

Toyota Launches the 2014 Corolla With Google+ to Drive Broad Engagement and Influence Consideration



Goals

- Drive consideration from young consumers who are buying their first cars
- Use innovative technology and develop relevant content

Approach

- Launched the **Toyota Collaborator** application that lets prospective car buyers customize their own Corolla with friends and family over Hangout and connect with dealers
- Promoted social content across the web as one of the first global brands to use +Post ads, Google's first social ads offering

Results

- Twice as much time was spent with the Collaborator as with Toyota's traditional car configuration tool*
- Gained an almost 50% higher engagement rate than industry averages with the pilot +Post ads campaign**

Aiming to change the car-buying experience

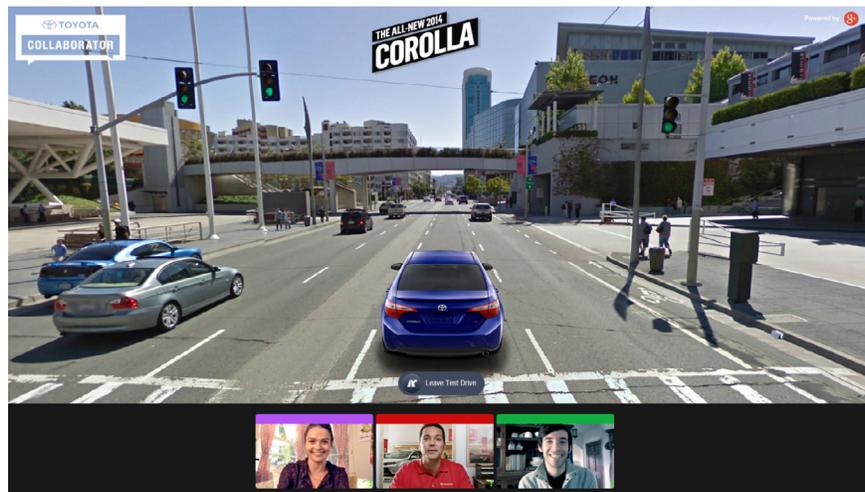
Founded in 1937, Toyota is a leading automotive manufacturer producing more than 10 million vehicles annually. The company introduced the Toyota Corolla in 1966, and the new models are some of the most popular cars in the world, with more than 30 million sold.

The Toyota Corolla consumer is young, creative and connected. So when it came to launching the 2014 Corolla, Toyota needed a unique and creative approach to reach an audience of people buying their first car. Google+ offered the ideal solution. Toyota USA and its agency Saatchi & Saatchi LA partnered with Google for the release of the 2014 Corolla, launching one of the first +Post ad campaigns and reinventing the car-buying experience with the Toyota Collaborator.

Customizing your own Toyota Corolla—online and together

The Toyota Collaborator uses Google+ to let people video chat with their friends and family as they build and customize their ideal 2014 Toyota Corolla online. They can even go on a virtual test drive together using Street View in Google Maps. After they've created their Toyota Corolla, participants can be connected to their local dealer to find answers to product questions, check inventory or even schedule a test drive.

Toyota is excited that the average time spent designing a car has doubled. And people are engaging heavily with the tool, taking virtual tours of their cars and going on virtual test drives. It is currently featured on the homepage of Toyota.com, and its launch video has been viewed almost 100K times.



* According to a study conducted by Toyota

** Please see industry benchmarks for rich media ads here: <http://www.richmediagallery.com/resources/benchmarks/>

Enabling brands to treat the web as their social stream

Google also collaborated with Toyota USA, which was one of the first global brands to pilot +Post ads to extend the reach of the Collaborator campaign. The +Post ads take a post on Google+—video, images or even a live Hangout—and use Google AdWords to quickly turn it into an interactive display ad served across the web. People can leave a comment, follow the brand, give a +1 or join a Hangout On Air—directly from an ad.

“It’s pretty cool that we can let our consumers talk to us directly through the advertising,” says Dylan Schwartz, creative director, Saatchi & Saatchi LA. “It doesn’t just change what we say; it changes how we think about it, and how we craft the messaging. And it makes the entire web our social platform.”

Discussing how +Post ads allowed Toyota to engage with the Corolla’s target audience, Monica Peterson, director of social media, Toyota USA, says: “Rather than talk at them, we wanted to talk with them. +Post ads increased the level of conversations online and reached those consumers wherever they are.”

Toyota can match its social content to the right people, in the right place, including demographics and much more. Notes Schwartz, “We focused on developing content that was relevant to our audience to drive engagement, and +Post ads made sure that content got noticed.”

These interactive ads become more relevant with social signals, such as +1s or comments from people you may know. With +Post ads, Google is enabling Toyota to distribute its social content and conversations across the web—essentially treating the web as its stream.

The image shows a screenshot of a Google+ post from Toyota USA. At the top left is the Toyota logo with the slogan "Let's Go Places" and the text "Toyota USA". To the right is a "Follow" button. Below this is the text "Shared publicly - Nov 15, 2013". The main content of the post is an advertisement for the "THE ALL-NEW 2014 COROLLA". The ad features a blue car and a circular interface with a "START" button and the text "Start customizing it with TOYOTA COLLABORATOR". Below the car, there is a section titled "Customize with friends" and a small video player showing three people. At the bottom of the post, there is a "+28" button and a "Share" button.

First to market

The first to market with this type of experience, Toyota is experimenting with what the future of car buying looks like. It’s true that ten years out, car buyers may still be walking in to dealerships and participating in sales negotiations. However, there might be a better way, and Toyota has taken the first step to pushing the industry in that direction.

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