

# Volkswagen India Case Study

Innovative campaign inspires 2,700  
car recommendations in 4 weeks



**Volkswagen. Das Auto.**

Volkswagen (VW) is one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers and the largest carmaker in Europe. As Volkswagen pursues its goal of becoming the number one automaker in the world by 2018, India has become a key component of its strategy. India is currently the world's second fastest growing car market, with shipments expected to more than double by 2018.<sup>1</sup>

As a relatively recent entry into the Indian automotive market, VW needed to raise brand awareness. To address this challenge, Volkswagen's marketing team focused one of its key brand pillars, innovation, to make a strong impact throughout the roll-out in India. Innovation was showcased not only in Volkswagen's product introductions, but also in its communications and advertising.

## Innovative marketing strategies raise awareness

VW India created groundbreaking campaigns such as the world's first 'talking newspaper', which used light-sensitive chips to speak to readers about Volkswagen as they turned the pages of their morning newspaper. The talking newspaper ad created a sensation in India, and garnered worldwide attention for taking print advertising to a new level. In one year, brand awareness more than quadrupled, increasing from 8 percent to a high of 37 percent.

Volkswagen next turned to digital media to extend its success and create new opportunities for customers to connect with the brand.

Lutz Kothe, Head of Marketing for VW India, says, "At Volkswagen, innovation is woven into everything we do. In formulating our digital strategy, we looked beyond the obvious for innovative ways to engage our audience. We knew that for many people, their car affects their professional life and their professional identity affects their car choices. This made LinkedIn a natural choice to connect with current and potential car buyers among the growing Indian professional population."

## Challenge

- Create brand awareness among working professionals
- Build loyalty and aspiration
- Influence decision-making

## Solution

- Establish VW-branded Company Page on LinkedIn
- Enable LinkedIn members to recommend their favorite VW models
- Use LinkedIn Recommendation Ads to extend reach

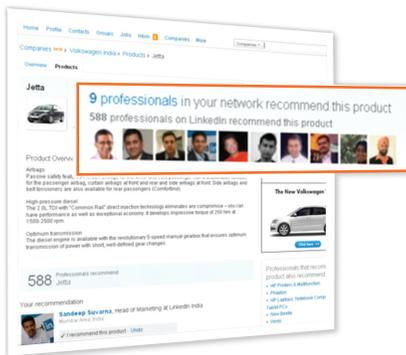
## Why LinkedIn?

- #1 resource for career-minded professionals
- Precise targeting by seniority and geography ensures match with affordability criteria, dealership locations

## Results

- 2,700 product recommendations in 30 days
- 2,300 new followers on VW India Company Page
- 960,000 viral updates about VW car models

<sup>1</sup>"Indian car market growth second fastest globally," The Times of India, Jan 12, 2011; IHS Global Insight Automotive Industry Analysis, (data status: 07/02/11), rounded.



LinkedIn Recommendations are 'Network Aware,' allowing members to see who in their professional network has recommended VW products

### Engaging working professionals on LinkedIn

LinkedIn approached Volkswagen India with an opportunity to be the first auto major to establish a presence on LinkedIn Company Pages. 'Company Pages' provide a branded home base within the LinkedIn community where businesses can showcase their company, products, and services in a trusted, professional environment.

Volkswagen India participated in the worldwide launch of Company Pages in November 2010, and soon thereafter opened up their pages to allow LinkedIn members to post reviews and recommendations of their car line in India including the New Beetle, Vento, and Polo.

Mr. Lutz Kothe, Head of Marketing & PR, Volkswagen Passenger Cars says "We were pleasantly surprised to see how easy it was to create our Company Page on LinkedIn and start engaging with customers among the LinkedIn community. Furthermore, the quality of interaction was very high.



Sample Volkswagen recommendation ad featuring the new Beetle

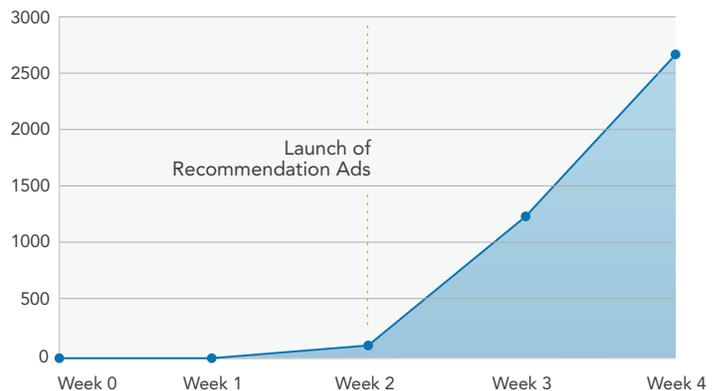
### Recommendation Ads get people talking

Next, Volkswagen launched a series of Recommendation Ads encouraging more customers to join the conversation. Each ad showcased endorsements of actual LinkedIn members, and invited the community to recommend their favorite Volkswagen model. Volkswagen used LinkedIn's broad reach (100 million members worldwide, 9 million in India) and precise targeting capabilities to connect with professionals who matched the buyer profiles for their different models.

Lutz Kothe said, "Volkswagen was the first company in India to use LinkedIn Recommendation Ads, and the campaign was a success. We went in with a goal of inspiring 500 recommendations among current and prospective car buyers. In less than 30 days, over 2,700 Volkswagen fans had stepped forward to recommend their favorite cars and share these recommendations with their professional networks. In the same time period, we gained over 2,300 followers who asked to stay abreast of the latest news and developments from Volkswagen.

Kothe concludes, "In a world where people spend an increasing amount of time at work, thinking about work, and interacting with their work colleagues, we believe it's important to foster discussion about Volkswagen products in a professional context. Our innovative partnership with LinkedIn lets our customers learn about Volkswagen products and provides insights".

### Recommendation Ads accelerate results



LinkedIn member-generated recommendations of VW car models increased dramatically with the launch the recommendation ad campaign. Over 2,700 Volkswagen fans recommended their favorite car models to their professional network in just four weeks.

Reach the world's largest audience of business professionals with LinkedIn.

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