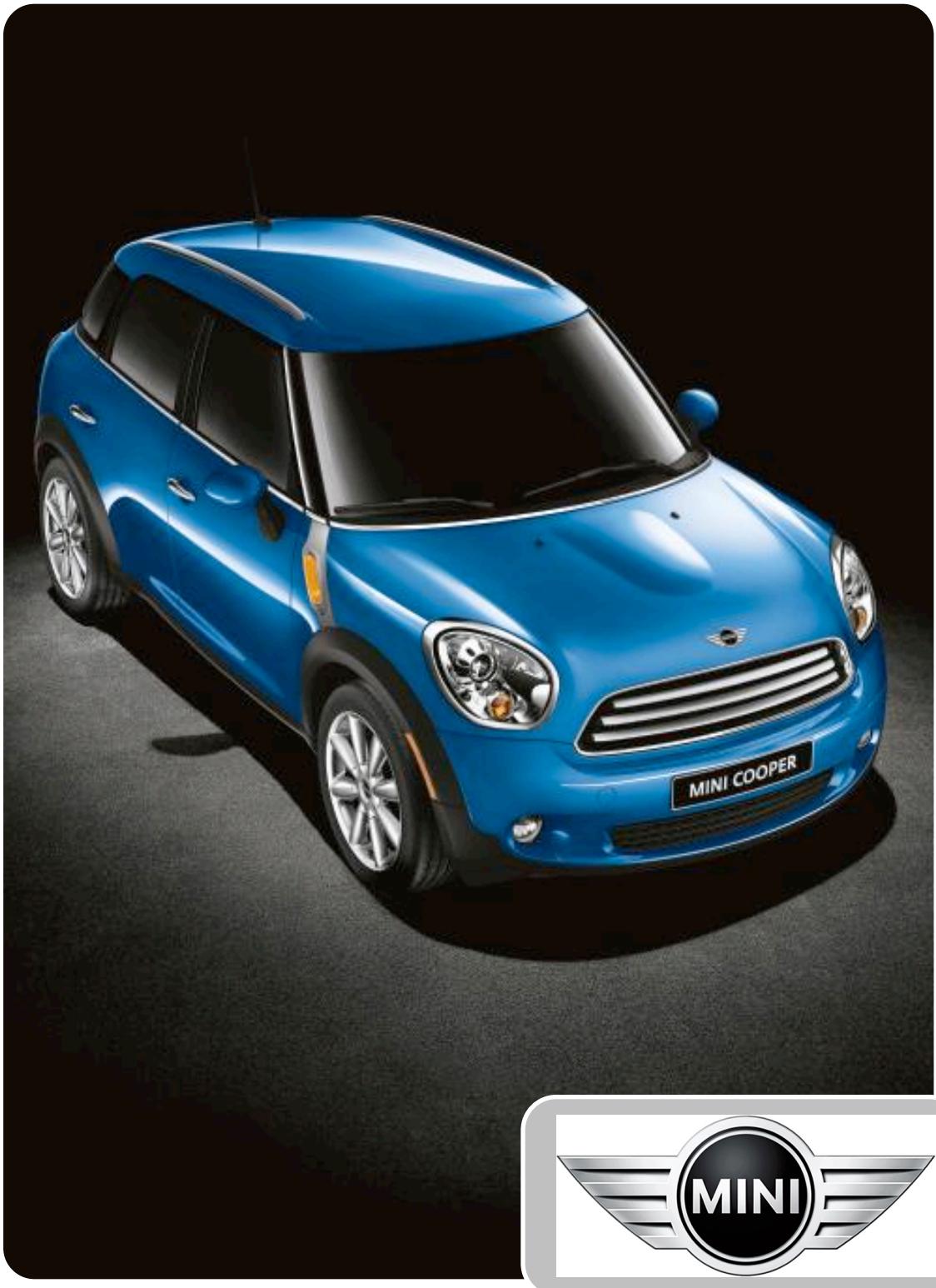


# Z OOM

## MINI COUNTRYMAN



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# MINI COUNTRYMAN

THE NEXT BIG THING IN MINI.



## STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

Stretch the MINI brand without alienating its traditional target market.

With the 2011 launch of the MINI Countryman, BMW seeks to stretch the MINI brand into the automobile crossover market.

The MINI brand has always spoken to the trendsetters, the post-materialist crowd; however, consumers within this market are fairly fidgety and switch products easily and frequently. This campaign will create consideration of the MINI brand among 20 to 30 year olds, who are seeking a car with the utility of a crossover and the personality and design of a MINI.

