

Added-Value Case Study #1: My Big Automotive Brain

Event: Midwest Automotive Media Association Chicago Auto Show Luncheon

Topic: The expanding market for high-performance cars and SUVs – including its history, from U.S. and global perspectives

Speaker: Ulriche Bruhnke, CEO of Mercedes-AMG

The challenge: Rob Allan, manager for Mercedes-AMG in the U.S., asked me to deliver a first draft in three business days, without having the opportunity to meet or even speak to Mr. Bruhnke. My job was to make this German executive sound comfortable speaking about the history of the global and U.S. performance markets, not just the high-end European segment.

The result: I drew on my own knowledge and research and applied judicious humor. My words helped make Mr. Bruhnke sound like he knew Jaguar XKE, Pontiac GTO, Datsun Z and Subaru STI as well as he knew AMG. The audience truly enjoyed the speech. Many rushed to interview to Mr. Bruhnke and request copies, and noted auto writer Jack Keebler based his next *Motor Trend* column on it.

Added-Value Case Study #2: Original Thinking

Event: 2005 New York International Auto Show

Topic: Mercedes-Benz R-Class introduction

Speaker: Michelle Cervantez, executive vice president, sales and marketing, Mercedes-Benz USA

The challenge: Ms. Cervantez wanted to link the R-Class's design and packaging to New York City in an original way. There would certainly be no "built for New York's tough streets" or "has more space than your typical walk-up" clichés. And one more thing: I needed to also connect the last Mercedes-Benz world introduction in New York -- the 300 SL Gullwing in 1954.

The result: How do you combine vehicle packaging innovation, influential German design, New York City and the early 1950s? To me, it added up to legendary German architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe and his iconic New York City creation, the Seagram Building on Park Avenue. It was landmark New York City architecture that helped set the standard for design around the world -- and the perfect fit for a Mercedes-Benz New York world introduction. The client loved the speech, and the audience appreciated the New York connection.

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