

Engauge sparks NGK's interest

By: Lauren Bell
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NGK Spark Plugs USA has tapped Engauge to push the brand via interactive and relationship marketing projects.

The spark plug manufacturer and distributor chose Engauge for this project partly thanks to its executives' automotive experience. Jason Bergeron, creative director at Engauge, has worked with Chrysler, and Steve Swanson, executive director at the agency, previously worked on Michelin, Volkswagen and Mobile One projects.

“We understand the automotive industry and Detroit — that culture and that consumer,” offered Swanson. “NGK has not really done a lot of aggressive consumer marketing in the past, and that's what we're going to help them with.”

Swanson added that the new campaigns, which will break this fall, will target multivehicle enthusiasts. The campaign will be mostly interactive and will include videos, a Web site, a community forum and online games. Engauge will tap into social networks to find consumers.

“We've realized it's very expensive to have TV and print ads and things like that,” Swanson said. “Through interactive ads you can have a relationship with a consumer, which is certainly what we're striving for. Our goal is much more than just pure selling, it's more how NGK becomes part of someone's life.”

Mark Sprague, marketing manager for NGK, said that previous marketing activities focused on grassroots advertising.

“We would get out with individual [auto] racers and sponsor them and also get involved with consumer-style engagements where we would go to car shows or motorsports events and publicize our products with the consumers there,” he said. “This is just another way to engage with the consumer.”

The agreement with Engauge is on a project-by-project basis, as are all of NGK's marketing relationships.