



AMEC Communication Effectiveness Awards 2007

GOLD AWARD WINNER: Best Use of Measurement for a Single Event

Client/Campaign: Nissan – QASHQAI European Launch

Objective / Brief: Nissan launched the Qashqai to European journalists (from print, broadcast and online media) in February 2007, following the unveiling of the design at the 2006 Paris Motor Show. 461 key automotive journalists were invited from Nissan's G5 countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK) to a Pan European Test Drive (**PET**) in Barcelona: Each journalist was given a Qashqai to test drive, then review.

Nissan's PET communications objectives

- ◆ To position the Qashqai as "an alternative to the norm"
- ◆ To position the Qashqai as a superior model to the VW Golf, Toyota RAV4 and Ford Focus – the key target competitor models

The PET media evaluation objectives

Metrica was briefed to assess the effectiveness of the PET in delivering:

1. High "return on investment" by showing how what percentage of journalists attending the PET wrote about Qashqai (appendix 1)
2. Comparison between PET journalists' articles and other "collateral" PR (appendix 2)
3. Identifying commonly praised and criticised features of the Qashqai
4. Favourable media coverage of the Qashqai (appendix 3)
5. Coverage that delivered Nissan's Qashqai key messages (appendix 4)
6. Market positioning for the Qashqai, primarily as a superior alternative to the VW Golf (appendix 5)

Assessing the success or otherwise of achieving points 1-6 above would mean that Nissan could:

- ◆ Effectively target specific journalists who had been particularly favourable for future events
- ◆ Target unfavourable journalists for relationship building or exclude them from future events
- ◆ Understand which of Qashqai's features were hindering favourable reviews to prompt design modification and improve future media performance

The results of the Qashqai PET evaluation might also be used to benchmark performance for Nissan's six future product launches in 2007.

Strategy: Nissan's communications team gave a detailed presentation about Qashqai to its Metrica account team and then worked together to agree the evaluation objectives. Setting these collectively ensured relevance to, and buy-in from, the report's senior audience.

It was agreed to provide a series of 'flash' reports as the PET took place so that Nissan could monitor the success of the event as it ran in achieving favourable coverage for Qashqai and focus attention on journalists yet to write. This was supplemented by MyMetrica (appendix 6) access allowing Nissan access to Metrica's database of Qashqai articles.

Execution / Implementation: Having been fully briefed by the client and with the project objectives established Metrica's Nissan team delivered a presentation about Qashqai to its media analysts. The discussion about the car's features and attributes ensured that all members of the analyst and account team at Metrica shared the same detailed understanding of the model that Nissan's communications team wanted to impart on journalists. Nissan's G5 PR managers sent Metrica the guest list for the PET so that coverage attributable to the event could be identified.

The analysis reported the following key aspects:

- ◆ Highlighted which journalists wrote about Qashqai following the PET
- ◆ Whether journalists attending the PET wrote more favourable articles about Qashqai than "collateral" coverage
- ◆ Coverage timeline to show that coverage peaked in the days after the event and to explain what had driven coverage at specific moments
- ◆ Market by market comparison – which G5 country was most interested in Qashqai
- ◆ Message delivery: after investing in the PET journalists Nissan was keen to ensure that the journalists were positioning Qashqai correctly
- ◆ Detailed positive and negative message delivery to highlight strong points or problems identified with the car
- ◆ Market positioning - what competitor models did journalists compare Qashqai to
 - The top three comparisons were on target, against the Golf, RAV4 and Focus (appendix 5)
 - This showed positive and negative comparisons and showed that Qashqai was winning the C-Segment battle in the press
- ◆ Publications and journalists – most favourable and unfavourable shown to allow Nissan to manage these relationships
- ◆ Frequency with which Nissan spokespeople were quoted

Recommendations were made that the Qashqai was strategically pitched as a superior alternative to the VW Golf because Metrica's research showed that reviewers preferred the Nissan model. However, Metrica identified that a number of reviewers found space in the back restrictive and that this should be addressed for future revisions of the design. Metrica recommended that additional attention was paid to ensuring that invited journalists from France published road test reviews for future launches as the country was revealed to have the poorest performing market with only 53% of invited journalists publishing a Qashqai review.

Conclusion: The report showed Nissan's performance against the PET's communication objectives. 69% of PET coverage positioned Qashqai as an "alternative to the norm" while direct comparisons with key competitor models showed that reviewers rated Qashqai as superior.

The six evaluation objectives were easily identified in the "key facts" and "management summary" at the front of the report (appendix 2):

- ◆ The report has been used by senior Nissan executives to plan a further six launches in the rest of 2007/8 in Europe
- ◆ Commonly criticised features of the model have been fed back to Nissan's product design team for improvement
- ◆ The G5 report has been used to guide the launch in China and to pre-empt the media's response in other markets to the Qashqai

"We've seen from the media analysis of the Qashqai media launch that by concentrating on three or four key messages in a focused, easy-to-understand way, most of the key product attributes of Qashqai were clearly understood by most of the participating media. Nissan product communications will continue to focus on just three or four key product messages, even if there are potentially more that we would like to deliver. By diluting the key messages, we found that there is a risk that no clear key messages are delivered by the press to the consumer and, therefore, a key product could be launched onto the market without a clear, consistent position or product attributes."

Neil Reeve, Product Communications, Nissan Europe