

HYUNDAI: THE WALKING DEAD CHOP SHOP

JAY CHIAT AWARDS CATEGORY: NATIONAL STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

Hyundai has been on the rise with sales increasing by 89% from 2009–2012.¹ The brand had built a solid reputation as a rational choice among average car shoppers. But among the highly desirable youth audience driven more by their interests and passions, reason alone wasn't enough to get them excited about the Hyundai brand.

¹Source: Experian Retail Registration 2009 – 2013; ²Source: GfK Quarterly Brand Tracking Studies 2013

Involve the Fans vs. Interrupting Them

In the fall of 2013, Hyundai had product placement in the second season of *The Walking Dead* TV show as a way to build relevance among the show's Gen Y audience. As the popularity of zombie culture grew, we decided to elevate the partnership with *The Walking Dead* to increase our relevance with this growing and passionate millennial fan base. However, this highly engaged and passionate *Walking Dead* youth fanbase didn't want a brand to interrupt and commercialize their beloved show.

So how do you make a rational car brand appealing to an emotionally driven fan audience?

Our challenge was to involve the fans with the Hyundai brand and its cars in an authentic way that added value to their experience of *The Walking Dead*, and not interrupt them.

OBJECTIVES & SUCCESS METRICS

If we were going to involve the fans, we knew we had to motivate them to participate with us and eventually inspire them to help spread the word on behalf of the brand.

OBJECTIVE #1: Engage the Fans to BUILD

Demonstrate that the audience is spending more time participating with the Hyundai brand through the number of vehicles configured and built.

Success Metric:

- We wanted to equal the number of vehicles built in our experience versus the number of vehicles built on Hyundai.com during the same time period

OBJECTIVE #2: Empower the Fans to SHARE

Demonstrate that the audience is sharing their experience with the brand via social media channels.

Success Metric:

- We wanted to increase by 25% the number of social shares on the Hyundai Facebook page

OBJECTIVE #3: Retain the Fans

Demonstrate that the audience is returning to experience the brand.

Success Metric:

- We wanted to double the number of repeat visits to our experience versus the benchmark average of 24.9% who return to Hyundai.com

HOW WE GOT TO OUR INSIGHT:

Involve the Fans Through the Conversation of Survival in a Zombie Apocalypse

One of the inherent themes around *The Walking Dead* is about survival during the zombie apocalypse. We had observed that the survival narrative generated volumes of conversations on fan sites, blogs, forums, social media platforms and even college courses dedicated to this topic.

OUR INSIGHT:

Walking Dead fans are more likely to get involved with a brand if it enhances their experience. The way-in to involve this audience is through the conversation of survivability during a zombie apocalypse.

FROM INSIGHT TO IDEA:

With the insight of survivability as the motivating reason these fans were so voracious about consuming *Walking Dead* content, we fed into their hunger, and fueled their fantasy zombie world with The *Walking Dead* Chop Shop: a car configurator app that empowers the imagination of *The Walking Dead* fans to build their ultimate zombie survival machine.

Not only did we set out to build an app that would be relevant and compelling to a zombie survival fan, but we also designed the experience for social. During briefings and UX development of the app, we always asked ourselves what the social Facebook posts and tweets would look like.

Establishing Authenticity Right Off The Barbed-Wire-Wrapped Bat

If we were to get fans involved with us, we had to establish credibility and authenticity.

- So, we went directly to the creator of *The Walking Dead* comics and TV show and got Robert Kirkman onboard with our project.
- We launched The *Walking Dead* Chop Shop to the masses of anxiously awaiting fans, at the epicenter of zombie fandom: San Diego Comic-Con.
- We made sure every zombie survivalist attending had the opportunity to save themselves from the apocalypse through our posters, trolley wraps, print ads, web videos and street teams.
- To further establish our credibility with this highly engaged community, we invited them to an exclusive app launch party that coincided with *The Walking Dead's* 10th Anniversary Party at San Diego Comic-Con.

Engaging Fans by Making the Ultimate Survival Machine a Reality

Once we got the app into the hands of these passionate zombie fans, we had to give them a reason to care and participate.

- So, we created a contest that challenged them to design the ultimate zombie survival machine for a chance to have a 1:1 scale, life-size build-out of the vehicle for display at the NY Comic-Con. This was the ultimate gesture to get this creative fan community to participate with the Hyundai brand.
- We also crowd-sourced new weapon ideas from the fans and offered them daily trivia questions to help them earn points towards more weapons.

Using Real-time Data to Reach More Zombie Survivalists

To keep the momentum going we used a bit of science, data and a little creativity to keep the rivalries going between the app users.

- Rather than looking at app usage data post-campaign to measure the effectiveness of our work, we used the live data to inform our creative, so that the work was more relevant and targeted to new users.
- We deployed hyper-targeted Facebook Dark Posts to identify specific types of audiences to optimize awareness and engagement with the app.
- These Facebook Dark Posts would pit men and women against each other, and incite West Coast vs East Coast rivalries to battle it out for who could build the ultimate Hyundai zombie survival machine.

RESULTS:

Engage the Fans to BUILD

Demonstrate that the audience is spending more time participating with the Hyundai brand configure and build.

- Against a goal of equaling the number of vehicles built on our app versus the number built on Hyundai.com during the same time period, we blew that away by having **46,817 Hyundai zombie survival vehicles built⁴ versus 2,019 configured on Hyundai.com**
- With the industry benchmark average of :71 seconds⁵ of time spent with an app, we more than **tripled the time spent** with an average time spent on the first visit to The *Walking Dead* Chop Shop app of **4 minutes and 58 seconds**.

⁴App usage data, 7/15/13 – 8/15/13

⁵“Falling Asleep with Angry Birds, Facebook and Kindle—A Large Scale Study on Mobile Application Usage” 2012

Empower the Fans to SHARE

Demonstrate that the audience is sharing their experience with the brand via social media channels.

- Against a goal of doubling the number of social shares for this program versus the 14,000 received from the prior configurator experience of Hyundai’s Driveway Decision Maker program⁶, we actually **more than tripled the number by achieving 50,818 social media log-ins/shares⁷**
- Against a goal of increasing by 25% the number of social shares on the Hyundai Facebook page, **we almost tripled that by achieving a positive 71% lift.⁸**

⁶Gigya social app measurement and analytics, 7/15/13 – 8/31/13 ;

⁷Google Analytics and Omniture data, 9/1/12 – 4/15/13 ; ⁸Hyundai Facebook account performance metrics, 7/15/13 – 8/31/13

Retain the Fans

Demonstrate that the audience is returning to experience the brand.

- Against a goal of doubling the number of repeat visits to our app versus the benchmark average of 24.9% who return to Hyundai.com⁹, **we more than doubled that by having 60.4% of the app users return** to The *Walking Dead* Chop Shop app¹⁰

^{9,10}Google Analytics, 7/15/13 – 8/31/13

A Welcomed Side Effect to the Zombie Outbreak

We also became the #1 Ranked Automotive Lifestyle App¹¹ in the iTunes Store

¹¹Distimo Mobile App Store Analytics, 7/15/13 – 8/31/13