

The University of Akron IdeaExchange@UAkron

Honors Research Projects

The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors
College

Spring 2018

It's a Goodyear for Innovation

Nathaniel Rellinger
njr48@zips.uakron.edu

Erin Horstman
egh8@zips.uakron.edu

Miranda Radesic
mrr90@zips.uakron.edu

Layne McKinley
lem75@zips.uakron.edu

Nash Smalley
nrs76@zips.uakron.edu

See next page for additional authors

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

Follow this and additional works at: http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects

 Part of the [Advertising and Promotion Management Commons](#), [Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons](#), and the [Strategic Management Policy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rellinger, Nathaniel; Horstman, Erin; Radesic, Miranda; McKinley, Layne; Smalley, Nash; and Starvaggi, Rachel, "It's a Goodyear for Innovation" (2018). *Honors Research Projects*. 743.
http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/743

This Honors Research Project is brought to you for free and open access by The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors College at IdeaExchange@UAkron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Research Projects by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@UAkron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.

Author

Nathaniel Rellinger, Erin Horstman, Miranda Radesic, Layne McKinley, Nash Smalley, and Rachel Starvaggi

It's a Goodyear for Innovation

Honors Project in Business Administration

4 May 2018

Project Report

Miranda Radesic, Erin Horstman, Nash Smalley,

Layne McKinley, Nathaniel Rellinger, Rachel Starvaggi

Introduction

Innovation is nothing new to The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. The near future will bring another phase of evolution as the focus of tires sales will shift with the growing popularity of ride sharing, car sharing, and autonomous vehicles. For the scope of our project, it initially seemed obvious to use Goodyear's good name as a selling point for a partnership with car sharing companies. We surveyed students at several colleges across Ohio that have car sharing fleets on campus and asked them about how they utilize the vehicles. After discovering through these interviews that ride sharing was more popular, we expanded our research rather than relying on our intuition about car sharing. Ride sharing became the focus of our project, and we explored how Goodyear's name, quality, and resources can be leveraged to entice ride share companies as well as their users and drivers.

Preconceived Notions

As a team we had preconceived notions and personal biases regarding who car share and ride share users were and how Goodyear could leverage its brand to meet the needs of those users. These notions grew both from our personal experiences and insights gained from our secondary research. We used these notions to guide our primary research that led to the personal interviews and the survey. The main perceived notions we will discuss are millennial use, brand equity, typical user, reason for use, and primary markets.

The first preconceived notion we had was that millennials would be the primary users of a car sharing or ride sharing program. This notion came both from our personal biases and from our secondary research. From our secondary, we knew millennials were driving less than their parents at the same age and that there would be a decrease in private car ownership with this

millennial population. We thought due to these reasons millennials may choose to go in a direction where they occasionally use a car share or ride share program over purchasing a private vehicle outright.

The second preconceived notion was that brand equity would be important in enticing customers to use a car share or ride share program instead of using a different model of transportation. For example, our personal biases led us to believe that Goodyear could leverage its brand name and image to attract consumers to use a car share or ride share program. We thought that Goodyear could potentially enter a joint-venture with a car share or ride share program and Goodyear's brand image would drive more consumers to use the service.

The third preconceived notion we shared was in regards to the attributes and demographics of a typical user. This preconceived notion came primarily from research in the secondary report. We believed that the typical user would be Caucasian, single, well-educated, environmentally aware, live in an urban area, have an annual salary over \$60,000, live in a rental apartment, and be between the ages of twenty-five to thirty-five years. According to our research, gender did not matter in usage as it was almost equally split between females and males.

The fourth preconceived notion we held was about the main reason(s) for car share or ride share use. As a group, we believed that individuals would choose to use a car share or ride share program for reasons like a weekend getaway to a place within a few hours of travel or a day where an individual had to run multiple errands. Our secondary research also showed similar reasons for a car share or ride share program use. According to the research, the two primary uses of a car share or ride share program were shopping and recreation; however, it also cited travel to-and-from work, personal business, and work-related travel as other reasons for use.

