TEACH CONSUMERS HOW TO SWIPE RIGHT WITH THEIR CARS

OEMs need to respond to changing needs and expectations or risk rejection

Automotive has long been one of the most dynamic industries. New technologies have increased possibilities significantly, and few could have predicted the state of the industry today. Consumers are increasingly accustomed to the wealth of features and benefits provided by their cars and are demanding further progress and growth from manufacturers.

The pandemic has brought tremendous challenges to the sector worldwide, with strained supply chains and semiconductor chip shortages. More important, however, will be how the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) respond to the long-term effects caused by the disruption.

Capgemini's global survey found that digitization has become an even greater priority in both the car-buying and ownership experience. Another important conclusion is that health and wellness are now crucial factors, with many more people considering car ownership for the first time, particularly in the 35-and-under category.

The rapid evolution of the automotive landscape

While the wave of change brought on by the pandemic cannot be disregarded as OEMs aim to recover, they must be diligent and not overlook the essentials. CASE (Connected, Autonomous, Shared, and Electric) trends should still be top of mind for decision makers to position their enterprise for future success.

In the past decade, Tesla has revolutionized attitudes towards electrification and sustainable energy while making its cars simultaneously more valuable and affordable. It also raised the bar for the entire industry through its over-the-air (OTA) software capabilities. We have seen the connected and electric domains accelerate substantially because of one organization's willingness to respond to trends with a combination of cutting-edge technology and human vigor.

One strategy going forward would be to emulate the efforts of the major players. The push to electric is just one example, and seeing that it has been embraced by Ford, Volkswagen, Volvo, Toyota, and many others shows it is a global movement. But perhaps more important is for OEMs to realize that while the opportunity to first lead a CASE trend or pioneer a feature for today's cars may have passed, it is not too late to explore new territory and create a disruption that steers the future of the industry.

The rise of the trusted vehicle

Technology has driven the automobile industry forward in unexpected ways. It is no longer beyond us to envision a world with predominantly self-driving cars that take us where we need to be safely, and that cars powered by sustainable energy will reduce our carbon footprint by a great deal and move towards a better future. But before we get there, people will need to trust their cars.

The trusted vehicle is a product of powerful machine learning and artificial intelligence systems in the cloud. By aggregating and analyzing massive amounts of real-time data to monitor traffic flow, it can predict problems before they occur to enable autonomy that we can trust, while bringing robust and secure identity systems that enable personalized experiences for each consumer. Combining essential function and innovative user experience, the trusted vehicle is a connected solution built for the future of automotive.

It will take some time for consumers to fully embrace autonomy but, while connectivity work continues, OEMs should not overlook the great opportunity to deliver cars consumers will need – and want. The overall driving experience is undergoing a major transformation, and consumers demand more digital features, capabilities, and engagement from their vehicles.

Delivering the cars consumers want

What consumers desire most is to develop a relationship with their cars. Manufacturers willing to formulate a strategy around this theme rather than just respond to trends will be more likely to not only keep pace but thrive. This is a significant effort and will require bringing together the car, cloud, and the consumer and navigating the complexity of changing preferences through clever use of data. But this approach will enable OEMs to better respond to growing user expectations.

Consumers are increasingly seeing cars as an extension of their digital ecosystem and expecting them to have the same intuitive features and capabilities found in smartphones. Voice is quickly emerging as a crucial touchless interaction component and an essential element of the in-car experience, **with nearly 50 percent of consumers** relying on voice assistants today. As integration and usability with smart devices grows, people will start to develop the same personal relationships with their cars as they have with their phones.

As the world comes out of the pandemic and markets fully recover, automotive will continue to see enormous change. The demands on the in-car experience will continue to rise and, with connected vehicles just emerging, there is still time to be the first brand that helps consumers establish the relationship they want with their automobiles. This is a rare opportunity for car companies to lead a new and major trend, and missing such a unique chance in this hyper-competitive space can be devastating.

Capgemini has a deep understanding of the automotive and manufacturing industry with a long history of working with major players across the globe. Together with Altran, one of the world's leading engineering and R&D companies, we are uniquely qualified in the field of cloud applications development to support enterprises working to build a more sustainable and better future for transportation.
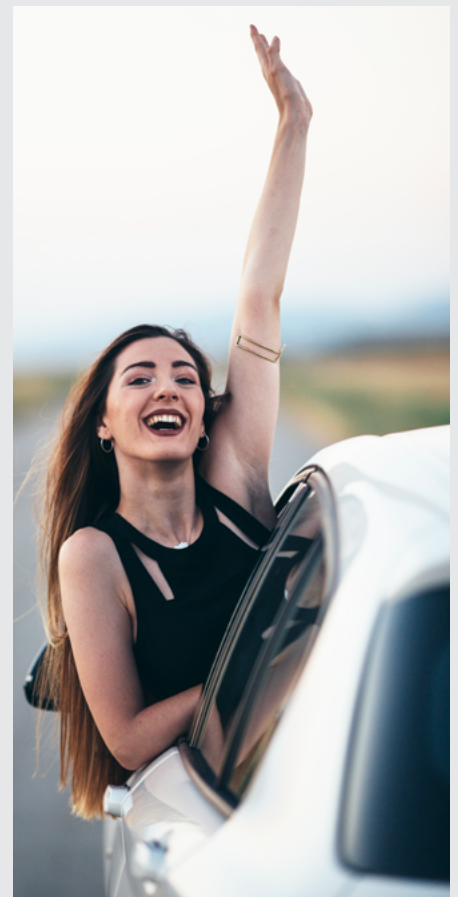
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For more details, contact:

DANIEL DAVENPORT
Director, Automotive
daniel.davenport@capgemini.com

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