

A man and a woman are shown in profile, looking towards a car. The man is in the foreground, wearing glasses and a blue t-shirt. The woman is behind him, also looking at the car. The car is a silver Toyota Hybrid. The background is a sunset sky with orange and blue hues. The text "Toyota Hybrid: Not A Moment To Lose" is overlaid in white.

Toyota Hybrid: Not A Moment To Lose

Toyota Hybrid: Not A Moment To Lose

Executive summary (286 words)

It's 2017 and, across Europe, Toyota's hybrid moment has surely come.

The VW 'dieseldgate' scandal, and the engine debate it triggered, has opened the door for hybrids. Toyota's hybrids were launched back in 1997, and now, as competitors fast track their own models, Toyota can finally capitalise on those years of investment. Can't it?

Except, even with significant financial incentives now available for buyers, the overwhelming majority of car purchasers continue to eschew hybrid vehicles, either sticking with petrol or postponing their purchase altogether. Why? A host of reasons, some functional, some emotional, varying by audience and market.

That became Toyota's challenge for us. How to tackle this myriad of consumer barriers to hybrid, simultaneously and fast, before the automotive category got its act together and Toyota's moment of hybrid advantage was lost?

The&Partnership used a radically different approach to audience research. We used the power of data and technology to seize the day: sizing barriers, unlocking insights and informing a vast system of creative content. Each element addressed a different audience challenge, all served dynamically to audiences at the perfect point in their car buying journey. This insight-led, multi-dimensional approach meant multiple consumer barriers could be cleverly tackled at the same time and led to exceptional sales growth of Toyota hybrids across key markets in Europe .

Within three months of the campaign, we saw a clear uplift in consideration: increasing Toyota hybrid search by 57%; increasing Toyota hybrid webpage visits by 36% and test-drive requests by 83%. Toyota's image of being the 'hybrid leader' consistently trended up (2-5% depending on market). Finally, we achieved record hybrid sales: up 26.86%, much more than overall Toyota car sales, which only increased 3.38% across major European markets.



Europe 2017: this should be Toyota's moment.

VW had been playing fast and loose with calibration of its diesel car emissions, a scandal labelled 'Dieselgate', leading Governments and regulators to ban diesels from many city centres, and hit them with extra tax (fig.1). In theory, as sales of diesel cars fall, hybrid should be the beneficiary.

Toyota was the leading manufacturer of hybrid cars, ergo, Toyota's moment.

Unfortunately for Toyota, consumers had other ideas.

Figure 1: Diesel's demise



The Hybrid Challenge(s)

20 years earlier, in 1997, Toyota had launched one of the first hybrid cars – a Prius – with a petrol engine and an electric motor, working in tandem.

By the time ‘Dieselgate’ struck, Toyota had bet the business on hybrid technology, rolling it out across its major models (fig.2). Toyota’s leadership was confident that while momentum behind electric vehicles was growing, they weren’t yet a practical alternative for most drivers. Hybrid was today’s ideal solution (fig.3).



Figure 3: Toyota focuses on hybrid technology



Figure 2: Toyota’s Hybrid Range in 2017

Firstly, barriers to consideration couldn't be reduced to a single issue (fig.4). Instead, different people had different concerns – from the functional, to the emotional, even to the social – which played out differently across different countries. All would have to be tackled to take hybrid mainstream.

The Hybrid Challenge(s) (Continued)

Secondly, the clock was ticking. Everyone knew the game was up for diesel, and competitors were rushing to provide their own alternative powertrain solutions. There was growing noise around electric-as-the-future: Elon Musk, Tesla, world leaders, other manufacturers – fully-electric cars dominated the headlines and cultural zeitgeist. Nowhere was this better highlighted than at the 2017 Paris Motorshow, where hybrid barely got a look-in (fig.5).

There was a clear and present danger: that consumers would postpone their decision, allowing competitors to catch up.

The real communication task then, was to convince the car buying majority that hybrid was now a legitimate choice, overcoming ALL of their barriers to consideration, BEFORE the window of opportunity had closed.

