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## case study

# Cedia's USER GENERATED CONTEST

### www.GreatDrivingChallenge.com

Hindustan Motors (HML) well understood the sentiments of a Cedia owner. Consumer research reiterated that a loyal Cedia owner loved to get behind its wheels and just drive. So when it was time to launch the new Mitsubishi Cedia Sports, HML wanted to reach out to its target audience and engage travel fanatics in conversations around 'A long drive'. This vision led to the creation of what we believe is India's largest and buzziest digital-led campaign, by us at Agency Experience Commerce, aptly titled 'Great Driving Challenge'.

### The Vision

Simply put: Engaging a community of travel fanatics around the idea of a long-drive - a getaway.

We wanted travel aficionados from all over the country to come together, driven by a mutual passion for enjoying a long drive. The web was a natural medium for engagement, as it provided multiple social platforms, diverse communities, and tools to encourage participation, conversation, and consumption of content.

The central idea of the campaign was powerful and appealed to

workaholics to take a break from their daily grind and escape on an all-expense paid 10-day trip in a brand new Mitsubishi.

### UGC - Core of the Contest

To win the contest, applicants had to share their travel stories from the road via microblogs, photo-updates, videos etc.

Each applicant couple was provided a personal blogging space on greatdrivingchallenge.com, to share their past travelogues, travel pictures, videos, and travel plans. The application process itself was a lot of fun, and meant long hours of family time, planning and dreaming about the event.

### Couples Only - Bringing in Family and Friends

Unlike most internet contests, we wanted to rope in not just individuals but their partners. By making the event open to 'couples only', we ensured that the entire 'family and friends' network was rallying behind, helping spread the word offline too.

### Indian Social media - Where no Automobile Co. had Treaded Before

Indian automobile brands had never considered online platforms to be anything more than a place to drop a banner ad and a way to collect contact information. Hindustan Motors and Mitsubishi were breaking new ground with The Great Driving Challenge (TGDC). They were committed to the vision of giving consumers a substantial role, and were willing to give their digital agency the freedom and flexibility required to make the campaign a success.

### Breaking Away from Conventions, Reaping Rewards

We decided to break the campaign in print, and delay the promotion online. Sure, there is a loss of conversion opportunities from print to internet, but we bet on the fact that the print campaign would result in a



higher quality of conversion from site-visitors to actual sign-ups.

The print ad designed by HML's ad agency Contract delivered results - we saw an astounding 5,000 sign ups and had over 700 applications within a few days.

It was important for us as a digital agency in India, to measure the ROI from print. The traffic volume was in line with our expectations, and our gut feel was proven right as we saw very high quality traffic - a super-low bounce rate of <6%, and conversion ratio of >25%. This far exceeded benchmarks for brand-supported destinations that we had seen in our past projects.

Once the core audience was engaged with the campaign idea, we supported the launch with a low decibel internet ad campaign. By the end of the second week, the viral ability of the campaign had taken over, and was fuelling further growth. We received more quality audience from facebook, blogs and organic search than paid internet advertisements.

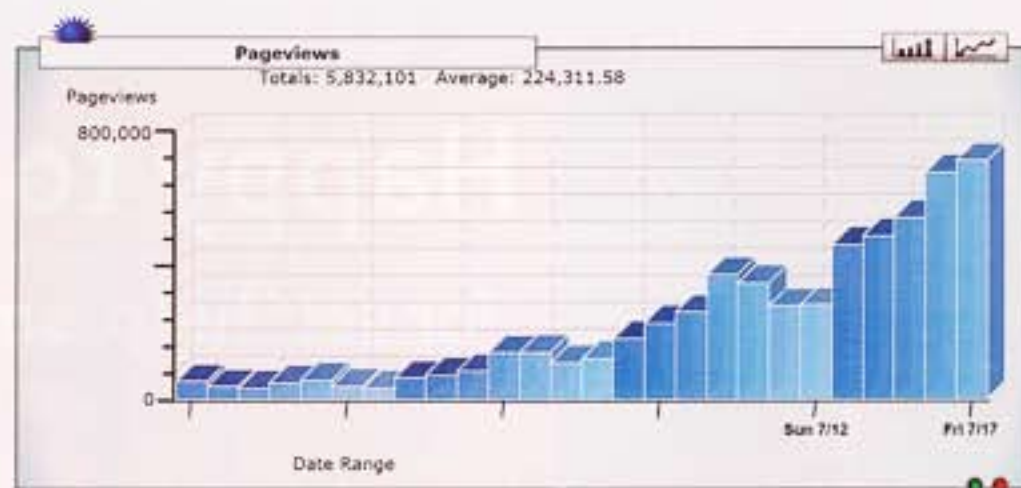
By the end of the second week, TGDC has garnered over 10 lakh page views from 1, 50,000 unique visitors.

