Introducing the personal car launch

A study of the new customer journey and how today’s auto buyers research, browse and buy
There’s no such thing as a typical customer journey

In the mobile age, customers are discovering, researching and buying cars differently compared to how they have done in the past. However, new car launches typically follow the traditional pattern of TV-led campaign peaks to build model awareness and drive people to dealerships.

On platforms like Facebook, consumers are signalling that it’s time for car brands to respond to their shifts in behaviour, and to consider car launches less in the context of traditional marketing journeys and more as a part of customers’ personal life journeys.

To help marketers do this, Facebook IQ commissioned an auto consumer* study in partnership with Accenture, surveying 1,004 people aged 18+ in the UK from November 2018 to February 2019.

In the study, we uncovered three key insights the industry is increasingly facing when launching new cars:

- The digital neighbourhood
- Changes in life circumstances
- Frictionless experiences

Here we explore how the industry can respond to these trends, and provide solutions from the Facebook family and success stories from other auto brands.

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* An auto consumer is defined as someone who has purchased a new vehicle within the last year or intends to purchase a new vehicle within the next 5 years or a person who purchased a new vehicle within the past 1-5 years and intends to purchase a new vehicle in the next 12 months.
Align your launch with your customer

Car launch communication plans have traditionally been driven by bricks and mortar businesses and product development. However, as people are changing the way they discover, evaluate and shop, there’s a need for car brands to reassess how they communicate the launch of new models.

People’s auto purchase decisions are influenced by what they see around them. In the past, a new model might have been seen in a neighbour’s driveway, or the supermarket car park. Today their neighbourhood is a digital-first neighbourhood. 45% of surveyed auto consumers learn about new car launches on mobile, while 44% say they learn about them on social media and messaging services, and 30% through advertising on these platforms. This means that a car brand’s presence and advertising on social media now play a decisive role in driving awareness for new model launches.

The personal context of social media delivers a huge advantage over traditional media. Auto consumers between 18-34 years old, who use online channels to view brand ads/content say the Facebook family of apps and services is the #1 most influential source. As 61% of auto consumers say they believe that a car is an expression of their personality and style, this increasingly provides car brands with the opportunity to align their launches with the personal brands their customers are trying to build on social media.

Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture
(Facebook commissioned online study of 1,004 respondents age 18+, UK, Nov 2018- Feb 2019)
44% of auto consumers say they learn about new model launches on social media or messaging services.

30% of auto consumers say they learn about new model launches from advertising social media or messaging services.

42% of 18-34 year old auto consumers say they leverage the Facebook family of apps and services to learn about new model launches.

45% of auto consumers surveyed say they learn about new model launches on mobile.

40% of auto consumers say mission and value of a brand matter when deciding which new automotive brand to buy.

67% of auto consumers say they use Facebook for auto-related activities (among weekly platform users).

69% of auto consumers say they use Instagram for auto-related activities (among weekly platform users).

61% of auto consumers say they believe that an automobile is an expression of their personality and style.
Pitch, play, plunge

When people use their smartphones, they display different types of behaviour depending on whether they are checking their phone in a snatched moment on the go, or taking time to watch long-form, engaging content. So, it’s important for autos brands to create multiple styles of assets in line with different types of behaviour. We recommend a pitch, play, plunge approach:

- **Pitch** the idea to people by breaking through with short form content in feed, stories and in stream
- Reward the interested by inviting them to explore and interact with play content like stories carousel and Instant Experiences
- Then let people deep dive with plunge experiences like Messenger, AR and IGTV.

This approach is proven to drive better breakthrough and deeper connections for brands, compared to single asset campaigns. As well as shifting as recall and top of mind awareness, mixed-asset campaigns move some of the most difficult metrics to shift, such as familiarity and affinity.

Facebook internal meta analysis of 3000 brand lift studies, Aug 2017 to Sep 2018

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**Pitch**
Immediate to get to the many.

**Play**
Interactive for the curious.

**Plunge**
Immersive for the interested to dive in.
Mixed-asset campaigns perform better at every level

Index lift of mixed-asset campaigns over single-style asset campaigns.

Facebook internal meta analysis of 3000 brand lift studies, Aug 2017 to Sep 2018
Auto marketers have used print and TV advertising for decades. Now it’s time to translate these ideas for on-the-go consumers. The key to modern marketing is connecting with people in the places where they’re already spending their time. Where do you do this? Mobile, and more specifically, the Facebook family of apps and services.

Here are a few ways auto marketers can leverage the strengths of the medium to create great visual stories for the mobile-first era:

**Shoot for vertical**

The traditional horizontal 16:9 format is being turned on its head, or rather on its side. In its place, 9:16 vertical video is emerging as the number one way to frame for imaginative storytelling.

**The 3 second audition**

Gone are the days of waiting for the big reveal. Now, you need to capture attention and deliver the main message within the first 3 seconds. Or, to put it another way, forget about the scenic route... just get to your destination.