An integrated, multichannel marketing campaign that highlights the important aspects and individuality of the MINI brand, but also markets the car as a legitimate performance crossover, “a bigger MINI for bigger experiences,” is needed to drive awareness and sales of the Countryman.

The brand must continue to speak with the target market’s love of uniqueness and personality, while at the same time, offering a more practical family car. Staying true to the brand and continuing to emphasize its unique position within the market is essential to preserving MINI’s brand image.

The Countryman should be advertised as a suitable option within the crossover market and shed some of the common misconceptions of the MINI brand, primarily dealing with size and performance. The MINI Countryman enhances the MINI brand with a product that fits the needs of small families as well as the outdoor enthusiast (Autonews). As the first generation of MINI owners mature and begin their own families, they will be able to trade-up to a larger vehicle, without abandoning the MINI brand. Through effective marketing, BMW can tap into those consumers who are looking for a unique and customizable car, but who are also seeking the room and performance capability of a larger, sporty vehicle.



## SITUATION ANALYSIS

BMW aims to turn the new MINI Countryman into a must-have purchase for thousands of consumers who believe their MINI days are over when they have kids. As the first generation of new MINI owners mature and begin to have families of their own, practical needs must be considered. Most of these consumers consider safety, size and practicality when making a purchase decision. Thus, BMW hopes to meet these needs with the larger, sturdier crossover, while at the same time keeping the hip, retro MINI image.

### Consumer Analysis:

Despite the increasing popularity of light trucks; including pickups, SUVs and vans, the car continues to be the most dominant vehicle in America, with 80 percent of households owning a car (Mintel). Car ownership appears to be more dependent on needs because public transportation is more economical for single households than for two or more individuals, while an SUV can more comfortably transport more household members (Mintel).

Consumers most likely to purchase compact cars are singles, aged 18 to 34. Many young Americans prefer a used luxury car over a compact car, because the compact can be viewed as cheap and a market-entry product.

#### COMPACT CAR CONSUMERS

Age	% of Owners	Index
18-24	7	183
35-44	23	96
45-54	27	103

These single, 18 to 34, minorities, are more likely to purchase compact cars than families, couples, older consumers and Caucasians (Mintel).

Smaller households show a higher degree of compact car ownership with safety as the primary concern to consumers. Beyond the issues of styling and cab space, issues regarding safety and prestige hinder compact car sales. Next to safety issues is price. Ownership seems to be correlated with level of income. Households with an income of \$75K or greater represent 78 percent of car owners or leasers, compared to 64 percent of households less than \$25K, or 74 percent of households between \$25K and \$75K (Mintel).



The potential solution for marketing to younger consumers, who are more interested in purchasing luxury vehicles, is building upon the trend of personalization and customization of vehicles. Compact cars have the potential to attract these younger consumers by designing customizable vehicles with additional space for small families (Mintel).

The MINI Countryman possess the luxury vehicle aspect with the idea of a larger compact vehicle for couples and small families that fall in the 20 – 30 year-old age range.

### Competitive Analysis:

MINI's goal is to compete with other crossovers, which includes the *Nissan Rogue*, *Subaru Forester*, and the *Toyota RAV4* (Austin). Volkswagen is also a tough competitor with two models in the same market as the MINI Countryman: the *Golf* and *Tiguan* (Austin). Others see the *Nissan Juke* as a potential competitor. The major issue with the Countryman and its' competition, is that the model is much smaller than all the other crossover vehicles. In fact, it is roughly the same size as the *Volkswagen Golf*, which retails for far less. The MINI Countryman starts at a base price of \$22,350 and ranges upwards of \$30,000 after factoring in customization costs and the purchase of additional features (Wysaski). As it stands, the MINI line of vehicles is the only brand of successful premium priced compact cars in the United States automotive market.

## Consumer Media Consumption:

Over the past decade, there has been a remarkable change in the advertising industry. Advertising for products and services no longer includes the usual 30-second television spot ad or radio commercial. The target market for the MINI Countryman, adults ages 20 - 30, is becoming increasingly difficult to reach through traditional media.

Although television ads are still common in media campaigns, research has proven that the increasing number of DVRs in households is interfering with the communication process. A key point is that most DVR owners usually watch television at its' scheduled time. However, if they do record shows, 84 percent typically fast forward through commercials. In a more detailed study, a group of 25 to 34 year olds were the most likely to record all shows and rarely watch them at their scheduled time ("Attitudes"). This provides a challenge when attempting to reach MINI Countryman's target audience through traditional media.

