

Chrysler's Eminem Ad Still Reverberates

by Gerald Scott
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If the entire Detroit auto industry needed a post-auto show push into the heart of 2011, perhaps Chrysler's "Eminem" Super Bowl TV commercial was it.

The unique, two-minute commercial that ran in the third quarter of the Super Bowl football game continues to resonate in a positive way for Chrysler, for the 200 sedan it was promoting, for Eminem and for Detroit itself.

In the now-famous TV ad, Chrysler shared the stage with its hometown and closed with the amusing tagline, "Imported from Detroit."

Did it have an impact?

Dr. Michael Bernacchi, marketing maven at the University of Detroit Mercy, held his annual Super Bowl TV ad debrief together with 500 local high school students one day after the airing.

"I have never seen teenagers clap for an auto ad," Bernacchi declared.

Indeed, Bernacchi also allowed that following the broadcast, he was contacted by people from around the globe, many of whom don't have much affection for the Motor City – and they uniformly said they were moved in a positive sense by the ad.

CBS News went as far as to say that it was the one Super Bowl ad generating the most online and marketing "buzz" a day following the game.

Other marketing analysts have said that the Chrysler 200 ad is not only the most memorable of the 2011 Super Bowl – but that it very well could overlap and become part of larger pop culture, which is something to say in today's 24-hour news cycle world of disposable attitudes.

The official name of the ad from Chrysler and its ad agency was "Born of Fire," but of course in local parlance people are calling it "the Eminem Chrysler ad."

Indeed – if you Googled the phrase "Eminem Chrysler ad," just one day after it aired, you got 8.6 million returns – that's no typo, there really were 8.6 million returns from Google. If Chrysler paid \$8 million-plus for the air time and ad itself, as has been reported in other quarters, they may have gotten their money's worth – a buck a Google return, it works out.

Unlike Volkswagen, which heavily teased its cute "Darth Vader" TV ad for the Passat online several days prior to the Super Bowl, Chrysler was virtually tight-lipped and almost nothing about the provocative ad leaked out until broadcast time, which in this era of WikiLeaks is remarkable in and of itself.

The so-called Eminem ad was actually part of Chrysler Brand's larger ad campaign to kick off the 200, revealing that "Imported from Detroit" tagline for the first time.

"Super Bowl advertising is about making a statement and

capturing the attention of the audience," said Olivier Francois, president and CEO, Chrysler Brand and lead executive for Marketing, Chrysler Group.

"'Born of Fire' is designed to generate conversation about the brand and the new 2011 Chrysler 200. The spot reflects where the brand is headed and pays tribute to our industrial roots."

Chrysler added that the two-minute spot – a Super Bowl first – was shot in the city of Detroit using a local cast and crew members.

Added Francois, "The new tagline was created to convey the message that one does not have to cross an ocean to obtain luxury, it's available right here."

The Chrysler brand kicks off its marketing and advertising campaign this month. The campaign highlights the rejuvenation of the entire product lineup, which includes the new, redesigned and repackaged 2011

Chrysler sedan and convertible, the highly anticipated Chrysler 300 sedan and the innovative Chrysler Town & Country minivan.

But, of course, it all comes back to the ad with Eminem's appearance and the music of his irrepressible "Lose Yourself" rap song thrumming in the background.

"The Chrysler brand, the company and its employees have adopted the principle that failure is not an option," Francois said.

If the "Eminem ad" from Chrysler is indicative of this new spirit emanating from Auburn Hills, maybe Francois' comments can be absorbed as more than just good marketing hyperbole. By comparison, GM bought five Super Bowl TV ads but collectively didn't have the same impact as one Chrysler ad, experts have observed.

Said Eminem in his only spoken line in the TV commercial:

"This is the Motor City. And this is what we do."



Chrysler's Super Bowl TV ad for its 200 sedan continues to make waves in the marketing world. The two-minute commercial starred rapper Eminem and paid tribute to the city of Detroit.

Agassi: Israel will be First to Put 100K EVs on Road

By DAN PERRY
Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) – Electric car pioneer Shai Agassi is a man with a startling prediction: Before 2020, he says, more people everywhere will be buying electric cars than those powered by gasoline.

"It doesn't mean that oil is not necessary, but we're starting the way out," said Agassi, a former top executive for information giant SAP AG who launched his Better Place venture several years ago.

Existing electric cars have a limited range, after which owners have to stop and wait for hours while their car's battery recharges. Owners of Agassi's cars would be able to remove the used battery and replace it with a fully charged one, allowing them to get back on the road almost immediately.

The first country slated to go live with a network of "battery-switching" stations run by Better Place is his native Israel, where he plans a launch – with 56 stations and an expected 5,000 cars – before the end of 2011.

In 2012, Denmark and Australia are expected to join, along with trials in Hawaii and in the San Francisco Bay area.

Brimming with infectious optimism, Agassi has been a regular at the World Economic Forum, where he was interviewed by The Associated Press.

Agassi said he has raised about \$700 billion and spent about a third of it, mostly on setting up the stations. That leaves enough cash to absorb losses while he builds up to break-even, which Agassi asserts will not take long.