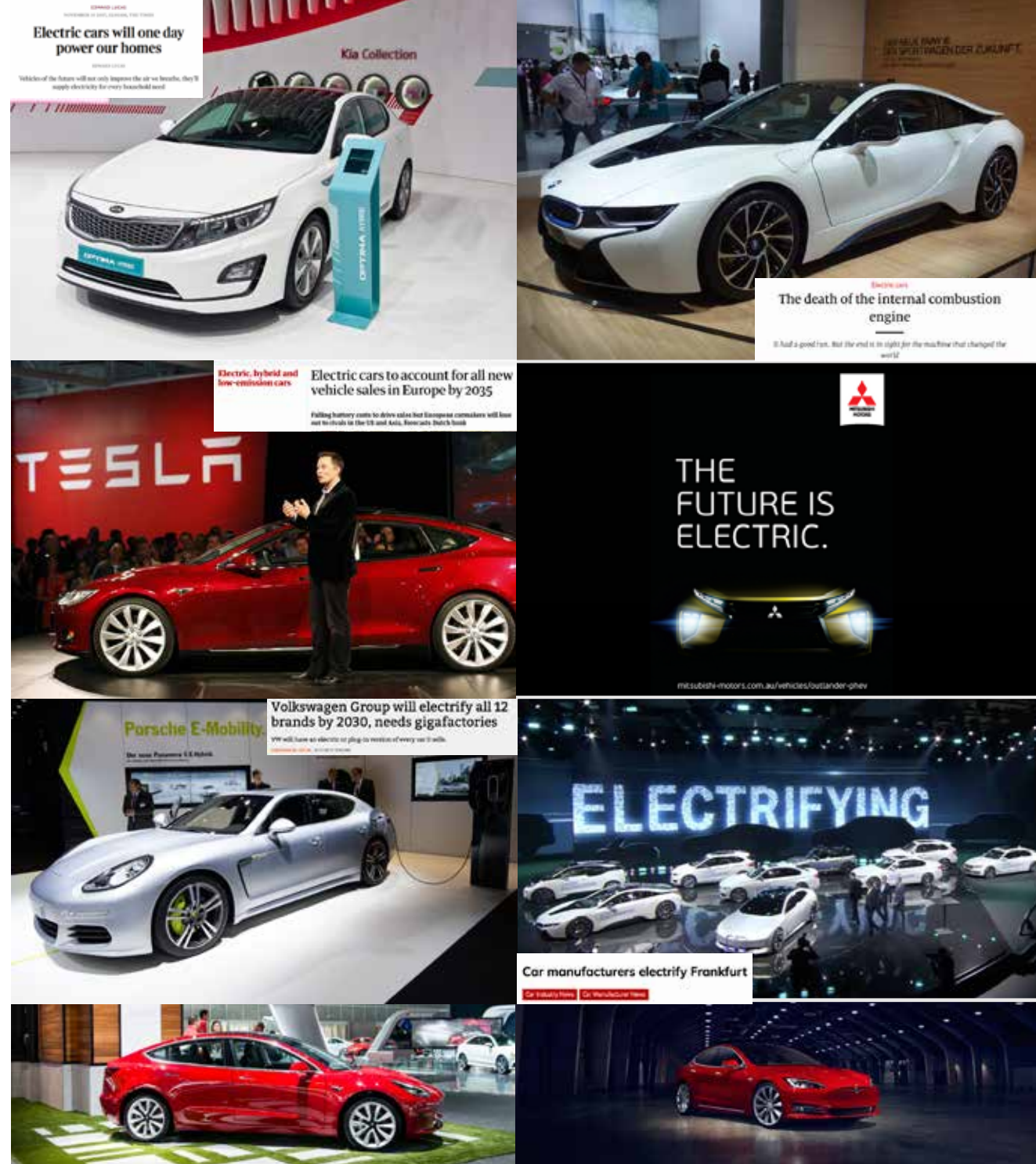


Figure 5: 2017 Paris Motorshow press coverage

Campaign Objectives

- 1. Remove barriers to driving a hybrid in general, and increase consideration for Toyota hybrids, specifically**
- 2. Build Toyota's image as the hybrid leader**
- 3. Grow hybrid sales across major European markets**



Research: A Data-Led Methodology

We began by talking to hybrid rejecters. It quickly became clear that switching to a relatively unknown hybrid powertrain was a BIG DEAL for people.

Their engine, the one thing that had always been a straightforward binary choice – petrol or diesel – had suddenly become something to think about. And to think about your engine was to worry about your engine (fig.6).

They raised questions like:

- **Could they trust it?**
- **Was it proven?**
- **Did it change how the car drove?**
- **Was it underpowered?**
- **Did it need to be plugged in?**
- **Would the battery last?**
- **What would others think?**



Figure 6: Consumers views on hybrid

Source: GroupM Live Panel Toyota Hybrid Survey, 2017

Typically, a creative agency would look for the key barrier to switching and the single insight that would unlock the brief - but with hybrid, there wasn't just one! The car buying journey is too complicated, the barriers to hybrid too numerous, and the European markets too varied, for a silver bullet.

Of course, such multiplicity is a challenge faced by many global brands and might previously have led to a single, lowest common denominator solution. But now we were able to harness the power of data and technology to inform our creativity, we could address the hybrid challenge with the variety and nuance it deserved.

Our Methodology:

- Utilize m[INSIGHTS], GroupM's proprietary digital behavioural insights platform.
- Add a bespoke hybrid survey, of 10,000 people across Europe, to provide an in-depth look at hybrid consideration and barriers.
- Use cookie-matching to link the results from the two research tools.

This methodology meant we could see how answers corresponded to actual media behaviour, where in the digital buying journey different barriers became more prominent, and how many people each affected within our brand target audience (totalling 62m across Europe).

We developed a simple 2x2 framework (fig.7) that:

- Categorised audiences based on openness to hybrid, and to Toyota
- Quantified those audiences
- Highlighted the relative importance of different barriers