**Design for sound off**

(But delight with sound on)

Use sound to delight rather than to inform. Lean into your storytelling capabilities so that your video ads communicate clearly with sound off, but get better with sound on.

**Play more**

Vertical canvas offers endless opportunities to entice and excite. Design for how people consume and don’t be afraid to experiment with stop motion, 2D animation, and visual effects.

http://facebook.com/business/my/playwithcars
Ford

Building a community of car enthusiasts

Ford’s ambition was to reignite a community of car enthusiasts with the Mustang brand. So Ford brought to life the most exciting new feature of the 2018 Mustang – the endless number of on-the-fly customisations available to owners.

The campaign ran across Instagram Stories, Stories Carousel and Instant Experience Customiser. A series of visually arresting ads invited car enthusiasts into the driver’s seat of a richly tailored Instant Experience to customise their own Mustang. And the standalone stories ads showcased the most dazzling ‘on-the-fly’ customisation effects.

By pairing best practice creative with a strong community angle, Ford saw impressive results.

Ford

Launching a limited-edition car with a mixed-asset campaign

Renault launched the new limited edition Captur into a crowded Italian market using the pitch, play, plunge approach across Instagram Stories, Feed Carousel and Messenger.

Featuring immersive Manga stories, the campaign appealed to a younger audience – taking them on a journey within a fictionalised Tokyo where they could see the car in action.

This unique 1:1 story-led approach culminated in a Messenger experience, with different messages developed for different audiences. It was also possible for consumers to pre-order one of the limited-edition SUVs via Messenger.

RENault

53,861 Australians took part and voted for their favourite Mustang

+36.3 lift in ad awareness

+35.3 lift in message association

+9pt increase in ad recall

+12pt increase in campaign awareness

100 cars sold in 30 days
Be first in lane when consumers start their personal auto journeys

Car launches don’t necessarily happen at the same time that consumers are open to learning about a new vehicle. 74% of auto consumers surveyed say they bought a new vehicle due to a change in personal circumstances. Consequently, most people only start looking for cars when prompted by a major life events such as graduation, marriage, a new job or a new baby. Many of these milestones are preceded by a period of time when people are in preparation mode, and are therefore open to discovering new car content.

These insights becomes even more meaningful in light of the fact that consumers act fast once they approach a key milestone. 88% of auto consumers said it took them up to 3 months to buy a new car. And only a few brands made it onto their buying shortlist. 91% of surveyed car buyers considered up to 3 brands, including the one they eventually bought. This is a great opportunity for brands to make sure they are front of mind before the personal auto journey starts.

People share life’s moments on Facebook and Instagram, and they enjoy and share great car content in these spaces too. 67% and 69% of auto consumers respectively say they use Facebook and Instagram for autos-related content, while 70% say they want to see more content from car brands in their feed and stories. By continually communicating their brand content and values, auto brands can help consumers see how their brand fits in with who they see themselves becoming.

Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture (Facebook commissioned online study of 1,004 respondents age 18+, UK, Nov 2018- Feb 2019)
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### The consumer’s personal journey

- 88% of auto consumers say they spend up to three months on the auto process
- 91% of surveyed car buyers consider up to 3 brands when they enter the shopping process
- Auto consumers between 18-34 years old, who use online channels to view brand ads/content say the Facebook family is the #1 most influential source
- 74% of auto consumers say they buy a new vehicle due to a change in circumstance

### The influence of social media

- 77% of auto consumers say posts on social media would make them consider buying or leasing the new model
- 53% of autos consumers aged 18-34 say they view brand ads/content on the Facebook family of apps and services
- 70% of surveyed Facebook/Instagram users say they’d like to see more content on their feeds for automobiles
- 66% of auto consumers say they would be interested in joining an online brand sponsored community if it provided value
Promoting a new car with engaging carousel ads

German automotive company Opel ran a series of sequential carousel ads in Instagram Stories to encourage people to enter a competition to win a new Opel ADAM – resulting in a 2.5x increase in registrations.

Each carousel card showcased one of its colourful models with an emoji over the top, with the call to action asking viewers to take a test to find out which model they were.

After the test, people entered the competition to win the new model and registered for a newsletter about the new car line.

Stories make full use of the mobile screen, offering businesses a beautiful, distraction-free canvas where they can share photos and videos that drive results by optimising for Reach, Video Views, Traffic, Conversions, App Installs or Brand Awareness. Carousel ads in Instagram Stories allow advertisers to reach their target audience with more than one single piece of media. There is the option to share an integrated story, multiple products or a sequenced narrative with these versatile ad formats.

http://facebook.com/business/myplaywithcars

Instagram Stories

500 million people use Instagram Stories every day. It’s a fast, fun and flexible format that enables brands to tell more immersive business stories to their audiences.
Configuring the new model with ease in feed

Audi UK created an innovative Instant Experience, giving users a range of colour, alloy wheel, wing mirror and interior options to choose from.