The last preconceived notion we had was about usage and availability in certain markets. Collectively, we did not believe usage would be non-existent in certain markets; moreover, we did expect it to be less in certain markets than others. Through our secondary research, we looked into locations both nationally and in the State of Ohio where car share or ride share programs already existed. Later in our survey, it will become apparent that we chose certain locations that already have strong car share programs or ride share programs. For example, some of our biases led us to believe that car share or ride share programs were more relevant in cities like New York, Chicago, or Philadelphia, where vehicle ownership per household was lower than the national average; this is in comparison to cities like Cleveland or Fort Worth. We also believed that usage would for car share or ride share programs would be better in cities where the public transportation was weak compared to other cities of its size with better public transit systems.

Overall our preconceived notions included millennial use, brand equity, typical user, reason for use, and primary markets. These notions guided our primary research survey and personal interviews which we will go into more depth about later in this report. We will address if our preconceived notions from personal biases and secondary research were correct and true throughout this primary report.

Personal Interviews

On Friday, February 9, we left our own campus to make trips to other nearby campuses in order to organically test our survey questions. We made stops at both Cleveland State University and Case Western Reserve University. The reason these two universities were chosen was because of their distinct differences, which were indirectly reinforced by the types of feedback

we received at each university, respectively. Cleveland State is a public university and very much a commuter school (similar to The University of Akron), while Case Western Reserve is a smaller, private university with many students coming from out-of-state.

This was a preliminary test, and the goal was not necessarily to analyze our results in great detail, but rather to try out the survey questions we had put together, determine their effectiveness, and then appropriately refine them for use in larger cities where we theorized that car sharing would be used by a larger portion of the population. We deemed this to be an appropriate approach and decided not to execute our final refined survey in the Cleveland area due to the fact that in comparison to other major cities (i.e. New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, etc.), Cleveland is considerably smaller and more spread out. While we were successful in using the results to refine the presentation of our survey, what we found was of great concern. Not only was there less usage of car sharing programs (as we expected), but we found that only a few students were even able to acknowledge the existence of car sharing products such as “Zipcar.” This came in light of the fact that both of the universities we visited actually housed car sharing programs on their own campuses.

Our first visit that day was to Cleveland State. At first, the approach was to conduct the verbal survey in groups of three, with two speaking and interacting with the subject while the third took down notes from the conversation. While this method was helpful in accurately recording information, it lacked in that the conversation felt less personal and more abstract. Our intention here was not to have a formal question and answer session but to incorporate our questions into an interactive two-way conversation with the subject and to get their thoughts. This is where we struggled and fell short in obtaining authentic feedback. Therefore, we made a change when we arrived at Case Western Reserve. We opted to split the groups further, from

groups of three to groups of two and one. This served two purposes: first, it allowed us to get feedback from a wider variety of subjects. Second, it helped to ease the tension on the subject because it is generally easier to answer questions honestly and create conversation when the setting is slightly more intimate. For example, we noted that while talking with Cleveland State students, we were talking to groups of three or four who would inadvertently denote a spokesperson to answer all of our questions. Therefore, we encountered a lot of groupthink where we were talking to three or four people but really only getting feedback from one person. By dividing the groups further at Case Western Reserve, we improved by not only reaching more subjects, but getting better and more honest feedback from each of them.

At Cleveland State, we talked to a total of 11 people from four different groups. While there, we learned that only a few people had even seen Zipcars. Almost everyone that we talked to owned a personal car, which we found a little surprising at first, considering Cleveland is a bigger city. However, most of the people we talked to were commuter students who lived outside of the city. In addition to already owning a car, most students were hesitant of the costs involved with using Zipcar. The above points show that Zipcar does not do an adequate job of making themselves known to their users. We determined that the advertising of Zipcar on college campuses was highly lacking.