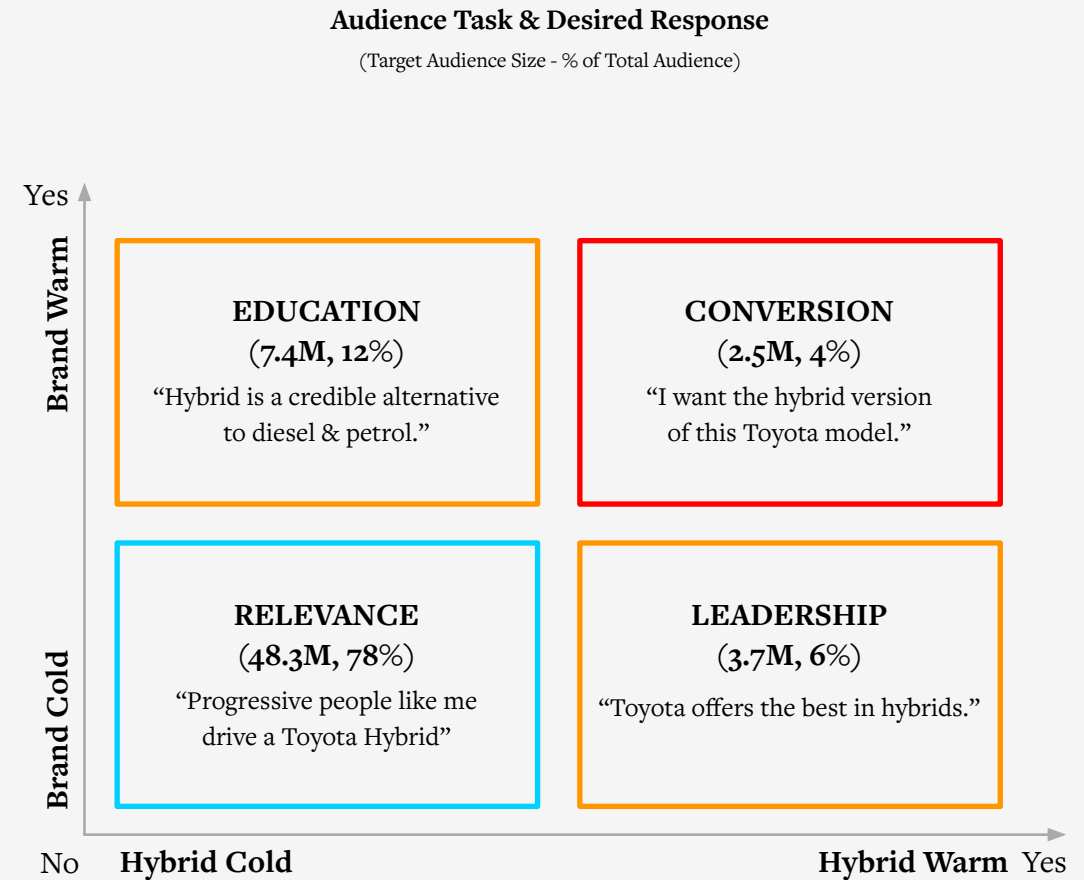


Figure 7: Segmenting the audience task and desired response

Source: GroupM Livepanel Toyota Hybrid Survey, 2017

Two things became clear.

Firstly, functional barriers (confusion around how hybrids worked, reliability, and so on) often rooted in myths or outdated wisdom, posed sizable issues for 7.4m of our audience.

For example:

26% thought hybrids had to be plugged in to be recharged (*they don't*)

21% believed hybrids had limited range (*they don't*)

23% felt the driving experience was inferior and the car under-powered (*it isn't*)

Secondly, and even more significantly, was that a much larger group (48.3m), rejected hybrids for emotional and social reasons. This was something Toyota had never previously attempted to address.

Specifically:

Over 1 in 4 (of 48.3M) just didn't see themselves as the type of person to drive a hybrid.

Research: Understanding The Barriers (Continued)

To explore the driver image in more detail, we conducted:

- Additional depth interviews with hybrid drivers and rejecters
- Phone interviews with several Toyota dealers
- Ran our hypotheses past many Uber hybrid drivers on late nights home!

This confirmed driver image was a major part of hybrid's problem (fig. 8):

- The typical hybrid driver was seen as an eco-conscious eccentric (a 'treehugger'), who saw their car as a statement of their environmental beliefs
- More recently, that undesirable image had been compounded, as hybrid began to be seen as the choice of taxi drivers, mainly Uber

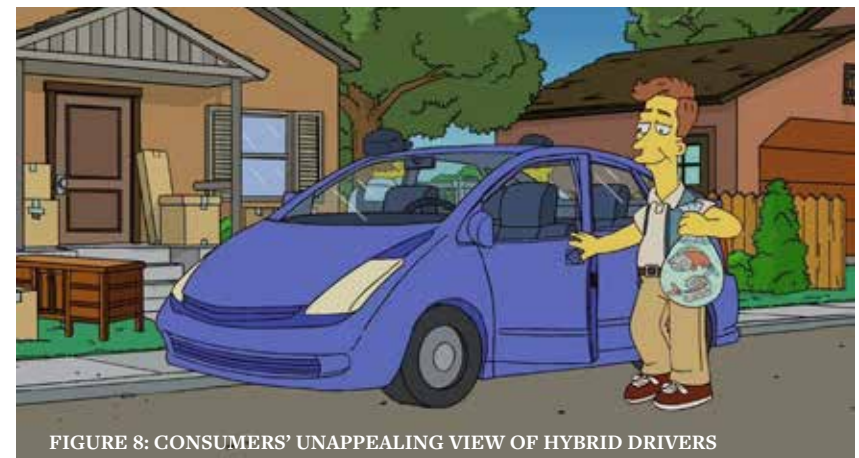


FIGURE 8: CONSUMERS' UNAPPEALING VIEW OF HYBRID DRIVERS



Strategy: A Multi-Faceted Creative Platform

To bring hybrid out of its niche, we had to update perceptions. This meant persuading people that hybrid was already a much more popular choice than they realised and while environmental concerns might be relevant, you didn't have to be an eco-warrior to drive one. In fact, hybrid drivers were a broad church united in their desire for a more progressive car that didn't compromise their driving experience.

