

**point**of**view**

# What's Driving Consumer Conversations **Online?**

**Andrew Leary**

CEO, Ipsos Social Media Exchange

**Douwe Rademaker**

CEO, Ipsos MarketQuest

**Ipsos Marketing**

**Ipsos SMX**

**GAME CHANGERS**



The world is changing; there is a new auto consumer – the millennial, and they represent twenty-eight percent of new car sales and shop very differently than those before them. Ninety-five percent shop for cars online, sixty-three percent visit at least two dealerships, and they use social media on average forty-three times a day.<sup>1</sup> Right behind them is GenZ, who is even more connected.

## So what does this all mean?

First and foremost it means that car manufacturers need to embrace social media now more than ever, and understand how its multiple channels can help drive sales. It also means that car manufacturers and their agencies need to continue to improve as publishers, sharing the right information, images and messages on the right channels at the right time to the right individuals. Equally important, it means that manufacturers and their agencies need to develop more actionable and strategic measures of the impact of their social media efforts.

## Moving Beyond Sentiment

Historically, brands have looked at consumer sentiment, reach and activity to understand how they perform online – how are people feeling about my brand? How many friends does my brand page have and how many likes and comments are being shared?

While these metrics provide interesting KPI's for community managers and social media marketers, it is our belief that the key to driving sales is to understand the motivations driving the consumer online actions and conversations along their path to purchase.

## Enter Censydiam

For over thirty years the Censydiam framework has been helping brands understand these deep-seated consumer emotions and needs. Covering over fifty categories, Censydiam allows brands to connect with consumers and be invited into their lives.

The eight fundamental Censydiam motivations leverage personal and social dimensions established by Freud and Adler. However, it is the granularity and global consistency inherent in the Censydiam model that makes it one of the most powerful tools available to help brands capture and understand the true motivations of the consumer.

<sup>1</sup> Toyota/J.D. Power 2015

Last year at the Greenbook IEX Conference, we showcased how large amounts of social data could be coded against the Censydiam framework in the running category. 250,000 social conversations were machine coded at 90% accuracy against human coding, demonstrating that this type of coding could be done at scale. This study also showed the predictive power of social conversations by identifying which specific consumer motivations were driving purchase in the category.<sup>2</sup>

## Lexus NX vs. Acura RDX

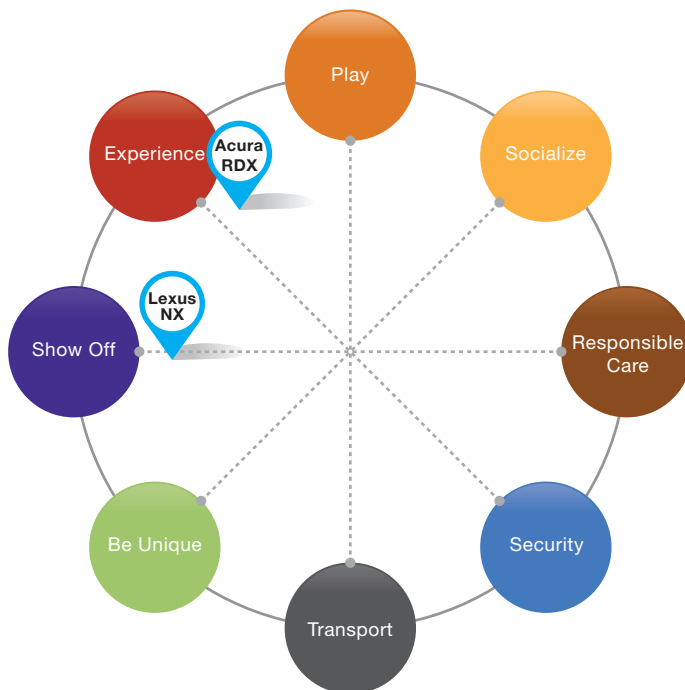
In April of 2015 we applied the Censydiam framework to social data in the automotive category, using two popular models in the growing compact luxury SUV segment.