Once students were told more about what Zipcar was, and what car sharing was, we were able to form a dialogue with them regarding potential uses. Some students claimed they would consider a car sharing service for a big trip or for traveling to a different city. Some students even considered the idea of using it for a short trip if they needed to leave campus and come back. The purpose for this would be a guaranteed parking spot when they got back because Zipcars have their own parking. They claimed that once they moved their car from their original

spot in the morning, finding a spot around noon or in the afternoon would be difficult, forcing them to remain on campus even if they have a large break. One student, however, was slightly hesitant due to the uncertainty of how insurance would work with Zipcar and other car sharing companies. She said that she would be hesitant to use it because she did not want to be liable to the corporation.

We also spoke with the Cleveland State University rowing team as they were raising money to travel to a competition; they have experienced issues with age restrictions preventing certain members from renting cars to travel for competitions. After explaining to them what Zipcar was, they determined that they would consider using it for transporting some members. It would not be applicable if all of the members could fit in the large vehicle that is necessary for them to tow their boats for the competitions.

Finally, one of the major takeaways from our time at Cleveland State University was the attractiveness Zipcar and other car sharing services had over age restrictions. All of the students that we talked to were under the age of 25, which is the required age to rent a car without acquiring a surplus charge due to age. On college campuses, Zipcar is allowed to be used by any valid student over the age of 18. Students found that this could be beneficial to them because the surplus charge can make renting a car almost impossible, especially on a college student's budget.

At Case Western Reserve, we talked to fourteen different people (including one faculty member and an employee at an on-campus coffee shop) among nine different groups. Case Western Reserve University provided our team with much more insight as to how car sharing was used among young people on a college campus. Since Case Western Reserve is a private university, the makeup of students on campus is very different from the makeup of

students at a public university. Many of the students that we talked to were from out-of-state. We spoke to two students from California, one from Florida, and one from Washington. Most of the students lived on campus for at least one year without a car. Although some of the students had a car on campus after their freshman year, many did not. Parking passes and parking spots at Case Western Reserve are not convenient for many students, so even if they did have a car, it would be a pain and a hassle to keep their car on campus.

For many of the students from out-of-state, car sharing was used to run simple errands. For example, a young girl said that she uses car sharing in order to go grocery shopping. Although there is a very reliable bus system used by many Case Western students, she claimed that carrying groceries on a bus is difficult. In addition, she felt safer using the car sharing service as opposed to the bus. Some of the other students said that they used the car sharing service to go shopping at Target or to get late night snacks at Taco Bell. Another student used the car sharing service to visit family in Pittsburgh. A couple of students stated that they did not use the car sharing service in Cleveland, but they had used it in major cities such as Seattle. One student even claimed that her and her friends use Zipcar once a month for various activities, mostly shopping. One student, an international student, said that he used car sharing to practice driving, since he did not drive a lot in his home country. Almost everyone who used the car sharing service stated that they had a positive experience and that they would use it again.

A few downsides to the service that we learned about were the availability of the different cars on campus or within different cities. According to the users, a car must be reserved for a certain time slot before using it; therefore, spontaneous usage is not available. In addition, when using the car for the first time, you must wait to receive a card in the mail in order to access the car. If the car is returned late, as one user in Atlanta did, there is a small late fee. This

was not seen as much of a downside because the user understood the need for a late fee because of the reservations made. In addition to scheduling issues, car sharing services require the car to be returned to the same location that it was picked up from. This was an issue for some students who considered using it for one way trips or for people who wanted to stay somewhere for a few hours or days and not pay for the use of a parked car. Some people stated that car sharing was too expensive and that they would only use it as a last resort to walking, Uber, or the bus system. A few students started stating instances in which they could see themselves using car sharing but had not yet. For certain distances and certain times of day, car sharing was cheaper than Uber. This is most likely due to the surcharge that Uber is known for charging during higher traffic times of usage. Many students said that cost was a big determining factor in whether or not they would Uber versus car sharing. Some people said that they would use car sharing as a one way method to the airport, but this would depend on whether the car service allowed for certain cars to be left in a different spot from where they were picked up. A few students who were from warmer weather states said they would consider using car sharing during periods of heavy snow, as their cars from the warmer states are not equipped to handle driving in the snow.

