

CATEGORY: Brand Experience of the Year- Wow Others

COMPANY: Mahindra Two Wheelers

PRODUCT: M2W Expert Drive

BRIEF AND OBJECTIVES:

Mahindra Centuro positioned as one of Mahindra Two Wheelers' flagship brands, sought to enter the commuter motorcycle market with its launch on July 1, 2013 in Jaipur.

Mahindra Two Wheelers wanted to target the trade experts. The main objective was to positively influence these trade experts and to leave an indelible impression of the Mahindra Centuro onto their minds. It was a given that reputed and leading journalists across the country could create a long-standing impression on the minds of the targeted consumers. These top journalists who review and influence perception in the automotive universe had to be brought under one roof and given an experience that would startle them out of their wits.

The brief was to create an experience for these experts in an environment where the mahindraness and technology of the Mahindra Centuro stand out. Also, these influencers would have to feel and experience a never before seen test drive experience.

CONCEPT AND ACTIVITY:

The concept was created with the focus on designing an experiential test ride that not just takes off from the mundane mechanism of regular test rides but rather establishes true reasons for owning the bike with its first ride on the land it was born to be tested on.

Keeping this in mind the location decided on was Narendra Nagar, nestled in the thick lush and tranquil foothills of the Himalayas. While the journalists were initially skeptical of the choice of place for the first ride, all their doubts were instantly dispelled on their way from Jolly Grand International Airport at Dehradun to Narendra Nagar.

The top 15 journalists from the leading automotive periodicals were invited and taken to the location in a flight. The intention was to set them in the right mood in such a scenic location connected with lovely yet twisted roads. The experts were then escorted to Anand Spa that has been well acknowledged for its impeccable hospitality and rejuvenation services.

They were welcomed by the Mahindra Two Wheelers R&D team on arrival. A one on one discussion with the research and development team gave the journalists a clearer picture of the new age features. The

journalist who had come for the test ride was given a princely treatment that included fine lunching and spa treatment.

This was then followed by the briefing on Mahindra Centuro's inherent prowess, highlighting the several segment innovations. The experts were naturally itchy to get on the bikes and test the true mettle of the bikes. They were in for a pleasant shock when unlike the competitors Mahindra's Centuro was given to them to be driven on the most challenging tracks.

The R&D team then handed over 15 bikes, one to each journalist who were requested to test the bike in any manner they deemed fit, by defining their own path - for themselves and the Mahindra Centuro. The reason for not defining the test road was to establish Mahindra Centuro's success on parameters such as its engineering, weight distribution, fuel efficiency, suspension and the likes based on independent reviews from the experts. After the expert drive they were welcomed back to the resort where they shared their real experience against the experience bike claims to own.

AMPLIFICATION AND SCALE:

The expert test drive led to the culmination of realistic and positive reviews not just in the print space but also in the online world in the form of blogs, first ride reviews and videos uploaded on YouTube. The never done before test ride idea, of taking the bike on mountainous road went viral amongst the motorist community. Each and every journalist who rode these power bikes gave fabulous reviews and in no time word spread like wild fire.

Mahindra Two Wheelers Facebook page was leveraged to further build the brand conversation and confirm brand patrons' perspective on the Mahindra Centuro. While Mahindra Two Wheeler's Facebook page boasted a huge number of hits, the launch and reviews from the expert test drive took such loyalty to an explosive 9 lakh hits with patrons still pouring in.

This also acted as a major catalyst in Centuro going on to become the most desired bike of the consumers and then going on to win as many as 6 awards.

RESULTS:

Overall what resonated well with the experts and the target audience was the handsome features of the bike coupled with experiences such as excellent weight distribution, suspension, decent fuel efficiency and good value for money, the key feature being its multifunction flip-to-open key with 96-bit encryption that rules out the use of a duplicate key to start the bike.

The experts also appreciated the idea of easily locating the bike with a touch of a button on the key. The idea of trying the bike in its flesh not just established Mahindra Centuro's true credentials among the journalists but also lived up to the objective of creating an experiential test ride. Centuro's brand

equity was boosted tremendously with an unprecedented number of mentions generated initially through such an experts. The bike emerged in conversations, articles, blogs, reviews etc of well over 25 auto publications namely TopGear, Overdrive, Zigwheels, AutoCar, the Economic Times and My Bike World among others in the digital space and in print. The bike also had individual patrons reviewing their first experience with Mahindra Centuro and uploading them on social media platforms. Comparisons to rival brands have been drawn in which Mahindra Centuro scores the highest in terms of customer inspired innovation and value for money. The bike has the strong backing of not just the Mahindra Group Company but also close to a million fans on its social profile. Within less than 8 months since its launch on the 1st of July 2013, the bike sold over 1 lakh units. This not just reflects competitive pricing but a well-routed strategy to make consumers “rise” along with the two wheeler company. It’s no wonder than that Mahindra Centuro has proudly usurped awards like “Viewers’ Choice Bike of the Year” by Bloomberg India Autocar India, “Viewers Choice Bike of the Year” by Bike India, "Commuter Bike of the Year" by Zigwheels, "Golden Steering Award, Two Wheeler of the Year" by Auto Build India, "Peoples' Choice Bike of the Year" by Vicky.in and “Bike Maker of the Year” 2013 by DNA.