Despite the hardships of reaching the target market in a more traditional manner, the Internet has provided astounding opportunities for engagement with potential consumers. Overall, consumers between the ages of 25 and 34, are the most engaged with blogs, discussion groups, and social media ("Attitudes"). Consumers in this age range want to participate and feel included within the realm of social media. Thus, advertisements that are engaging and interactive will prove to be beneficial when reaching the MINI Countryman's target audience.

Another trend occurring in advertising is the concept of in-phone advertisements. Consumers ages 25 to 34, spend much of their time surfing the web from their mobile device and are most familiar with the concept of pop-up advertisements on their cell phones ("Attitudes"). Although some see these advertisements as annoying, research shows that consumers are more likely to watch an advertisement if they find it clever or humorous. Interactive applications are a growing trend amongst consumers and a mobile application for the MINI Countryman would be very helpful in creating brand awareness within the target market.

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Top Safety Pick</li><li>* Unique position within the market</li><li>* Loyal customers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Stigma related to size</li><li>* High Price</li><li>* Positioned neutrally in consumers' minds</li></ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Growing Crossover Market</li><li>* Consumer seeking individuality through personalization</li><li>* Advantage of new advertising avenues and trends</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* Economic Recession</li><li>* Shift away from luxury cars</li></ul>

## Automotive Trends:

Numerous trends are arising within the automotive industry with a focus on digital media marketing. Car sales are on the rise, and increased 11 percent in 2010 ("Digital Media Marketing"). The report also states that men are more likely to purchase a vehicle than women and one-third of those surveyed plan to purchase a vehicle in the next two years ("Digital Media Marketing"). Another key point to digital media marketing, is that approximately one-fourth of consumers are uninterested if an automotive website is lacking in information or design. The target market range for the Countryman, 20-30 year olds, is the ideal group that is the most open to social network interaction and online participation.

The main component to the vehicle research process is the car manufacturer's website. This is the most valued and trusted way for consumers to seek information; therefore, it is key that MINI's website is up to date, aesthetically appealing, as well as easy to navigate ("Digital Media Marketing"). Overall, this trend of digital media marketing is an advertising component the MINI Countryman must focus on. A strong website is essential to a successful and marketable campaign.



# MARKETING OBJECTIVES



- » Increase MINI Countryman awareness through social networks
- » Increase online sales
- » Increase in MINI dealership traffic
- » Reduce misconceptions regarding size
- » Promote brand awareness of MINI Countryman
- » Increase MINI market share

**CUSTOMIZE  
YOUR MINI  
WITH YOUR  
STYLE**

## Behavioral Objectives:

1. Within the 2012 calendar year, we will increase MINI Countryman awareness through social media networks, in order to directly reach and impact 20-30 year-old consumers. Results will be measured through an increased Klout score, increased Facebook "likes", and Twitter followers.
2. In the 2012 calendar year, we seek to double the previous years' online customizable MINI Countryman sales. MINI Countryman sales will be driven through increased use of the MINI's online customizable tool, which allows the consumer to design their own custom MINI and send their specifics to a dealership for ordering.
3. MINI dealership and sales events will show an increase in shopper traffic. We predict that a 20 percent increase in 2012 dealership traffic will lead to a tangible increase in unit sales, while providing consumers the opportunity to become educated on the benefits and advantages that the MINI Countryman has to offer.



## Perceptual and Attitude Objectives:

4. Education of the MINI brand is needed to reduce misconceptions surrounding size. It is prudent we ride recent brand momentum, through creation of an integrated marketing campaign that pushes for relevance, consideration and opinion within the crossover market. We hope to see a decrease of negative perceptions regarding size through increased social media participation by the end of the 2012 calendar year, measurable through socialmention.com.
5. Promote brand awareness by emphasizing the unique advantages of the MINI Countryman by increasing visits to the website.

The MINI brand has always sought to "win hearts and turns heads", and be "refreshingly different: extroverted, spontaneous and in every respect something out of the ordinary" ("Company Facts"). Thus, it is important to sustain the youthful, sporty and adventurous image of MINI while continuing to strengthen its position as a cult brand.

6. Increase overall MINI market share compared to the previous years, while at the same time gaining a top five market share within the crossover automobile sector. Emphasis must be placed on gaining brand recognition and consideration relative to more established competitors.

## **Big Idea:**

The bigger MINI Countryman: Emphasizing consumer desire for more space without compromising the Mini's unique personality

While the MINI brand has been a dominant force within the niche market of young, edgy trendsetters; the brand has done very little to market itself outside of this market. Stigmas surrounding size and practicality have plagued the MINI brand since its' reintroduction in the early 2000's. With the introduction of the MINI Countryman, the MINI brand creates consideration among 20-30 year olds who are seeking a family car with the utility of a crossover, and the personality and design of a MINI. Unfortunately, the consumers most likely to purchase compact cars, singles, aged 18 to 34, happen to be extremely price sensitive. The MINI Countryman offers a potential solution to the problem of attracting this group of younger consumers by offering personalized and customizable vehicles with additional room for small families.

