

## CASE STUDY: FORD FAIRMONT GHIA

# Ford Fairmont Ghia & the Nine Network



Gaining cut through in the highly competitive automotive industry is inherently challenging. Ford understands this and so, when it came to launching the new Ford Fairmont Ghia, looked for a different approach. Working with the Nine Network, Ford employed a successful integration to capture the attention of viewers.

## Background

The Nine Network and Ford had successfully worked together before with the promotion of the Ford Focus through the hit show *Sex and the City*, as well as through the summer cricket season. The Nine Network, Mindshare and Ford had a proven very successful working relationship and so got together once again for the launch of the new model of the Ford Fairmont Ghia in the last quarter of 2006.

## Challenges & Insights

Ford Fairmont Ghia had not actively advertised on television since March 2001 and so needed to reintroduce the brand to a broad audience.

The challenge was that the car was seen by some as just another Falcon with no distinctive personality, so the marketing needed to deliver something unexpected. It was also important to Ford that the Fairmont Ghia took ownership of the competitive luxury vehicles category.

## Objectives

The marketing objective was to strengthen the positioning of the Ford Fairmont Ghia by promoting specific brand attributes: European styling, luxury and performance, and the fact that these were all contained in an Australian sedan.

The communications objective was to connect with Large Car Intenders in a relevant and meaningful way to increase awareness and consideration of the Ford Fairmont Ghia. The target market was very broad and according to Mindshare business director, Angela Feruglio, this was in part, how a partnership with the Nine Network's *Getaway* program was born. "During our customer interrogation brand plan phase, we unearthed that *Getaway* was a 'must watch' program amongst our target segments. "The show's format helped to genuinely establish the 'European-inspired, Australian-built' brand positioning of the launch phase; and from this the partnership was born."

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## Solution & Execution

Ford Fairmont Ghia committed to a four week sponsorship of Getaway, a property that would complement their brand attributes and in particular bring to life the European-inspired positioning. The synergy between travelling and European values on the show was particularly well suited. And the show was also ideal in that it could be tailored for content creation and integration.

The launch of Ford Fairmont Ghia began with the first Getaway episode being themed 'A day in the life of Europe'. The sponsorship featured billboards, a 'European' themed TVC and was supported by a consumer promotion to win a European holiday, announced by a Getaway presenter in a first-in-break television commercial.

The Ford Fairmont Ghia European TVC ran across the Nine Network. The creative theme of the TVC aligned brand attributes 'spirit', 'precision', and 'safety' as synonymous with the European countries, Italy, Germany and Sweden. A Getaway in-program promotional TVC, featuring Natalie Gruzlewski, directed consumers to enter the competition via a full page colour execution in Woman's Day or via the Ninemsn Getaway website. The competition required consumers to watch Getaway, view the TVC and then link each country with the corresponding attribute.

## Results

A collaborative research study was conducted by Mindshare, Ford and the Nine Network to gain insights into the effectiveness of the sponsorship and promotion. The study was conducted over a four week period online and focused on people 25-54 who watch Getaway as well as all people 25-54.

The two primary objectives of the study were:

1. Understand the overall awareness and impact of the activity
2. To ascertain whether Getaway directly assisted in driving attribute connections

The Getaway sponsorship raised awareness of the Ford Fairmont Ghia European TVC. Getaway viewers were 81 per cent more likely to recall the commercial than non Getaway viewers who were only exposed to the spot schedule. The promotional TVC created by 9MM with Getaway talent Natalie Gruzlewski, contributed strongly to the spontaneous recall of the main campaign message – 'European Styling'. The combined ad recognition score for all media used during the campaign was 34 per cent, with television contributing the greatest reach. Respondents were 140 per cent more likely to recall the consumer promotion if they were a viewer of Getaway.

Of Getaway viewers who visited the Ninemsn Getaway website, 29 per cent entered the competition. 35 per cent of competition entrants were able to recall Ford Fairmont Ghia, with one in four of them opting in for more information on the car. A higher percentage of those who entered the competition were likely to already be Ford loyalists, or have an improved perception of the brand as an outcome of the campaign activity. "The volume of competition entries and 'opt-ins' to receive more information from Ford surpassed similar integrated media promotions and is testimony to the high involvement and interactivity of Getaway viewers," Feruglio says.