Overall, the interviews from Case Western Reserve helped us learn more about the culture of car sharing in multiple cities as well as in an area populated with many people who did not own a car. As was the case at Cleveland State, most people learned of the car sharing services through visibility of the cars parked on campus, proving again that advertising is lacking. However, many more people used the car sharing service at Case Western as opposed to Cleveland State, mostly out of necessity or for tourist-like purposes. Individuals who used car sharing tended to have a positive experience with the service.

Company Liaison Relations

Innovation

Goodyear came into class during the fall semester to present about innovation function within the company. The company overview was presented by Erin Spring. Later, two members from the innovation team (Greer and Rodrigo) came to present on innovation, Human-Centered Design, and give an introduction of the project. They talked about how they are the most forward-looking department in the company, often looking ahead ten, twenty, or thirty years. Of course, they are continually re-evaluating past predictions and projects as time progresses. Greer and Rodrigo displayed some past projects undertaken at Goodyear, but the majority of the presentation was about Human-Centered Design theory. Also known as “Design Thinking,” this is a means to get answers regarding questions about the “jobs to be done.” When conducting research, a person or group must first identify any biases or preconceived notions about their expectations of how the study will progress. This allows for a baseline that can be used to compare with actual results when finished. Researchers are then able to go straight to the source of the issue and ask the questions which are most pertinent. They can compare their results with anticipated expectations based on personal biases. During their presentation, we were able to practice using this tool to become more familiar with it. Greer and Rodrigo also gave a brief overview of the assigned project and indicated they would be the primary contacts throughout the life of the project.

Contact Challenges

During the last week of October we were assigned the Goodyear project. That week we attempted to contact our Goodyear liaisons to get the communication started. After not hearing anything after a week or two, we confirmed addresses with Andy and tried once more. By then it

was close to the holidays, so we set out to finish our secondary research hoping we could hear back from Goodyear in the meantime. What was odd was the other Goodyear group had been meeting with Greer and Rodrigo every two weeks, so we knew there was a communication issue. We had no intentions of having that much communication with them, but we at least wanted to have a touchpoint and schedule the meeting and tour which were required by February. We got in touch at the end of January and set up a joint tour of the Goodyear Facility with both Honors Project teams. The demeanor and language of Greer and Rodrigo led us to believe they had no idea there were two Goodyear teams. Once the tour began, a team member made it clear that we were a second group working on the same project and they were our contacts too. From there we sent a summary of our progress and set up a touchpoint call with Rodrigo.

Touchpoint, Shift

Our meeting with Rodrigo was both relieving and helpful. We had done all of our secondary research and were headed in the direction of trying to discover what Goodyear could do to solve people's problems with car and ride sharing. However, we failed to incorporate Design Thinking into our problem-solving model. Before a problem can be solved, we need to find out who is and is not using car and ride sharing, the motivations for doing so, and how it is used. Rodrigo helped us realign with what Goodyear's expectations of the project. These expectations included finding demographic information, motivations, and experiences of ride sharing users and non-users to aid in developing a few personas for which Goodyear can use to target their research going forward. This allows for Goodyear to figure out which jobs need to be done and then meet those needs later. It was noted in our secondary research that Goodyear's strong brand image can be leveraged for further partnerships with car and ride sharing fleets.

While Rodrigo helped us see that brand image may be strong, it is no more than for the other few major competitors.

Exploratory Research: Surveys

Determining Survey Design

After the preliminary efforts of our exploratory research, we were able to pursue further research through the use of surveys. The personal interviews were helpful in delving into how people utilized car sharing. However, it was difficult to obtain meaningful data about the future of car sharing. This difficulty continued on into the survey portion of our exploratory research. Originally, our scope was focused on the future of car sharing within the United States. We chose this as we believed that Goodyear could best find a place in this market because of its business to business nature. Car sharing is done through fleets such as Enterprise, Zipcar, and many others. This differs from ride sharing because these companies (Uber, Lyft, etc.) have individual drivers instead of fleets.

