

AD-WRAPPED RENTAL CARS

MAKE WAY ON ATLANTA STREETS

Wrap Media Group's rental vehicle campaigns provide a win-win-win: secured reservations for the rental agency, a deep discount to the rental customer and a way for the advertiser to push out its brand where billboards can't.

By Joanne Tucker



Car renters visit the same destinations in the wrapped vehicles that are frequented by prime candidates for the advertised brands. Sheets, an energy mouth strip company, stocked the rental cars with samples.

When the founders of Wrap Media Group look at rental cars, they see empty canvases — or maybe moving billboards — and since launching the advertising company Aug. 12, they've wrapped 25 vehicles with ads for Budget Rent a Car of Atlanta, a licensee.

"In many cases, outdoor advertising is difficult to measure," says CEO and partner of Wrap Media Group Dennis Custage, who was once COO of National and Alamo's foreign territories. But with rental cars equipped with global positioning systems (GPS), advertisers

get an in-depth look at where the ad traveled, for how long and time of day.

Sheets, an energy-boosting mouth strip company, is Wrap Media Group's first rental car advertiser. Warren Struhl, CEO of Pure Brands, which owns Sheets, says choosing Wrap Media is part of the company's strategy to reach markets that traditional advertising platforms are unable to. "We also like to look at more fresh and renegade opportunities," he says, adding, "I saw Wrap Media as a very forward-thinking way to promote our brand and get drivers engaged in our brand."

The Wrapped Reservation

To reserve the ad-wrapped car, customers can reserve the vehicle on location or click the "Sponsored Rental" tab on the rental agency's website, which starts a qualification process. Potential renters answer questions about their purpose of travel, planned destinations, number in party and other questions regarding their trip. "We're trying to target leisure travelers," says David Berke, COO and co-partner of Wrap Media Group.

The discount percentage offered may vary since the rental agency can change the amount

depending on utilization throughout the ad campaign. For example, the inaugural renters at Budget Atlanta — a family of four — paid about \$80 for a four-day rental that would have cost more than \$300. Currently, though, the website lists getting "up to 50 percent off" with the sponsored rental. According to Custage, Budget reports offering an average of 25 percent off to maintain utilization targets.

Wrap Media also gives the customer recommended locations and hotspots the advertiser would like to see the vehicle venture. In Atlanta, which so far is the only city Wrap Me-

Wrap Media Group has wrapped 25 vehicles for Budget Rent a Car of Atlanta. Wrap Media pays the car rental company a fixed rate per vehicle for the duration of the campaign, and in turn the car rental company offers a discount to the customer — a rate that can be altered depending on utilization.

dia has vehicles, "we really don't have a single case where we're not happy with where the cars are going," Custage says.

For those who don't qualify for the ad-wrapped rental, Custage maintains that the partnership is still beneficial to both the advertiser and the rental agency. He says that Budget Atlanta's website traffic has increased significantly, and non-qualifying customers tend to still rent a vehicle from Budget Atlanta since they're already on the site. In the first 30 days of the offer, 448 customers clicked the "Sponsored Rental" tile and completed the questionnaire, according to Custage. Those that did not qualify, were still directed to the Budget site, and were at least exposed to the advertiser.

Wrap Media installs GPS on the vehicle if it isn't already, and provides training to the counter staff members to make sure they understand the ad-wrapped rental. "We don't want the car rental company to have to do anything outside of what they already have to do," Custage says. And for the customer, Budget Atlanta hasn't reported any customer disputes, according to Custage.

Clear Compensation and Results

Wrap Media pays the car rental company a fixed rate per vehicle for the duration of the campaign. If cars aren't in reservation, Wrap Media may pull a rental vehicle out of fleet for a few days accompanied with a "brand ambassador" from the advertiser's company. "The

car rental company should be indifferent as to whether it's a third party renter or a driver we've put in the car," Custage says, adding that agencies can take comfort in getting a fixed price for the length of the ad campaign.

In giving results to the advertiser, Wrap Media is able to show how many miles the vehicle traveled and other targets set out at the beginning of the ad-wrap campaign. "We don't seem to have a problem making the target because of the fact that so far the uptake on these discounts has been extraordinarily good," Custage says, adding that GPS tracking allows proof in meeting these targets.

Both Custage and Berke report a large demand from potential advertisers, and as a result Wrap Media is on the hunt for additional rental partners. "We're looking for companies that have coverage in the cities and tourist sites where we have a demand from advertisers," Custage says, adding that car sharing is another canvas they're looking to potentially fill.

And so far, Budget Atlanta is pleased with the service. "Wrap Media Group is well-managed and pays a lot of attention to operating detail based on their knowledge of the car rental industry," says Heather Etzler, general manager of Budget Rent A Car of Atlanta.

Wrap Media doesn't just slap ads on rental cars, but acts as an integrated advertising agency, Custage says. Depending on the advertisement, Wrap Media uses various platforms to reach out, such as text messaging codes, product placement at rental venues and other ways of pushing out samples.

In a Sheets vehicle, for example, renters will find the car stocked with samples as a "thank you" for renting. "We're establishing the Sheets brand through outdoor advertising on cars that look pretty cool, and at the same time we provide samples and giveaways to the driver so hopefully they'll adopt the brand," Struhl says, adding that this allows the drivers to become "pseudo ambassadors" of Sheets. "It's pretty engaging," he says.