While this became the foundation of our creative brief, we were also clear that we didn't need a traditional campaign, we needed a creative platform with a far broader suite of creative assets, to address all of the hybrid barriers identified earlier.



Creative Platform

**“To sell something familiar,
make it surprising.**

**To sell something surprising,
make it familiar.”**

Derek Thompson – Why Things Become Popular

Our creative idea was to familiarise hybrid, by shining a light on the many and various people who had already made the choice to drive one; a desirable, yet accessible movement. We summed it up with a simple statement:

We Choose Hybrid.

Within the creative platform we developed assets to meet each of the respective audience tasks: relevance; education; leadership; and conversion.

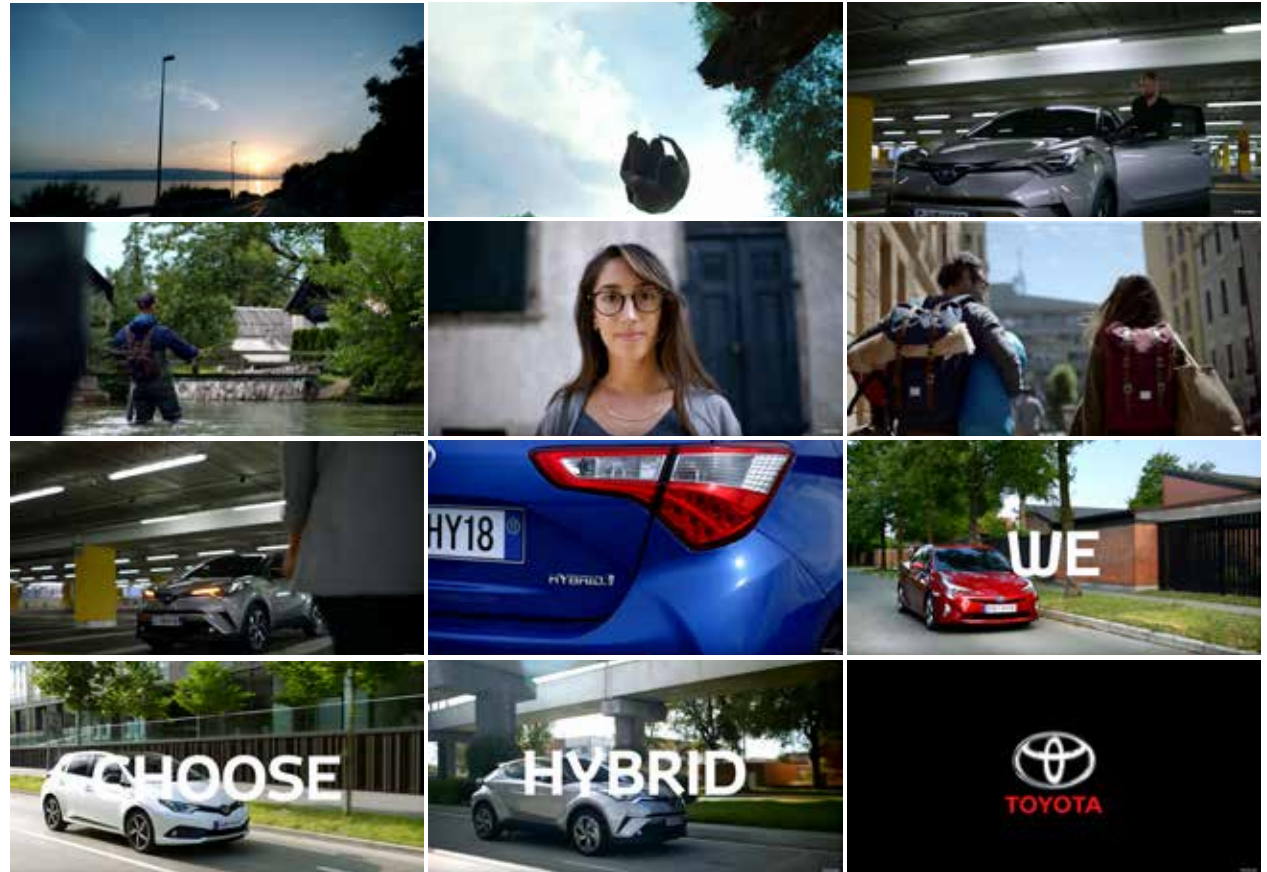


Relevance Assets

Broadcast comms (primarily TV, OOH, print) focused on the aspirational hybrid drivers of today, with the reasons why each of them chose hybrid.

These helped to address driver image, a key piece of the puzzle, but by no means all of it.

TV Storyboard



Press



OOH



Education Assets

Supporting content took on the functional barriers with a range of 10 educational videos. They made clear, for example, that hybrids do not need to be plugged in.

Educational Online Video



Educational Online Video



Leadership Assets

For those already considering a hybrid but unsure about Toyota, dedicated creative assets reinforced Toyota's hybrid leadership and reassured of the brand's hybrid pedigree.

