

Cassies 2006 Cases

Brand/Case: 2006 Toyota Yaris Hatch Back

Winner: Off to A Good Start—Gold

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2006 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?
- Crossover Note 11. The Eureka Insight.
- Crossover Note 20. Emotional versus Rational.
- Crossover Note 21. Likeability.
- Crossover Note 33. Changing the Target Audience.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Business Results Period (Consecutive Months): October 2005 – Present
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: September 2005
Base of Period of Comparison: Echo Hatchback Launch 2003

This is the story of how Toyota Canada's smallest car ever became their greatest launch ever.

We knew we couldn't sell Yaris as a sub-compact; we had to present it as a lifestyle choice. [Crossover Notes 1 and 20](#). The launch was developed around a metaphorical character named Uncle Yaris. He had many of the values and attributes of the car itself.

Launched in October 2005, Yaris quickly became the number one seller in the category. In addition, Yaris is delivering another very important Toyota objective—it is lowering the average age of the Toyota driver.

In short, this unconventional launch [Crossover Note 10](#) has been a resounding success, and is held up as the most significant new vehicle launch in the history of Toyota Canada.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

a) Overall Assessment

Launching a new vehicle is a challenge at the best of times. When that vehicle is replacing the number one seller in the category it becomes even more difficult. When Toyota announced their plans to replace their sub-compact Echo with a new European model more than a few eyebrows were raised. Echo was a huge success in Canada. It was the number one selling sub-compact car with a 26% market-share¹

	SOM
Echo Hatchback	26.0%
Echo Sedan	16.4%
Hyundai Accent	20.5%
Chevrolet Aveo	13.4%
Kia Rio	11.2%
Suzuki Swift	3.5%

Consumers had only recently come to terms with the previous switch from Tercel to Echo and now they were to have a new model name thrown at them: Yaris.

But the confusion didn't end there. The sub-compact category had become increasingly crowded with new entries from Kia (Rio) and Hyundai (Accent). There were also the domestic models including the Chevy Aveo and Pontiac Wave. In fact, the sub-compact segment was now the second largest automotive segment, behind only compact cars.

¹ AIAMC Canadian Automotive Sales

Yaris was an improvement in style over Echo to be sure, but the advantages stopped there. The horsepower and performance were ordinary. The standard features were just that and the price was higher than Echo, which was already near the top of the category.

Added to this, the sub-compact category was plagued with negative associations in Canada. “Unattractive,” “Unimaginative,” “Underperforming” were words that came up often in research. Sub-compact purchases were entirely rational with value leading the charge. There was very little emotion in the purchase process and, with the exception of the recently launched Mini, the entire category screamed compromise. You didn’t buy a sub-compact; you bought a “utilitarian econo-box.”

Meanwhile, Toyota's overall sales had been strong, but a disturbing trend was emerging. Buyers were getting older. This did not reflect the progressive direction the company was moving in. Something had to be done to attract a younger generation of drivers, and the financial accessibility of Yaris made it the perfect spearhead vehicle. **Crossover Note 33.**

In summary, Yaris, with its standard features and higher price, had to replace the sales leader in a saturated category, and attract the younger generation. No problem.

b) Resulting Objectives

1. To quickly and seamlessly replace Echo as segment leader with increased market share in the sub-compact category.
2. To make Toyota relevant and attractive to a fickle, media savvy young male target.

STRATEGY & INSIGHT

Business Strategy: It was vital to capture young, male opinion leaders. Qualitative research across Canada showed that women and empty nesters were drawn to Yaris’s quality, value and “cute” design, but young men were extremely resistant. This is a target that cannot be sold, only informed. They have vast amounts of information at their fingertips, and easily filter out unwanted messages. If they don't “discover and adopt” the car early on, they never will. But they rarely come to this category willingly; they are forced by financial pressures. So, the decision was made *to create a sub-compact option they could aspire to.* **Crossover Note 11.**

Yaris would overcome negative associations by not behaving like the rest of the category. Leaders are attracted to leaders so Yaris had to act like one. It would speak to the target in an unexpected yet totally authentic voice. Always informing. Never selling.

