

Radio drives successful re-launch of national retail chain by delivering brand awareness, geographic and creative flexibility

You can't blame consumers for not getting too excited by tires, after all, there's not much that can be said that's not obvious: they're round, black and inflated with compressed air. But that's just what Goodyear set out to do - to generate new interest in the category, to build brand awareness, to build sales - and to do it with Radio.

BACKGROUND

Like a new mattress or furnace, tires are essentially a grudge purchase with a relatively long purchase cycle. Two players, Goodyear and Michelin, dominate the tire market in Canada. These two powerhouse brands are neck-and-neck in a two horse race, followed by brands such as Bridgestone, Firestone, Uniroyal, Pirelli, Dunlop and private label products that include Canadian Tire's MotoMaster brand.

Despite current success, Goodyear's ride hasn't always been smooth. In the mid-to-late 1980s, the company spent millions of dollars promoting its corporate store chain, but did not achieve much more than 2% unaided awareness among consumers.

Staggered by spending so much for such little return, Goodyear threw out its entire campaign and made a fresh start.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

To re-launch the Goodyear chain, Goodyear developed a new campaign called "Work With Me" featuring a new spokesperson, Thom Sharp, a popular, L.A.-based comedian with a distinctive voice and hairline. The campaign was met with considerable success, and voted one of the most likeable campaigns in Canada by Gallop + Gallop Polling.

The new spokesperson was working well and over time was integrated into all aspects of Goodyear's communications - brand, retail auto service and tire, promotions, PR, dealer relations, training and internal communications. This involved both television and Radio advertising, although brand or image advertising was always dedicated to television.

That is until spring 2002, when Goodyear decided to "test" brand advertising on Radio.

RADIO'S ROLE WITHIN THE MEDIA STRATEGY

Goodyear found there were some basic and obvious advantages to using Radio. It is relatively quick and easy to produce commercials enabling them to react faster to the market than with television.

The cost of production is lower so Goodyear was able to create far more Radio spots than is usual for the industry, meaning that wear-out never became a factor.

Radio's flexibility allowed for the adjustment of weight levels when Goodyear wanted to heavy up in specific markets while maintaining others. Additional formats such as remotes and traffic tags were also utilized to maximize the impact of the Radio buy.

Radio offered the ability to hit a smaller bulls eye than television as well as fewer seasonal swings to which television is prone. This targetability became a real bonus for Goodyear, considering tires are a highly seasonal category with sales peaks in spring and fall.

Radio's format consistency was advantageous to Goodyear enabling efficient targeting by demographic and psychographic. This offered a significant contrast to television where each season a new round of programs brought a new round of uncertainty.

RESULTS

The initial advertising tracking results were encouraging but there were some concerns with respect to actual comprehension of the brand support points - in other words, reasons to believe. Uncertain if the issue was the medium or the message, Goodyear persevered. On receipt of a second wave of test score results, it was clear that Goodyear had hit gold.

During the 2002 test year, Goodyear's brand unit volume increased 4.6% over 2001, and market share grew 3.1%. In Ontario where the highest weight levels had run, unaided recall scores tracked 50% higher than nationally. Consumer comprehension grew and detailed recall responses jumped 50% from the first wave of tracking in spring 2002 to the second wave in the fall.

In year two of the Thom Sharp brand Radio campaign, results were on par with scores more commonly seen with television

"Radio is not simply a tactical medium. If used correctly, with the right properties in place, Radio can foster improved image results and simultaneously drive qualified retail traffic counts."

Ian McIntosh, General Manager Advertising and Marketing