Leadership Online Video



Leadership Online Video



Conversion Assets

Direct response assets featured compelling offers and response mechanics to turn hybrid buying intention into dealership visits and test drive requests.

In summary, we had one creative platform, We Choose Hybrid, under which a broad suite of messaging and creative addressed all the emotional, functional, and social barriers to hybrid we had identified at different points along the car buying journey.

Conversion Online Video: Price/Offer dependant by market



Creative Deployment

The creative platform was made available at the beginning of Q4 2017. Uptake of creative assets can be a perennial challenge for Toyota, which encourages markets to behave autonomously, but in this instance the sheer versatility of the platform ensured widespread deployment:

- **150 master assets** (the most ever created by the pan-Euro marketing team)
- **500+ localised assets** deployed across markets
- **13 markets** chose to run the campaign (5 of whom are independent, so had to specifically request campaign assets)

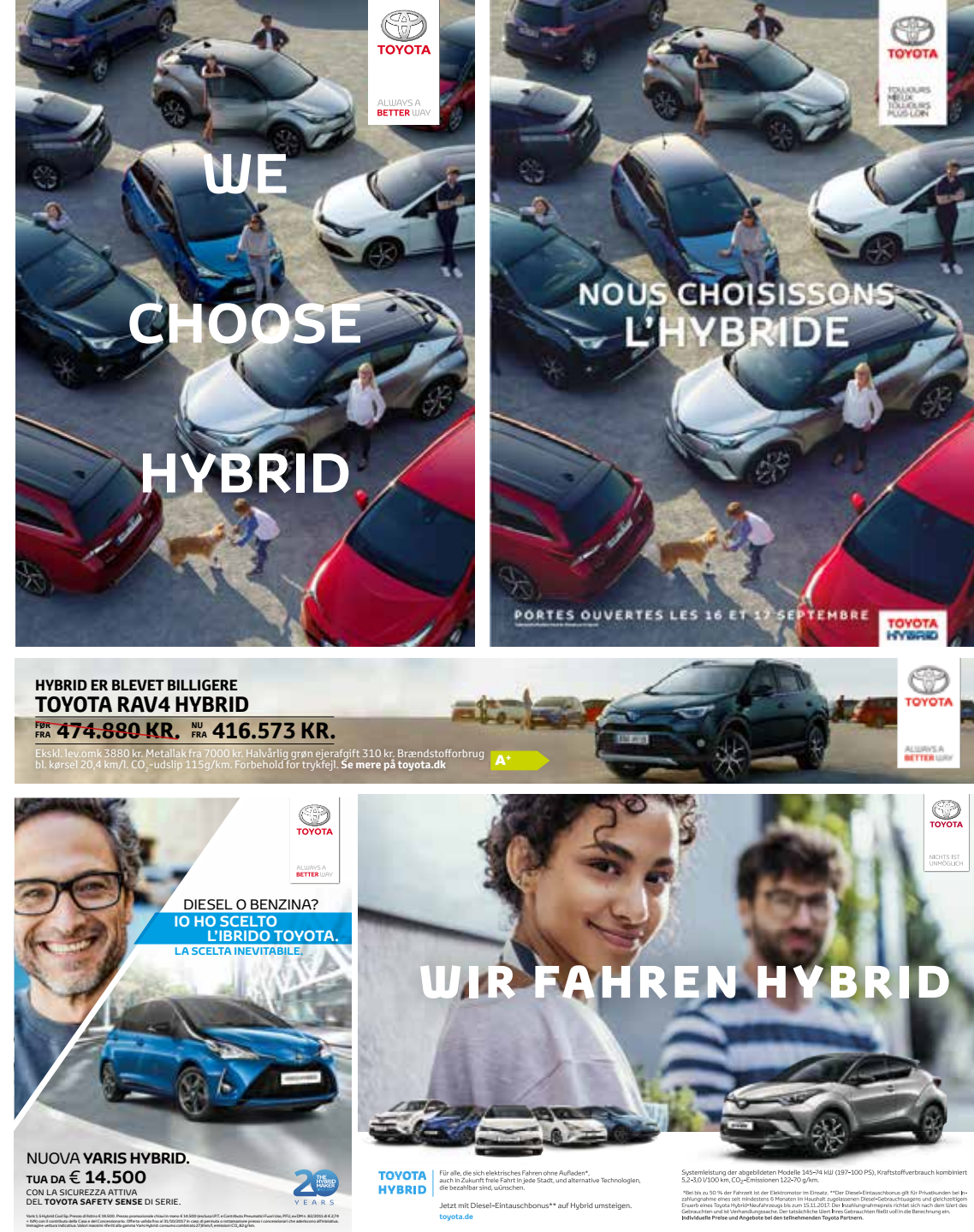


Figure 9: Localised creative

Creative Deployment (Continued)

Though TV accounted for the largest proportion of media investment (given the scale and urgency of this creative task), the platform was truly multimedia, with digital channels getting the second-highest share of the budget (18%).