"In Israel, in 2016, plus or minus a year, more electric cars will be sold than gasoline cars. When that happens in Country One, within two years you will see it in every country," he said.

That claim may seem preposterous for the car-crazy United States – but not for Israel. The country's electric company also expects electric cars to achieve a significant market share in the near future and is preparing its grid to meet the demand, according to the Haaretz newspaper.

Former U.S. President Bill

Clinton has emerged a believer as well.

"Israel will become the first country in the world to put 100,000 all-electric cars on the road," he said last week. "Not the U.S. Not China. Not countries much bigger – Israel!"

Agassi has found a niche created by a widespread sense that the world is not doing half enough to deal with the eventual end of oil – a prospect hastened by the explosive recent growth in the developing world.

"From 2000 to 2010, China added 120 million cars on the road (and) next year, 25 to 30 million," Agassi said. "It's no longer the U.S. that sets the price (of oil). Now it's a question of how many cars were added in China, how many were added in Brazil, how many were added in India."

He admits that the market for gas is somewhat inelastic, meaning that despite rising costs at the pump, people grumble and drive on. But they

New U.S. Stamp Salutes 100th Year of Indy

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) – The 100th anniversary of the Indianapolis 500 is being recognized with a new stamp later this year from the U.S. Postal Service.

The stamp will feature an art deco illustration of the Marmon "Wasp" that Ray Harroun drove to win the first Indy 500 in 1911. The Indy 500 stamp is part of the lineup of new commemorative stamps for 2011 announced recently by the postal service.

The stamp reads "Indianapolis 500" across the bottom, along with smaller type saying "100 years of racing." It goes on sale in May.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway president Jeff Belskus says the stamp is a wonderful addition to the celebration of the race's centennial.

By coincidence, 2011 is also the 100th anniversary of the Chevrolet brand and one of the Chevrolet brothers was an Indy car driver in that era.

That explains why the Chevrolet Camaro will serve as the official pace car for the 2011 Indy 500 race.

save elsewhere, he says, harming the economy in cascading ways.

Agassi plans to sell cars being developed by Renault SA and equipped with removable batteries – which are currently quite heavy and have a range of 100 miles. Drivers would be promised four battery swapping stations along any route the length of the range.

Although prices have not yet been set, Agassi said the idea would be that the consumer would not pay more to drive a given distance than its current cost using oil.

Like any venture that could threaten a mammoth industry, Better Place has generated its share of critics.

Some charge the company is trying to establish a new type of monopoly, while environmental groups objected to the laying of new power cables. It is also not clear that Israel's electricity grid can sustain the heightened demand posed by

the electric cars.

Some say battery-swapping is impractical and customers will prefer a fixed-battery car. In Davos, Nissan Motor Co. was demonstrating its new Leaf, a fixed-battery electric car that you can charge at home.

Agassi is not worried. He says over time, batteries will grow smaller and their ranges will grow longer, making the swap less odious.

He is most animated as he refutes criticism that the electricity needed to charge the battery has its own carbon footprint and the net result might be worse for the environment than the internal combustion engine.

The electricity could come from coal but also from natural gas or wind or other sources, he said, adding that the Israeli government has approved a 600-megawatt solar project in the country's southern desert that can power a half-million cars a year.

Fiat North America Showcases 500 Car in Chicago

CHICAGO – Making its first official debut at the 2011 Chicago Auto Show, Fiat North America is showcasing a display of radiating colors with six new Fiat 500 (Cinquecento) models and once historic model. With beautiful Italian styling, timeless functionality, efficient design and innovative technology – the same attributes that made the original version a timeless icon – the new Fiat 500 is relevant for an entirely new generation of drivers.

"With a diverse, young-at-heart community who values self-expression and finds freedom and fun in driving, the Windy City is a key market for the Fiat brand," said Laura Soave, Head of Fiat Brand North America.

"With its timeless Italian style, a high level of personalization options, an efficient powertrain that blends engaging driving performance and fuel efficiency, the new 2012 Fiat 500 matches our customers' individuality needs and delivers on their desire to be ecologically responsible at the same time."

Like the original Cinquecento, the new 2012 Fiat 500 showcases the Fiat brand's ingenu-

ity to build world-class small cars that ignite a spirit of the times through simple design, beautiful craftsmanship and timeless value. As a result, the Fiat 500 has continued to surprise and delight customers worldwide for more than 50 years.

Modernizing the successful formula from its past, the new Fiat 500 caters to an entirely new generation of Americans who want their vehicle to be as engaging, individualized, ecologically responsible and technologically savvy as they are.

This modern-generation Fiat 500 offers high levels of safety, fuel economy, quality and advanced technology.

With its city-friendly four-passenger A-segment size, engaging driving dynamics, all-new fuel-efficient 1.4-liter MultiAir engine with eco:Drive Application, state-of-the-art TomTom Navigation with BLUE&ME Handsfree Communication technology and seven standard air bags, the new Fiat 500 offers a driving and ownership experience unlike anything available today.