What we set out to find were answers to three questions:

- 1) How do Lexus and Acura position their NX and RDX models through social media communications?
- 2) What motivates online consumer conversations around these two models along the path to purchase?
- 3) How can this information inform Lexus and Acura's 360o brand communication strategy to drive sales?

## Brand Positioning vs. Consumer Conversation

It was immediately apparent through the eyes of the Censydiam framework that both Lexus and Acura have unique and relevant brand positioning. Lexus communications are aligned with the emotion of "Showing Off," while Acura is aligned with "Experience." Consumer conversations online also aligned with these same emotions for the two models, indicating that brand communications were resonating well with the target audience.



However, when breaking down these same consumer conversations along each separate stage in the Path to Purchase (Awareness, Consideration, Purchase), we uncovered a very interesting insight.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ipsos SMX Censydiam Social Study, 2014

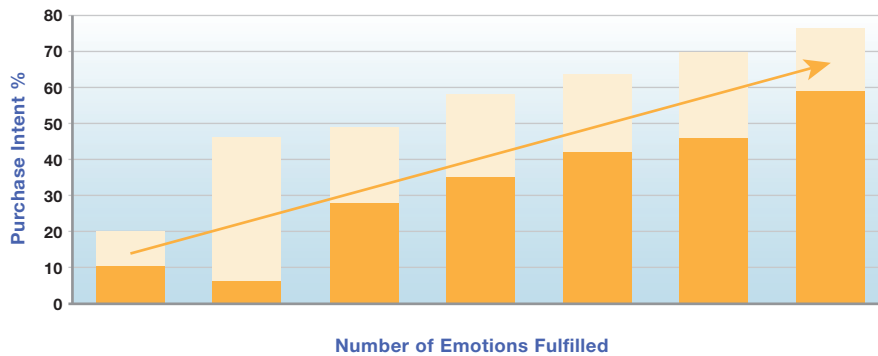
<sup>3</sup> Path to purchase is determined based upon a proprietary code frame developed by SMX

## What We Discovered

Motivations that resonated with consumers in the awareness and consideration phases were not necessarily the same as the ones that drove actual purchase. When it came to the purchase decision, many more emotions become relevant.

In other words, someone may aspire to 'Showing Off' when considering the Lexus, but when it comes to the actual purchase decision, other motivations like "Security," "Responsible Care" and "Driving Pleasure" become relevant as well.

It is well established that clear, unique and relevant positioning around a single consumer motivation is very important to break through the clutter and drive awareness and consideration. A brand must focus its messaging and drive awareness. But, in line with prior research conducted at Ipsos,<sup>4</sup> we now know that fulfilling multiple relevant emotions will help drive the actual purchase decision and hence, drive sales. In other words, further down the purchase path a brand must also consider the number of motivational touch points it has with target consumers. Brands, as content publishers, need a vehicle to stretch the primary brand messaging without compromising the central strategic focus.



In this particular study, we were able to see that Lexus can help drive incremental purchase by extending their communications to include "Experience" and "Safety" for those in the purchase phase, and Acura can do the same by extending their communications to include "Security" and "Responsible Care."

So while above the line communications should continue to focus on a singular motivation ('Showing off' for the Lexus NX and 'Experience' for the Acura RDX), it is important to understand consumers will continue to discuss the brand using other motivations throughout their path to purchase. Thus, brands need to decide whether or not to weigh in on these conversations by making relevant content available.

The beauty of social media is that we can use different channels to reach consumers at different points in their path to purchase, and shape communications to target specific consumer emotions along the way.

Before investing more money in social media, ask yourself...

Do you really know how people are talking about your brand and models online through different stages of the Path to Purchase?

Have you used this information to align your targeted social media campaigns with your overall communications strategy to drive incremental sales?