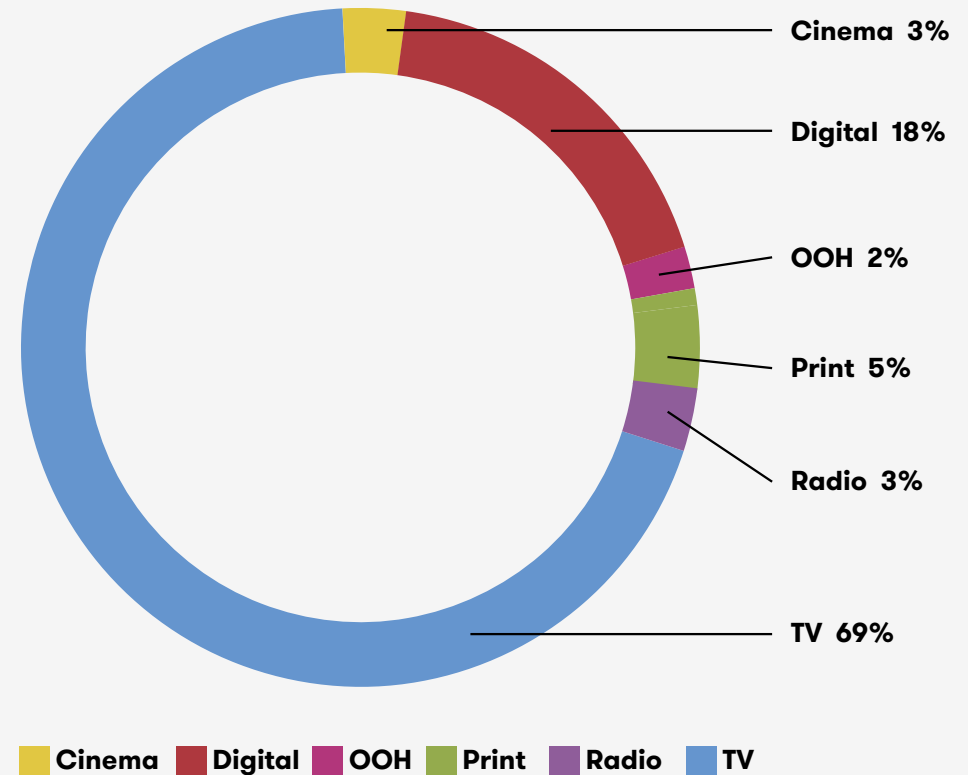
1-2-1 Digital Targeting at Scale

Typically, attitudinal research isn't so helpful for media planning, given the difficulty of accurately targeting attitudes in the real world. But this is where connecting our hybrid survey to individuals in m[INSIGHT] became invaluable. Because their digital behaviour was being tracked in real-time, we could serve them creative that specifically addressed their personal barriers to hybrid. What's more, we could build look-alike audiences at scale, and target those too. Levels of engagement with the creative dictated which creative asset they saw next.

In summary, the campaign was widely adopted by markets across Europe, even those operating independently of the pan-Euro marketing team.

The campaign was launched with significant multichannel spend, emphasising smart use of digital, serving the right content to the right person at the right moment in their buying journey.

Media Split by Channel



Source: Toyota Media Split across Major European Markets, Q4 2017

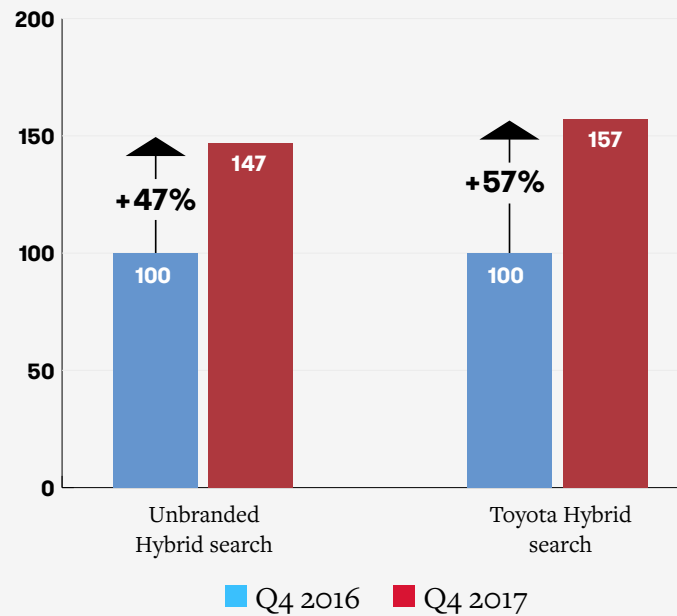
The Results

We saw remarkable results within the first 3 months of the campaign, with strong performance against all of our campaign objectives, even typically slow-moving brand measures.

1. Did we popularize hybrid? Yes.

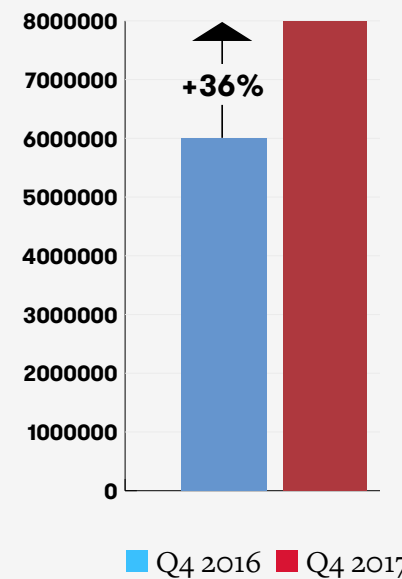
- Non-branded hybrid search was up 47% and Toyota hybrid search was up 57% (vs. Q4 2016).
- We increased interest in Toyota hybrids, with visits to Toyota Hybrid webpages up 36%, and test drive requests up 83%.