Creative Strategy: This target wants more (or at least the perception of more). They *need* a fuel efficient, accessibly priced, multi-use vehicle, but they *want* it to be quick, stylish and totally original—a car they can be proud of, an approved member of their exclusive club. The creative challenge was to *make Yaris a badge to define who they are.* The theory was that if you put your communications out there in an unorthodox yet totally honest voice, your target will come to you. **Crossover Note 21.**

Media Strategy: These young men are a sophisticated, somewhat cynical, media savvy generation who are less willing to engage in monologue communication, but are willing and interested in interactive campaigns that create a dialogue with the brand. They are more inclined to lead than follow. They are smart, fast moving and have a highly developed “bullshit meter”. They live online as comfortably as they do off. They have access to a great deal of information when making their purchase decisions. They know they own the future and they insist on having it on their terms.

It was crucial to get up close to these consumers and whisper to them. Anything else would be rejected. If it felt like expected automotive advertising it was immediately excluded from the plan. Instead of a heavy TV and print buy, the plan called for a three-stage launch, with a combination of innovative lifestyle touch-points throughout. The three stage unveiling would also create the impression of a growing movement—with close attention to detail at every stage, to ensure the messages transitioned properly.

EXECUTION

Meet Uncle Yaris: In order to entertain, educate and break through the highly developed media filters of our target, we created an outrageous metaphorical character who lived life on his own terms and, as we would find out later, shared a number of key attributes with the Toyota Yaris. His name was Uncle Yaris and he was difficult to ignore.

Research showed that young Canadian men have a unique relationship with their uncles. They see them as wiser, cooler and better-balanced versions of their fathers. They command respect and admiration yet are also good friends. (The exception is Quebec where “uncle” had some negative associations and was replaced with “mon ami Yaris”).

Phase One—Seed: This introduced Uncle Yaris in the most authentic manner possible. Mainstream media was avoided in favour of media that touched the target where they lived. In a given week our target might see Uncle Yaris wild postings on his walk to work. Inside his favourite club he might encounter customized Uncle Yaris graffiti in the washrooms. On leaving the club he might get handed a CD of Uncle Yaris’s favourite tunes. He might pick up an Uncle Yaris sticker at his local skate or boarding shop, or he might just answer his doorbell and find the pizza he ordered being delivered in one of three Uncle Yaris boxes. In this early stage, all messaging was about Uncle Yaris. There was no mention of the vehicle or Toyota anywhere.

Wild Postings



Mobile Media Advertising



Phase Three—Harvest: This revealed the vehicle. Overnight, the wild postings, mobile media and outdoor vinyls switched to the car (while retaining the same attribute). The 15 second TV commercials became 30 second spots with a repetitive structure that ensured the message was loud and clear. Full page ads appeared in Dose and other print media. Cinema and DVD advertising was introduced. And, most importantly, yaris.ca switched over to become a vehicle website, with Uncle Yaris taking a back seat.

