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Ford Fiesta Case Write-Up

Amid a global financial crisis, the Ford Motor Company released the Fiesta, a sub-compact car that is affordable and efficient. In April of 2009, months before the release of the model, Ford unveiled the “Ford Fiesta Movement” (FFM). This was a grassroots marketing campaign, reliant on social media. Ford utilized a viral marketing campaign, giving their product to a group of “agents” and allowing them to spread their reviews to the public over social media. The success of Ford’s viral marketing campaign was contingent upon the context of the model’s release and novelty of their marketing strategy.

The strategy of the FFM campaign was affected by the economic climate of the time. The financial crisis in 2009 hit the auto industry hard. Consumer buying habits became more conservative and new car purchases were less common. Ford combatted these challenges by promoting their car through a viral marketing campaign. By gifting their product to select customers, the reviews of the Fiesta appeared authentic. This was important in Ford’s effort to overcome the harsh economic climate. In a time where new car buyers were scarce, Ford was able to display their product in a relatable way that made consumers more comfortable with the brand.

The novelty of Ford’s FFM campaign made the strategy a success. Especially after the presidential election of 2008, promotion on social media became an important asset to organizations around the world. Ford tapped into this trend early by asking their agents to post their experiences with the Fiesta on social media. Agents were free to spread their honest reviews of the car on their individual accounts. Ford was one of the first car companies to utilize social media, making their content exiting and interesting.

Mimicking Ford’s marketing strategy today will not yield the same results. Since the launch of the FFM, companies from around the world have taken to social media to promote their products. At this point, the novelty of the strategy has disappeared. So, now that social media marketing is common practice, the quality of the product is far more important than the advertising strategy.