As we continued our research and even completed a survey to research consumer usage of car sharing, we hit a roadblock. In order to gain insightful data about car sharing, we needed survey responses from those who had utilized the service. In addition, we wanted to gain knowledge on how usage situations may vary among different areas of the United States. For example, we wanted to see if there was a difference between users who lived in the suburbs and those who lived in New York City. To collect this data, we researched various sources such as SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics, and QuestionPro. Quoted prices from each of these companies to receive the needed data were roughly \$1,000, which exceeded our budget. Therefore, the team came together to decide how we should overcome this challenge. We came to the conclusion that we would need to alter our scope. During our secondary research, we had researched the future

of car sharing, as well as ride sharing, and determined that it might be best to utilize our resources here in Akron and focus the rest of our research on ride sharing.

Once we changed our scope to ride sharing, we decided to pursue two areas of research for Goodyear. The first survey that we created was similar to the original car sharing survey. This survey would instead investigate users' experience with ridesharing, how they utilized the service, and then understand their thoughts and feelings when it came to transportation and the environment. The second survey targeted the drivers for ride sharing services. This survey asked the drivers why they chose to drive for these services, their feelings about tires, and how ride sharing affects their personal vehicle. We felt that it was important to gain the perspective of the ride share drivers as these would be direct customers to Goodyear (because they are the owners of the vehicles). Finally, we wanted to know how end users are utilizing ride sharing.

Collecting Survey Responses

In order to collect survey responses for both users and drivers of ride sharing, we used various methods. In each of the surveys, we incentivized the survey takers with four \$25 Amazon e-gift cards that would be randomly selected. Two \$25 gift cards were available per survey to those who completed and entered their email address. We chose to use this method because we felt that this type of incentive would increase our response rate for the surveys. First, our team utilized a wide variety of personal connections in order to collect data from ride share users. We contacted professors, many of whom agreed to send the survey out to their students. Additionally, we sent the survey out via email to the class lists of each of the courses in which we were enrolled, and posted the survey link on various forms of personal social media accounts. These efforts, along with the gift card incentives, allowed us to collect 174 responses for the ride share user survey.

While user responses were not difficult to come by, it was much more difficult to collect data on ride share drivers. We had to be creative in determining how to reach these drivers. One member of the team joined Facebook groups and pages made for ride share drivers. Many of these groups were private, so we had to get permission from the administrators of these groups in order to join. We sent information explaining that we were students collecting data for a research project for The University of Akron in these Facebook groups, along with a link to our survey. We received a total of 54 responses from ride share drivers. To ensure that all who took the survey were actually drivers, the first question on the survey was in regards to the ride share service for which they were employed to drive. If they selected “I do not drive for a rideshare service,” they were removed from the survey and not made able to answer further questions. The benefit of utilizing the ride share Facebook groups was that we were able to obtain data from drivers all over the country that we would not normally have access to free of charge. If we had tried to purchase survey results from a survey company, this data would have cost up to \$500. Although we had hoped to receive more than 54 responses, we were still able to analyze the data and gain insights from the collected data.

Survey Results

Results of the survey distributed to ride share drivers showed that nearly 50% of drivers started driving as a supplementary source of income and drive on a daily basis. The most popular time to drive is between 5:00 p.m. and 1:00 a.m., with 10-20 rides over the course of an average shift. Over 57% of trips were between 2-5 miles and most commonly had two passengers. When asking drivers about how ride sharing has affected their vehicle, 90% agreed that it has increased the rate at which their car requires maintenance, and the rate at which they need to replace tires. However, our results showed a split between whether or not ridesharing has a

negative effect on gas mileage.

In regards to tire buying habits, drivers are looking for tires that are moderately priced, have a recognizable brand name, and have a high treadwear warranty. We asked drivers to rank eight tire brands in the order that they were most likely to purchase them; it was found that Goodyear was among the top three most popular brands. Roughly 80% of the survey takers agreed that they would be more likely to purchase tires from a brand that would give a discount, or other form of perk, for being a ride share driver. Demographically, 60% of ride share drivers are male and more than 45 years old. Roughly 80% have an annual household income over \$30,000. Some have college or a four year degree, and there are no trends regarding marital status.

