

Advertising, Media, News
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Error sees Audi 'advertising' for Infiniti on WeChat Moments

This erroneous advertising placement in China cost only 202 renminbi, but became a hot topic on Weibo.

Screenshot from WeChat Moments sees Infiniti content displayed in Audi's advertisement.

Having just celebrated its 30th birthday, Infiniti got a surprise birthday gift from Audi: an advertisement on Tencent's WeChat Moments.

The Audi advertisement on WeChat Moments became the center of attention on social media this week, as its content ended up promoting not its own automobiles, but competitor Infiniti instead. While the ad placement was not expensive, the messed-up marketing incident ended up costing Audi and Tencent far more in public embarrassment.

Tencent subsequently issued an apology announcement in which Tencent Advertising claimed the incident was the result of "erroneous advertising materials being broadcast", and indicated that Tencent Advertising took the relevant advertisement offline immediately upon notice. (It was suspended after a total exposure of 3,969 views at a cost of RMB 202). Tencent said it would compensate for all losses, including the relevant advertising expenses incurred as a result of the use of erroneous materials.

Tencent apology

That apology letter put to rest any speculation that Audi and Infiniti were engaging in mutual co-branded marketing. But thanks to popular interest, this advertisement on WeChat Moments has now triggered even more attention from the public than first imagined. On November 13, the number of views related to #Tencent's advertisement apology# on Weibo reached 43,984,000, and those related to #Audi Infiniti# reached 14,592,000, sending both topics on Weibo's hot search list.

Other auto brands then got in on the act, claiming to be "envious" of Infiniti, hoping Audi might also place advertisements on their behalf. As Volvo said on Weibo@Audi, "Place an ad for us, too, my friend." Audi replied, "Understood. Will get back to you later."

Volvo post & Audi response

Due to the advertising gaffe, rumors on the Internet suggested that FAW-Volkswagen would temporarily suspend all media collaborations with GroupM. *Campaign China* spoke to this matter with GroupM China, who, in turn, released a public announcement.

“ Regarding the erroneous Audi advertisement in today's WeChat Moments, we noticed a screenshot from unidentified sources claiming that Audi 'will temporarily suspend all media collaborations with GroupM', which is not true. Our company's agent does not serve this customer in relation to this job. We reserve the right to pursue legal action against the perpetrator of the rumor, and we urge everyone to refrain from believing in or spreading such rumors. ”

Since the incident, industry insiders have mostly focused on the cost of the ad, arguing that Infiniti's ROI is very high for a mere RMB 202. As for Audi, they, too, received a lot of attention due to the mix-up and one could argue both brands ended up gaining from this incident.

Both Audi and Infiniti responded and interacted about what was happening in their official Weibo accounts, both grasping the opportunity to market themselves. Audi talked about "generosity", while Infiniti thanked Audi for the "birthday gift", saying, "let us ignite the future together, and unleash our potential." On this, Audi responded, "Let's continue our journey with courage, and create better possibilities for travelling."

One experienced advertiser *Campaign China* spoke with thought that the incident should be turned into a bigger story, and that Infiniti should place an advertisement for Audi in return, for the sake of a happy ending but guessed "the brands dare not do so, for sure".

Another industry insider jokingly told *Campaign*, "Currently, not only do we not know the content of the other part of the advertisement which has not been placed, among the part that has been placed, there might be another part that has benefited we-don't-know-whom."

The interesting thing is, when Infiniti celebrated its 30th birthday earlier, the theme was "Living Infinite Possibilities". Sure enough, everything is possible, as this gift from the heavens illustrates.

Some marketers are worried that advertising companies will have a harder time earning equivalent ROI going forward. After all, this Infiniti advertisement, 'sponsored' by Audi, only cost RMB 202.

Source: *Campaign Asia-Pacific*

Tags

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