This package is further enhanced with new quality and refinement adaptations for the

OnStar Will Now Sell Its Mirrors at Big Box Retail

DETROIT – More than 1,600 retailers, including all nationwide Best Buy locations, will sell OnStar's new \$299 retail mirror that offers key safety and security features such as Automatic Crash Response, Hands-Free Calling and Turn-by-Turn Navigation.

Best Buy, OnStar's first strategic retail partner, will offer on-site installation for \$75 to \$100, while online retailer Crutchfield will sell the product nationwide with referrals to third-party installers. A range of service plans will be available, starting at \$18.95 a month or \$199 a year. The retail mirror goes on sale this spring.

OnStar announced the product at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas on Jan. 4, offering OnStar service for the first time in non-GM and older GM vehicles already on the road. The mirror is validated to work on 99 percent of the top 20-selling non-GM vehicles over the last 10 years, or approximately 55 million cars and trucks, with more validations in process.

The new retail product provides the key features that have made OnStar's "blue button" an icon, including Stolen Vehicle Location Assistance, one-button access to emergency and roadside services, and Bluetooth connectivity.

"Our customers have been asking for years to add OnStar in the cars and trucks they already own – so we're confident there will be strong demand for the OnStar product right out of the gate," said Greg Ross, OnStar's vice president of business extensions.

Ingram Micro is the exclusive

master distributor for the retail mirror, responsible for distribution and logistics, merchandising, installation and technical support.

"OnStar is a strong brand name that will drive significant numbers of first-time customers into 12-volt and consumer electronics retailers," said John Soumbasakis, Ingram Micro's senior vice president of specialty solutions. "As a safety product, many drivers view OnStar as a 'must-have' rather than a 'nice-to-have' purchase. Ingram Micro looks forward to helping retailers make the most of this unique opportunity."

In addition to Best Buy and Crutchfield, several regional retailers will carry the mirror, including:

ABC Warehouse of Pontiac, Mich., 43 locations; Al & Ed's Autosound of Van Nuys, Cal., 18 locations; Car Toys of Seattle, Wash., 49 locations; Columbus Car Audio of Columbus, Ohio; three locations; Drive-In Autosound of Colorado Springs, Colo.; six locations; P.C. Richard & Son of Carteret, N.J.; 65 locations; and Sound Of Tri-State of Wilmington, Del.; three locations.

This move by OnStar into big box retail is part of an overall strategy to gradually increase its customer footprint from just new-GM car buyers to something larger and more comprehensive.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas recently, OnStar officials talked about the possibility of the unit moving into home electronic security, similar to what Brink's and ADT currently do in that consumer space.

All-New Focus Electric Is 'Most Maintenance-Free'

CHICAGO – When it comes to regularly scheduled maintenance, the Ford Focus Electric will be the easiest car to own that the Ford Motor Co. has ever built.

Because the Focus Electric does not have a conventional piston engine or an automatic or manual transmission, its drivers will wave goodbye to such things as oil changes and tuneups – a scenario most other motorists can only dream of right now.

"About all the driver will have to do is charge up the battery pack and go," said Sherif Marakby, Ford's director of electrification programs and engineering.

Ford says that the Focus Electric actually eliminates more than two dozen mechanical components that would normally require attention during the life of the vehicle.

The dramatic reduction in moving mechanical parts is the key reason why consumers won't have much to do to maintain the Focus Electric.

No matter how long they own the car or how many miles they drive over the years, Focus Electric owners

will nonetheless never wait in line for oil changes, experience the inconvenience of a worn-out muffler, radiator hose or serpentine belt, or have to change dirty air filters, fuel filters or transmission fluid.

"When you have no moving parts, such as the gears in a transmission or the pistons in an engine, you have maintenance," Marakby said.

"With an electric drive, there are very few moving parts. And in the Focus Electric, the only moving parts are the motor and the wheels."

Regular maintenance for the Focus Electric will consist of little more than checking the air pressure in the tires and keeping the windshield wiper reservoir topped off.

Longer term, the car's brake pads and shocks may still need replacing – along with the tires, of course.

Electrification is an important part of Ford's overall vehicle marketing strategy. This includes the introduction of five new electrified vehicles in North America by 2012 and Europe by 2013. The Focus Electric is at the forefront of this overall strategy.

U.S. market, including an all-new six-speed automatic transmission.

Fiat's new world-class 1.4-liter engine with state-of-the-art MultiAir technology powers the 2012 Fiat 500 and reduces emissions while improving fuel economy and power.

Chrysler says the car delivers spirited driving and is well-suited for the Fiat 500's lightweight design and city-friendly size, Fiat's efficient and responsive 1.4-liter MultiAir inline four-cylinder engine provides 101 horsepower (75 kW)

at 6,500 rpm and 98 lb.-ft. (133 N•m) of torque at 4,000 rpm.

When paired with the five-speed manual transmission, the Fiat 500 delivers up to 38 highway mpg and a best-in-class 30 mpg city. And with the all-new six-speed automatic transmission with Auto Stick, the new Fiat 500 delivers 27 mpg in the city and 34 mpg on the highway.

Critics have said that American buyers nonetheless shy from smaller, sub-compact offerings like the 500, but Fiat is hopeful all the same.



2012 Fiat 500 (North American version)