Results of the survey distributed to ride share users revealed that a majority of ride share users are ages 18-34 and have a household income of less than \$20,000, or one that exceeds \$100,000. Over 90% are married or single with at least some college education. The majority of ride share trips were taken to prevent drinking and driving, or while traveling out of town. Almost all trips were less than 25 minutes in duration. Users believe that ride sharing is convenient, easy to use, and relatively affordable. Regarding different modes of transportation and their effect on the environment, users believe that ridesharing is less harmful to the environment than a personal vehicle and/or public bus. Unsurprisingly, the most popular ridesharing services are Uber and Lyft.

Recommendations

Our first recommendation involves partnering with Uber to create “free ride events.” Our inspiration came from Miller Lite’s sponsorship with Chicago’s rapid transit system on New Year’s Eve in which the train system was free from 10 PM to 4 AM for everyone. The purpose

of this was so that no one would drive intoxicated. In a similar way, Goodyear could partner with Uber, the most prominently utilized ride sharing app, to create events that would provide free or reduced Uber rides at events that are notorious for alcohol consumption. In order to make it financially plausible, Goodyear would need to partner with Uber; otherwise, the cost of this sponsorship could prove to not be cost effective. This could be beneficial to Uber because it would encourage people who do not use the service to download the Uber app onto their phones. In addition, people would still need to enter credit card information in order to activate the account. Even if people are planning on only using the app due to a free or discounted ride, they would still have the app downloaded and their credit card information entered, making using Uber again more convenient and more likely to happen. Goodyear could benefit from this through the sponsorship advertising that would be in effect during the events. In addition, Goodyear would be fulfilling their corporate social responsibility by encouraging members of a community to not drink and drive. As we saw on our tour of Goodyear, the slogan used for many years was "Protect our Good Name." By encouraging customers of Goodyear and members of the community to adhere to driving laws, Goodyear is effectively protecting their good name.

We looked into the types of events that Goodyear could sponsor, and concluded that the Cotton Bowl would be a good first event to sponsor. As Goodyear is already the namesake sponsor of the Cotton Bowl, providing an additional sponsorship with different benefits for viewers would be beneficial to the company. The logistics behind this sponsorship would involve the use of some sort of discount code for viewers of the Cotton Bowl to enter into their Uber app. This benefit would be available to anyone who views this game, whether on television or by attending the game in-person. The Cotton Bowl is a major drinking event, as tailgating is prevalent at many college football games. The Cotton Bowl is held at AT&T stadium which is

known for selling more alcohol than anywhere else in Texas. When people walk into the stadium, they would be provided with a code to apply to their Uber accounts in the amount of a \$10-\$15 credit. This credit would need an expiration date, potentially within the week of the game. Attendees could then use this credit to get a ride home from the game, or sometime that following week. For television viewers, the credit would be in the amount of \$5-\$10, and it would also expire within that week. This would be obtained through entering a code that is displayed on screen at some time during the game. The Cotton Bowl idea could provide Goodyear with even more exposure, especially because the 2019 Cotton Bowl will be a College Football Playoff game. The bowl game already has a large following with 9.5 million viewers in 2017 (Paulsen).

Another event that could prove to be a good sponsorship would be with NBA basketball games. For these games, the offer would only apply to those who attended the game. In addition, it would only apply if the team being sponsored scored a certain amount of points, or completed a certain percentage of free throws, or some other measurable stipulation. If the team met the requirements, every attendee would receive a code to enter into their Uber account for a \$5 credit. Goodyear could choose to allow this sponsorship at different arenas during different weeks, essentially sponsoring multiple home teams. Once again, this sponsorship would provide advertising for Goodyear at these events, and since ride sharing is a prevalent and popular tool as stated in our secondary research, tying the two companies together would greatly benefit both parties. This sponsorship is different because it would capture viewers from all over the country as opposed to a single event. In addition, this sponsorship is more cost effective as it only applies to physical attendees, and the credit to the account is for a smaller amount of money. Goodyear

can capitalize on high traffic viewing events by advertising their name, as well as partnering with a widely used application to maintain a positive brand image.

