

Are You Ready to Motor?

By John Wood

Let's sip not guzzle.

Let's leave off-road vehicles off road.

Let's stop pretending we live in the jungle.

Let's stop intimidating each other.

Let's not use the size of our vehicle to compensate for our other shortcomings.

Let's reclaim our garage space.

Let's be nimble.

Let's be quick.

Let's be honest.

Do any of the above lines ring a bell?

They're from a campaign promoting the MINI Cooper, which made its U.S. debut in 2002. At the time, trucks, SUVs, and minivans made up six of the top-selling vehicles.

The challenge for Andrew Keller of ad agency Crispin Porter+Bogusky was two-fold.

They had a limited budget. And the message they were trying to convey was contrary to the abundant lifestyle associated with large vehicles.

Let's take a look at three of the main elements that made the ad campaign so successful anyway:



The medium they used — They knew they couldn't afford a "traditional big-car TV blowout" advertising campaign. So they opted for innovative print and outdoor advertisements, including magazine inserts that people could take out and pass on to others.

As for outdoor billboard advertising, it was an ideal medium to target drivers. They also did some very unique "buzz-creating" stunts. They fastened MINIS to the top of SUVs and drove them around the country, put them in stadiums, and created MINI supermarket rides with giant price tags attached.

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A great tag line — The tag line for the campaign was *Let's Motor*. Keller says ...

"I think all great tag lines are a call-to-action ... It's not just 'hey buy this product,' but a call to something more transcendent or philosophical. We wanted ours to be a call to this product and a call to this culture — take a different approach to life and driving."

So how did Keller come up with *Let's Motor*?

He got a huge assist from something you already have access to ... a thesaurus.

He put in the words "go" and "going" and there was "motor" staring right back at him. He liked it he says because it had a nice tie in to the Britishness of the car (even though the car was made by Germans).

Keller says "Motor was a great term; it was different from driving. It was slightly odd. It's good if a tagline clanks a little bit, if it uses words differently for the time, but is of the time."

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Generosity — They wanted the campaign to highlight generosity with lines like "Let's put away the middle finger," "Please let's lay off the horn," "Let's volunteer jumper cables," "Let's pay a stranger's toll." All good things that make you feel good about the idea of being altruistic.

There was also another type of generosity going on within the tag line itself. You didn't need a MINI to motor. Anyone could adopt the *Let's Motor* attitude. They were relying on the Law of Reciprocity to come into play. If a prospect liked the idea of motoring, they would return the favor by motoring in a MINI.

The MINI advertising campaign has been called one of the most influential in modern advertising.

Do you remember the MINI campaign? Care to share your thoughts about it? If so, please post your comments here.

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1 Response to "Are You Ready to Motor?"

Hey John

I thoroughly enjoyed every article of yours this week. Well done!

Guest (Elmarie) – over a year ago

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American Writers & Artists Institute

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924