Hybrid Search Volume



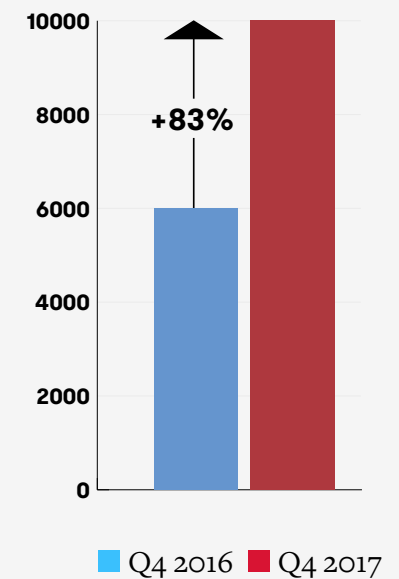
Source: Google Analytics – GA 360, Major European Markets Q4 2016 vs. Q4 2017

Toyota Hybrid Web Page Views



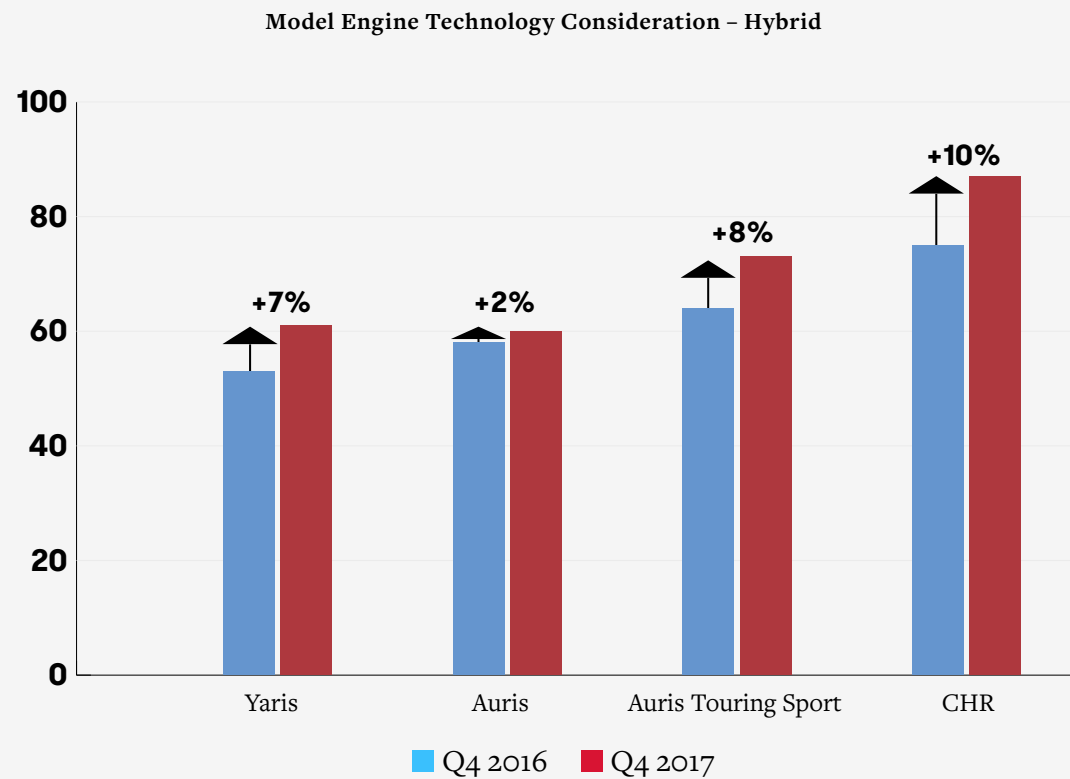
Source: Google Analytics – GA 360, Major European Markets Q4 2016 vs. Q4 2017