In terms of product and promotional recommendations, we believe that Goodyear should target rideshare drivers in their future marketing plan. Throughout our secondary research we found that user penetration is expected to increase from 14% to 22% by 2022, while revenues will increase by 19% (eMarketer, B). Therefore, ridesharing is going to be a continued form of transportation for the future. Within our survey for rideshare users, we found that 24% of respondents have utilized the service more than ten times, which was the largest percentage of all utilization levels surveyed. In addition, the most popular time frame for the duration of their typical ridesharing trip is 11-25 minutes. Therefore, we believe that there will be continued growth of rideshare drivers and a need to support this growing transportation segment.

One research goal for our ride share driver survey was to better understand these driver's perceptions of how their involvement with ridesharing affects their personal vehicle. In addition, we wanted to gain insight into how these drivers bought tires as well as their tire brand perceptions. One key insight that we found was that 88% of rideshare drivers use their personal vehicle for their ride share service at least several times a week and 42% use it every single day. In addition, 62% of them give more than 10 rides per shift with typical distance ranging from 2-5 miles. Therefore, their personal vehicles are being driven much more than the typical American driver of their own personal vehicle. This relates to tires because distance traveled effects tread wear and is important to the safety and performance of that vehicle. When a tire's tread wears down, the vehicle has less wet and snow traction and may fail to stop properly. Therefore, tires that last longer and have high tread wear warranty are tires that would be most beneficial to rideshare drivers. When the ride share drivers were surveyed about attributes they look for in a

tire, high tread wear warranty was the most important aspect compared to price and brand name. In addition, they also felt that driving for a ride sharing company increased the rate at which their personal vehicle required maintenance, as well as increasing the rate at which they need to replace their tires.

Therefore, we suggest that Goodyear should have a specific, high treadwear warranty tire marketed specifically for ride share drivers. The tire could be promoted as being able to withstand the extensive miles that ride share drivers face. In addition, it can also become the mechanism to ensuring safety from the driver to its passengers because this marketed Goodyear tire will be able to deliver better traction for longer periods of time. We feel that with the increase of ride share drivers and the need for a tire that can withstand more mileage, it would be beneficial for Goodyear to include this growing segment.

We also suggest that Goodyear create an incentivized program for their “Goodyear Auto Service: Tires and Auto Repair” locations that can increase customer traffic and loyalty in their stores. The “Goodyear Auto Service: Tires and Auto Repair” locations are the best place for consumers to interact with Goodyear as a brand and to understand their company and what they stand for because these are corporately owned locations. Therefore, we want to position Goodyear as a company that can be flexible and able to adjust and change with the future needs of the market. One of these changes that we see is the usage of other vehicles besides a person’s personal vehicle. This is done through car sharing, but most significantly through ride sharing. Goodyear can leverage their brand by incorporating themselves with another ride sharing service, such as Uber and an incentivized in-store program.

The incentivized program would occur through a partnership with Uber. We believe that Uber is the right partner for this program because it is the current market leader in the

ridesharing industry and has strong brand salience. This program would require the consumer to make certain purchases or take certain actions in which they gain points, which would be redeemable for free and/or discounted Uber rides. Uber gains through this program by partnering with a trusted brand such as Goodyear, as well as having access to new customers. Various actions that could be rewarded with these points include buying Goodyear branded tires, signing up for a credit card, and getting an oil change, alignment, or new brakes. We believe that signing up for a credit card and buying Goodyear branded tires should be worth the most amount of points. First, Goodyear's main business is selling tires and they should promote this product at their stores. Secondly, a customer who signs up for a Goodyear credit card is much more likely to become a loyal customer to their store and purchase tires as well as other automotive services. Other services such as oil changes, brakes, tire rotations, alignments, etc. can be worth a less amount of points and may not lead to a direct reward after the first time these services are purchased. Instead, the points can act as an incentive to bring customers back to the Goodyear store.