### Managing Participants

The biggest challenge we faced was the issue of managing passionate participants. Sensing the high volume of deserving applicants, many participants started flexing the rules, garnering huge number of false votes to score on popularity. We went out of our way to quell applicants' fear that the challenge was turning into a popularity contest and invited applicants to submit feedback on how fake votes should

The Great Driving Challenge is not only a path breaker in automobile marketing but also a lodestar in the convergence of new media with traditional media. It represents how seamlessly we can integrate digital media with traditional media and maximize reach, frequency and impact.

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Head of Marketing, Hindustan Motors



be dealt with. The blog thus turned into a very effective two-way communication channel to reach out to the applicants and to hear back from them.

#### Adoption - Who Said Social Media is Only for Kids?

Like traffic, reaching our target age demographic (mature community of 25+) was barely a challenge. During



#### Results

- Unique Visitors in a month: 6,50,000 +
- Page views in a month: 69,00,000 +
- Max page views for a day: 7,50,000 +
- Blog Citings: 120 +
- Total Votes Cast: 3,20,000
- Sign ups: 18,000 +
- Total Testimonials Cast: 13,000 +
- Alexa India Rank: 551

the concept stage, a team member had speculated: "Who will have so much time to spend online, creating applications?"

TGDC busted the myth that social media content is created mostly by the youth. Married couples, with families and kids to look after, and jobs that take over most of their days, make time for their passions on the internet too. The average age of applicants ranged from 25 to 60 years, with a median of around 31.

One couple in their sixties defended their age in the application, arguing they were the best couple because... "29 states, 13 countries, 15000 KM per year drive and 35 years of experience. Beat that! "

#### Social Media Engagement - From uploading a Profile Pic to Annotating Google Maps

TGDC saw 2,000 sign-ups in the first few hours itself; over 50 percent had already started meaningful applications by hour three. By the end of day one, over 300 people had completed meaningful applications, uploaded photos, mashed up their flickr streams, annotated their Google Maps, and were ready to reach out for testimonials and votes.

The average stay time for people creating an application was over an hour. Our jaws dropped! We were prepared for a long haul to entice applicants to fill up their forms (blogs), but the core of the community had formed faster than we dreamed possible.

Page views rose dramatically - we recorded over 69 lakhs within the month.

Traffic ranking site Alexa had us listed as 551 in India during the campaign period.

#### Sustaining the Social Media Activity on Indian Roads

The trickiest part of the challenge

was making sure the chosen (for the drive) couples would be able to upload social media content from the heart of rural India. By that point of TGDC, we had a large community hinged on every piece of content published on the site.

We equipped the teams with high speed data cards, computers and cameras so they could blog and upload multimedia from the road. Eventually, we had to integrate text messaging to ensure a constant flow of content, even where data connection was not available.

#### Multiple Agencies At Work

Though the campaign was digital-led, it included on-ground events and was not going to be a success without team work. The brand campaign was supported by Contract Advertising and the on-ground event was wholly managed by Encompass. It was important that the finalists derived the same experience offline as they had experienced online. All stakeholders ensured they did.

The brand - Mitsubishi - remained supportive of every request made by the contestants, even agreeing to last minute giveaways. A few weeks later, one of the finalists (who did not make it to the driveway) mused on Facebook: "Aapney hamaara taste kharaab kar diya hai ..!! With the kind of experience TGDC gave, any other online contest looks so lil baby in front of it !!! :P u da best !!!" ● TOM

TOM: For the basics of the property and a more in depth look, log on to: [www.GreatDrivingChallenge.com](http://www.GreatDrivingChallenge.com)



From 'Team-BHP Forum' (popular online auto destination): I've been watching the GDC unfold from day one and gotta say: This was BRILLIANT marketing by HM-Mitsubishi. Not once in the past 5 years had so many people visited an HM-Mitsubishi website, or had their brands created such a buzz in the market. I know for a fact that other brands are watching closely and will be coming out with their own in-house versions of the GDC soon. Coming from a manufacturer which has effectively over-slept (while the competition walked all over) was most unexpected. I hope some of this new found vigour rubs off on HM's product planning division (new Lancer, EVO X anyone?).