Toyota Test Drive Requests



1. Did we popularize hybrid? Yes.

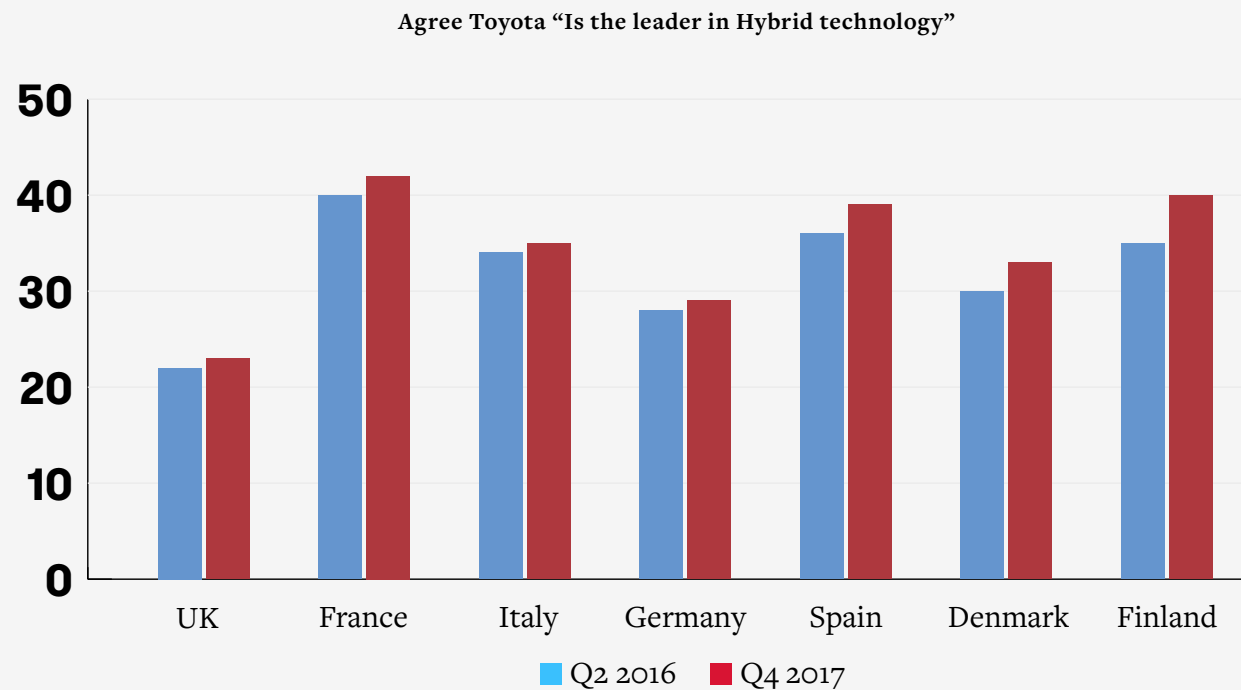
We also saw a significant increase in consideration for best-selling Toyota hybrid models.



Source: Toyota Brand Tracking, Millward Brown

2. Did we build our image as the hybrid leader? Yes

We saw a consistent increase in Toyota as the “leader in hybrid technology” across all markets where this is tracked.



Source: Toyota Brand Tracking, Millward Brown

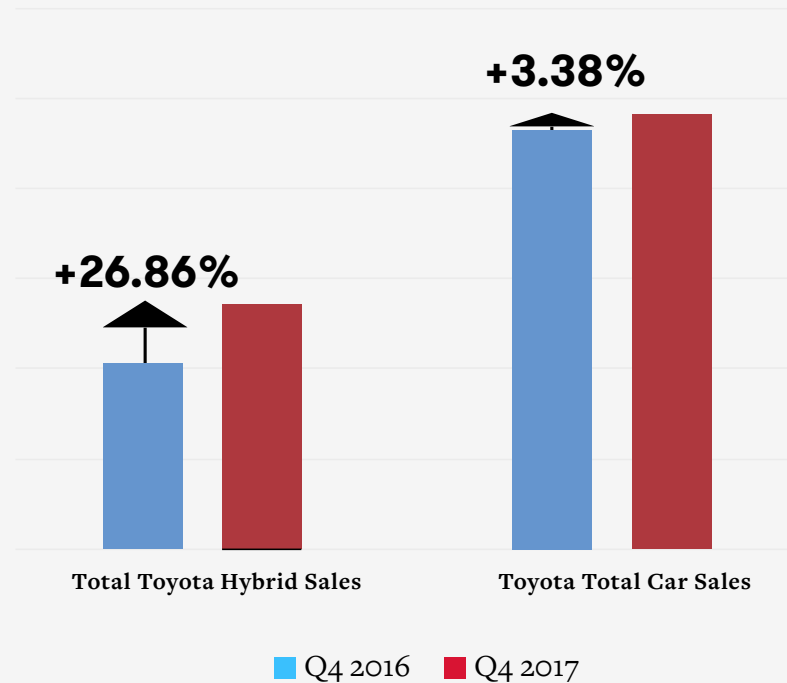
3. Did we sell more hybrids? Yes.

We achieved record hybrid sales in Q4 2017. In fact, sales of Toyota Hybrids increased 26.86% (vs. Q4 2016) while total Toyota car sales only increased 3.38% across major European markets. Lastly, for

every media pound spent in Q4, we generated £1.36 profit (assuming an average profit per hybrid sale of €1,000). Given the relative infancy of this creative platform and long gestation of the car

purchase cycle, we expect a high proportion of the sales effect to fall into Q1/Q2 of 2018, significantly boosting this ROMI.

Toyota Hybrid Sales vs. Toyota Total Car Sales
(Q4'16 vs. Q4'17)



Source: Toyota Sales Data

Summary

- This wasn't a moment Toyota could lose. Selling hybrids was critical for Toyota, but the window of greatest opportunity was short.
- Maximising the moment was challenging: consideration of hybrids remained low and electric vehicles stole headlines, causing consumers to hesitate.
- We applied an innovative data-led methodology (supplemented by qualitative research) to define and quantify barriers to hybrid purchase. There were many and we didn't have the luxury of time to address them one by one.
- As a result, we rejected the idea of a traditional campaign and instead designed a creative platform with a huge variety of creative assets to meet a raft of audience tasks.
- These were deployed in a highly targeted media system, picking off individual's personal barriers and accelerating the impact of the creative work.
- After just 3 months, the results were remarkable, with all consideration, brand and commercial objectives achieved.
- This is a showcase for the future of communication – data supercharging creative platforms, deployed in media systems that target 1-2-1 audiences at scale, to meet multiple communication objectives simultaneously.

TOTAL WORD COUNT: 1935