We believe that not only will this incentive plan be beneficial to consumers, but will also help to build rapport with Uber drivers. If more riders are utilizing the service and it is a result of Goodyear's program, then these drivers are going to look more favorably at Goodyear as a company. Therefore, they may be more trusting in their products and decide to buy Goodyear tires and get their car fixed at a Goodyear Auto Service: Tires and Auto Repair location.

Personas

It is useful to examine the results from our research for trends and patterns so as to develop a few personas that can help Goodyear identify segments of the population which can be

further investigated or targeted with marketing efforts. In this situation, there are two personas: the typical ride share driver and typical ride share user. The typical driver is a middle-aged male named Ben. Ben has completed some college and has an annual household income of \$40,000. He drives for Uber and has been doing so for the past year as a source of supplementary income. Ben drives almost every day of the week during the late evening hours. His average trip is two to five miles in length with two passengers. The main thing he looks for when buying tires is a high tread wear warranty because of higher than average annual miles driven. However, Ben is most likely to purchase tires from a brand that gives a discount or other perk for being a ride share driver.

The user persona can go by the name of Alexis. Alexis is a typical college student, age 21. She enjoys her new-found freedom by riding with Uber on the weekends with her friends. She believes gasoline usage has a harmful effect on global warming and that global warming is a threat to the environment. She enjoys ride sharing because it is convenient, safe, and easy to use. The average trip for Alexis is about 20 minutes although she often uses it to avoid the temptation of drinking and driving.

Furthering Research

Our design thinking research, which involved open-ended style personal interviews, was limited due to the available time, resources, and geographic area in which we are located. We were able to talk to college students in Northeast Ohio, but that is not the best representation of the population of users and drivers of ride sharing or car sharing. It would be best to be able to represent all geographic areas in the United States, as well as different demographic groups of people. We had a better attempt with the surveys that were sent out all across the country. Also,

it would have been beneficial for Goodyear to be able to find out why people are not current users and drivers of car sharing or ride sharing programs. They could possibly be able to assist car sharing or ride sharing companies in attracting those markets of people that do not currently use and/or drive.

Another area of research that could be insightful for Goodyear is personal car and tire usage habits in comparison to a car sharing or ride sharing driver/user. This could provide knowledge on expected sales to the two groups (sharers or personal users). If the data showed there were less greenhouse gas emissions when people shared rides compared to personal use, Goodyear could use this to launch a marketing campaign supporting green initiatives and efforts to better serve the environment.

Our recommendations are centered around providing perks/incentives to people who use ride sharing services; however, it would be beneficial to figure out what the best setting is to introduce these perks. Goodyear could use new methods of marketing in areas where they have already invested, such as the Cotton Bowl or the Cleveland Cavaliers. Goodyear could even find it is best to reach new consumers by utilizing new markets through events like the Super Bowl or through event production companies that put on concerts. Pinpointing the best place to introduce the new methodologies would need to come after further demographic research so that the ideal consumers can be reached.

Conclusion

Goodyear is on the peak of innovation for the tire industry and as a team we made it our goal to provide recommendations that are beneficial to the company. The project introduction had led us in the direction of only researching car sharing, but our human centered design

research was quick to show that car sharing is on the cusp of breaking through. However, it needs more than Goodyear's brand equity to get it there. We shifted our research to ride sharing users and drivers with the goal of capturing demographics and motivations of people who do and do not use ride sharing services. This information can be beneficial to Goodyear because they will have a basis to begin to segment the market and know where they need to continue further research. Customers have certain jobs that need to be done by the products and services they use, and innovation is simply re-thinking the way those jobs are accomplished. Our suggestions based on our research are able to introduce a strategy for entering into the ride sharing market via discounts, promotions, event sponsorships, or other partnerships with ride sharing companies. This can be beneficial for both selling tires to consumers and providing more brand awareness for Goodyear.

Additional References

Paulsen. "Cotton Bowl Ratings Hit High, But Not That Great." Sports Media Watch, Sports Media Watch, 30 Dec. 2017