Adults aged 20 to 30, are becoming increasingly difficult to reach with traditional advertising; however, the social media revolution has provided a gamut of opportunities for engagement with younger individuals. This younger generation is especially involved with blogs, discussion groups, social media and mobile

phone applications. Thus, an integrated IMC marketing plan utilizing social media (YouTube, Facebook and Twitter) and mobile applications as a way to drive consumer interaction and participation, offers a powerful tool with which to advertise.

## **Social Media**

### **Twitter:**

One aspect of social media that is growing at a tremendous pace is Twitter. To execute the objectives in our campaign, we will create a personalized Twitter page for the MINI Countryman. The Twitter feed will keep consumers with the MINI brand, while highlighting features of the Countryman to inform potential consumers. A QR code will reside as the profile picture for the page, which directs viewers to the MINI website by using a QR reader. This new technology provides a great way for potential consumers to become interactive with the Twitter page, which is one of the main aspects that our target market seeks. Google Analytics can then be used to determine how many viewers of the MINI website were directed from the Twitter page in order to gauge effectiveness of how well Twitter is communicating with potential consumers.



## **Facebook:**

While MINI has official Facebook pages for their vehicles, including the Countryman, the pages are decidedly one-dimensional, offering the consumer little in means of interacting with the MINI brand itself. The revised MINI Countryman Facebook page places an emphasis on the consumer. It provides a forum for consumers to ask questions and communicate concerns; offering yet another way to educate the consumer about the benefits associated with the MINI brand. The Facebook page will specifically target concerns associated with the size and functionality of the MINI Countryman. In addition, the Facebook page offers the MINI community a forum to interact together, talk about their various MINI adventures, and post pictures of the cars they love. Such online brand communities further communicate MINI's one of a kind brand image, depicting consumers as unique individuals instead of one large mass consumer following. The interaction between the consumer and the MINI brand through Facebook, promotes the MINI brand as one that is up-to-date and considerate, a company that values their current and potential future customer's feedback.

## **YouTube:**

Viral videos have started a gigantic trend in both advertising and marketing. By creating a custom MINI Countryman YouTube channel, we hope to communicate our big idea as well as engage potential customers. Video advertisements will be placed on

the channel, as well as a live feed of any IMC events. Individuals will be able to upload their own videos to the MINI YouTube channel, in order to share their unique Countryman adventures. This will prompt potential consumers to be interactive as well as provide them with an opportunity to express themselves and their love for MINI in a unique way.

## **Internet Radio**

### **Pandora:**

Personalized internet radio sites such as Pandora, an online radio where visitors can create their own music channels, provide an opportunity to reach potential consumers. Most of the target market seems to be shifting from traditional radio to Internet radio. Advertisements can be placed on the side of the viewer's individual Pandora page. These simplistic and clever advertisements will catch the viewer's attention and drive MINI Countryman awareness.

## **Mobile Media**

### **Mobile Application:**

By creating a mobile application for smartphones, MINI will provide a fun and creative way to reach the target market.

Consumers who download and uses the MINI Countryman application, will be in constant interaction with the brand. Each user will be able to personalize a Countryman using several of the same customization options that are available on the MINI website. Then the Countryman can be driven through a variety of courses, ranging from urban to rural settings.

There will not be actual opponents to race against; instead, the user will race for time. The user will receive extra benefits for picking up items along the course, which include: people, camping equipment, picnic accessories and sporting goods. Thus, the application is a interactive way to reduce the misconceptions surrounding MINI's size.

## **Banner and Mobile Ad:**

With the recent shift away from traditional advertising, online advertising has become one of the most effective advertising methods available, as it provides the ability to target specific markets while they are on the Internet. However, we are aware that the effectiveness of an online advertising campaign is only as good as the ads themselves and depends heavily on proper ad placement. Various types of ads were purchased for placement on select websites and mobile Internet media. These types of ads include: banner ads with a high-aspect ratio shape placed at the top of a webpage, floating ads which move across the user's screen, full page ads that change in size commanding the viewers attention, and mobile ads which pop up when using mobile applications. These web sites include, automotive websites: Automotive, Auto News and Motor Authority, as well as a series of placements within social media sites: Facebook and YouTube. Ad placements may vary over time, as placement will be matched closely with the target market's preference of websites, enabling us to reach the largest possible section of online consumers.

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