Outdoor Billboard



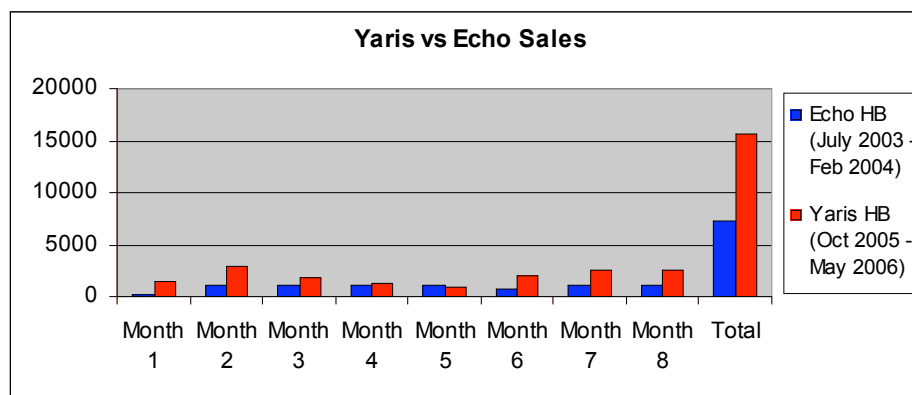
Launch Online Microsite



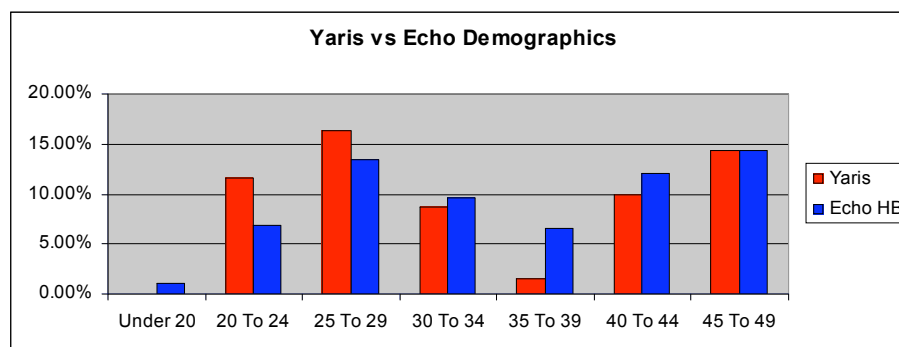
BUSINESS RESULTS

“In its first month of sales Yaris set a new benchmark for Toyota subcompacts, 28.3% above Echo hatchback’s best month.” Said Tony Wearing, Managing Director of TCI. “An innovative product combined with an innovative marketing campaign have captured the attention of consumers and played an enormous role in setting this month’s Toyota sales record.”

1. Sales of Yaris quickly eclipsed the successful Echo HB launch numbers from 2003. In two months from Launch (July-Sept. 2003) Echo HB sold 2,328 units amounting to 4.0% market share. In contrast, in just over two months from launch (Oct-Dec. 2005) Yaris HB sold 6,177 units, translating to a 7.3% share. But it didn’t stop there. Yaris HB sales in the first eight months were more than double sales of Echo HB during the same period of its launch.²



2. Yaris quickly became the new leader in sub-compact sales and, with the exception of one month, has stayed in the lead ever since its launch. Aggressive Toyota sales targets were also exceeded by almost 25%
3. The average age of Toyota sub-compact buyers dropped considerably. Sales to the 20 – 30 age group increased from just over 20% for Echo HB to 28% for Yaris HB. In fact, the dealer network had to do informal training to help staff talk to this strange new generation of drivers.



² AIAMC Canadian Automotive Sales

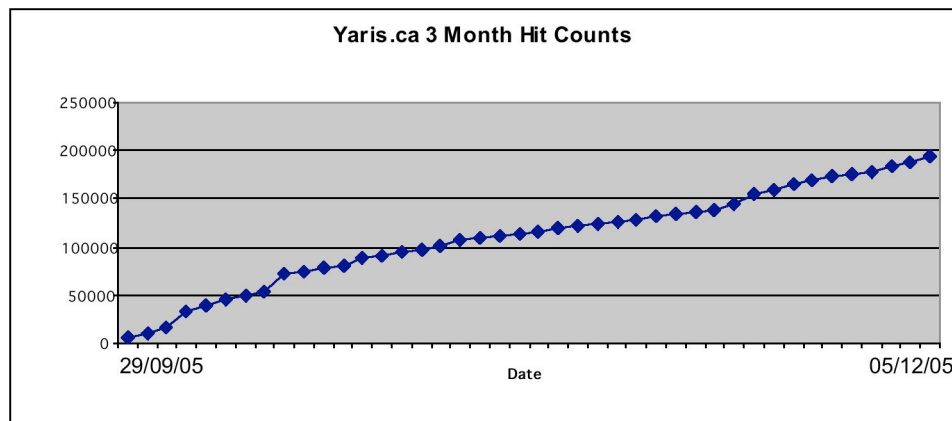
CAUSE & EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS:

1. Yaris HB is seen as not just a rational purchase decision but an emotional one as well. The top five sub-compact segment motivators are all rational (Fuel economy, Value for the money etc.) Even Echo HB had nothing but rational purchase motivators in its top five. Yaris has many of these rational motivators, but it also has “Fun to drive.” As Yaris comes with a 106 hp engine and 14 inch wheels it seems likely that this reason comes from the advertising rather than the product.

	Echo HB		Yaris HB
Fuel Economy	63.92%	Fuel Economy	70.81%
Reliability/Dependability	40.60%	Value For The Money	34.95%
Value For The Money	37.20%	Manufacturer Reputation	33.76%
Price/Cost to Buy	32.09%	Reliability/Dependability	31.56%
Manufacturer Reputation	23.70%	Fun To Drive	22.42%

Source: Maritz mTAB for Windows

2. A number of indicators point Yaris successfully speaking to the young male target. The website statistics are astounding. In its first three months, yaris.ca got 193,704 unique visits and 23,379 repeat visits. Almost 7,000 items were downloaded and thousands of test drives booked.



3. On top of this, blogs spontaneously appeared shortly after the seeding phase hit the streets. They hosted speculation as to who Uncle Yaris was. Some thought it was a new radio station; others thought it must be cell phone. So people were involved in what would be the unveiling of the car. [The case included extracts from blogs.]