

Ever considered ditching your keys?

By  Jessica Tennant

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Uber recently launched a campaign called 'Ditch Your Keys' to encourage car owners to switch to Uber and use their time spent travelling more efficiently.



The majority of South African drivers are reluctant to part with their car keys, as they see vehicle ownership as the more affordable choice and as a hassle-free alternative to using public transport. This campaign seeks to address such misconceptions.

"Through this campaign, we wanted to convince the millions of car owners in South Africa to consider ditching their vehicles for Uber in situations where cars are painful," says Ross Adami, marketing manager for Uber Sub-Saharan Africa.

Uber set out to do this by showing this audience the collateral pain points of owning and operating a car at strategic moments using highly contextual messaging.



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Advertising was placed at points where those reading it were highly probable to experience one of the pain points of owning a car. These situations included finding parking at a busy shopping mall, filling up with fuel, maintaining and insuring a vehicle, and when they may be over the limit.

"Strategically placed billboards and digital screens were positioned across the cities in which we operate, bringing these pain points to the fore at precisely the moments car-owners experienced them."

This prominent positioning combined with witty storytelling – using catch phrases such as, ‘Nobody ever got a speeding ticket from the back seat’ or ‘All the benefits of a car, without the extra costs’ – was intended to get South Africans to start questioning whether owning a car is worth it.

I touched base with Adami, who hasn’t owned a car for a year, to discuss this in more detail.

■ ***Do you own a car?***

I, personally, sold my car a year ago when I relocated to Johannesburg and it’s been the best decision I ever made. We forget that car ownership is paired with a whole host of hassles, pain points and additional costs – from servicing, maintenance, insurance and rising petrol costs. Not to mention losing hours of valuable time being stuck in traffic or paying for parking in the CBD.

■ ***South Africans are slowly realising that the cost of owning a car has become increasingly expensive and are on the lookout to spend less on transportation, as well as not having the stress of wasted time sitting in traffic. Comment on the rate of adoption. How does this compare globally?***

We’re already seeing attitudes to individual car ownership begin to change. Because when people are given an affordable, reliable alternative they’re happy to take it. In America, 10% of Uber riders under 30 say that they’ve either given up their car or are no longer planning to buy one.

The cost of owning a vehicle is extremely high with other factors to consider such as insurance, fuel, service plans. This is enough to make any car owner consider ditching their keys – especially considering that there are more than one billion cars in the world today which also sit idle 95% of the time.

We also see ditching your keys solving a worldwide dilemma of congestion as 22% of all CO² emissions globally come from transportation. In SA currently this makes up 23% of energy related carbon emissions.

Uber’s mission is to be a part of a broader mobility movement and as such, [Uber Movement](#) is being launched soon. Uber Movement is a new website to help urban planners, city leaders, third parties and the public better understand the transportation needs of their cities.

Uber has already completed around 10 million trips per day, in more than 600 cities. Uber has more than 2 million active driver-partners and 150,000 employees.

■ ***Should more and more people start to realise this, how would this affect them and the environment?***

Uber hopes to assist with general congestion – Uber can help reduce congestion by complementing public transport. Over time as people get used to the idea that you can always push a button and get a ride – and the need to own a car, or buy a second family car, goes down. Although there is still more research to be done, fewer cars on the road can mean fewer emissions, less congestion, less pollution and less time wasted sitting in traffic.

■ ***How is this being communicated, and what is the key messaging of the campaign?***

Uber aims to convince the millions of car owners in South Africa to consider ditching their vehicles for Uber in situations where cars are painful.



This campaign wants riders to get ease from finding parking at a busy shopping mall, filling up with fuel, maintaining and insuring a vehicle, and bring an end to drunk driving or worrying they may be over the limit when driving home.

■ ***What has the response been to the campaign?***

The response on the campaign has been really good thus far. We harnessed a whole range of communication platforms for the campaign, tailoring each and every message to highlight the pain points of car ownership right at the moment at which they're experienced. This precise and carefully thought-out strategy has resulted in increased usage across the board, with more and more people taking up the challenge to ditch their keys and ride with Uber.

■ ***How would you encourage those now considering selling their car to use Uber instead?***

Uber offers riders a safe and innovative option to get around at the push of a button. Uber is available every day of the year and gives vehicle owners the choice of paying for a vehicle when they need to take a trip as opposed to paying for a vehicle every month with added costs of insurance, trackers and fuel.

All in all, Uber offers more choice to customers, improves safety and service and encourages innovation.

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