The configuration experience enabled users to customise the new Audi e-tron – the premium brand’s first all-electric series production car – directly in the Facebook app before exploring their creation in a personalised video.

This gave consumers a frictionless and fully personalised, immersive experience in the palm of their hands, without needing to leave the Facebook app.

Facebook Instant Experiences

Formerly known as Canvas, Facebook Instant Experiences load instantly and are designed to capture the complete attention of your audience on mobile.

People can watch engaging videos and photos, swipe through carousels, tilt to pan and explore lifestyle images with tagged products – all in a single ad. Experiences are designed for mobile and load up to fifteen times faster than standard mobile web. Instant Experiences are like immersive digital brochures or microsites and can help:

- Drive product awareness or familiarity
- Demonstrate complex technology solutions through video
- Build brand engagement with interactive and 360-degree experiences.

Brands can also use Instant Experience to acquire customer data or leads. There’s the option to use straightforward templates or build a custom, one-of-a-kind Instant Experience.
Deliver frictionless experiences

Today’s consumers have higher expectations around personalisation, as they are accustomed to seamless product experiences across all aspects of their lives. An easy, convenient discovery, evaluation and purchase process is equally important for car buyers. For 77% of car buyers surveyed, it’s important that buying a car is as easy and convenient as possible.¹

What’s more, 70% of auto consumers say they are willing to provide their own data in exchange for a more personalised experience. This is an open invitation for car brands, especially when we consider that these consumers are making a purchase closely aligned to their life journey and in keeping with their own personality and style.²

A seamless experience strengthens the customer relationship and forms an ongoing bond, even post-purchase. 87% of auto consumers say they would like some type of engagement with their auto brand after their purchase.¹ So auto brands should look to provide the same friction-free digital experience that customers expect elsewhere – for example, enabling them to shop online or contact the dealership via Messenger.

The Facebook family offers auto consumers preferred channels for discovering new car launches and receiving personalised information pre-purchase, at purchase, and post-purchase.

¹ Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture (Facebook-commissioned online study of 709 respondents ages 18+, UK, July 2018)
² Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture (Facebook commissioned online study of 1,004 respondents age 18+, UK, Nov 2018-Feb 2019)
Personal and seamless experiences

- 77% of car buyers surveyed say that it’s important to them that buying an automobile is as easy and convenient as possible¹

- 75% of auto consumers surveyed say they like to receive personalised engagement on their smartphone from their auto brand²

- 70% of auto consumers say they would be willing to share data with auto brands if it meant a more personalised engagement²

- 47% of them feel that if an auto brand provided personalised engagement via their preferred communication type, they would be more likely to buy or lease the automobile brand²

Direct to consumer engagement

- 45% of auto consumers aged 18-34 say they would complete their entire automobile purchase online if they could¹

- 40% of auto consumers surveyed would like to make booking appointments directly with a dealership²

- 40% of auto consumers say they would like to receive maintenance reminders²

- 38% of auto consumers aged 18-34 say the Facebook family of apps and services would be their preferred type of communication on a smartphone or computer²

¹ Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture (Facebook-commissioned online study of 709 respondents ages 18+, UK, July 2018)

² Auto Consumer Journey Study by Accenture (Facebook commissioned online study of 1,004 respondents age 18+, UK, Nov 2018-Feb 2019)
Messenger

Messaging is the fastest-growing form of communication, between friends, family and, increasingly, businesses. It offers a reliable, convenient way to connect with customers and engage in natural, personal, in-the-moment conversation.

As of October 2018, there were 10bn messages exchanged between people and businesses globally on Messenger every month.

There are a number of different ways to use Messenger. Page messaging offers a simple, manual live chat experience, with the option to automate responses using tools such as greetings, instant replies and away messages. There’s also the option to integrate Messenger with an existing live chat provider.

For an automated experience, use the automated chat templates in Facebook Ads Manager or partner with a developer who builds chat templates. Or for a custom experience, engage with a third-party developer to build, manage and maintain an experience that includes a hand-off to live chat, if applicable.

Driving quality leads with a helpful Messenger bot

Italian automotive platform CarPlanner delivered seamless customer interactions and increased sales leads by 2.8x with click-to-Messenger ads and a Messenger bot.

Its goal was to generate high quality leads from potential customers interested in its flexible mobility solutions.

By showing images of the cars in carousel ads and presenting subscription plans to its target audience, the campaign prompted people to submit their details so that the sales team could get in touch with them.

2.8x increase in leads, compared to previous period
15% lower cost per lead, compared to other acquisition channels
98% of customers rated the bot positively
We can help you redesign your car launches in line with new consumer expectations

Find out more on our automotive landing page

fb.me/cars