

Case Study: Pontiac G6

There's a reason that the car Oprah Winfrey gave away to her stunned audience in fall 2004 was a G6. The sporty sedan is Exhibit A in GM's critical effort to revitalize its car offerings, and the company has much riding on the success of the G6. The G6 offers a lively ride with a tasteful interior. Coupled with smart pricing it is an attractive alternative to Honda or Toyota.

Three years later, though, sales volumes are modest. The reality is, this car was supposed to do something special, and it didn't do it. It just hasn't reached the success level that Pontiac and GM had hoped for. The marketing campaigns have failed to generate a sales momentum or create a consumer buzz for the G6

What Ails the G6 ?

GM designers and marketers have worked diligently on the G6. But, they need to identify what more needs to be done so that the next G6 is a bigger success. One strategy is to collect consumer feedbacks and analyze them for quality and functional problems or new opportunities. The product intelligence can then be used by both marketing and product professionals to plan and execute an ongoing success story.

GM cannot depend solely on classical surveys for consumer intelligence. In automobile marketing "word of mouth" is a significant factor and often provides an answer to what ails a specific model.

Blog Intelligence

Pontiac needs a method which utilizes the internet medium for consumer feedbacks. Consumer generated web (CGW) reviews or 'Blogs' represent one of the richest data repositories. But just knowing the 'buzz' or 'blog volume' or 'blog sentiment' is not enough. They need specifics and details.

The QUAD Report would provide Pontiac with a detailed analysis of the blogs associated with the G6. The report summarize and synthesize product quality and design related intelligence.

The G6 blog file was created in October-November of 2006. The blog space for the Pontiac G6 is relatively large and includes dedicated forums and auto review websites. A total of 600 CGW Reviews were extracted from 45 unique websites.

The QUAD analysis found that consumer evaluation of the product is dominated by two themes. First, is a comparison of the Pontiac G6 with previous GM

The Challenge

The 2003 launch of the Pontiac G6 represented a completely new styling approach from the iconic Grand Am. The G6 is now the best selling car in the Pontiac lineup, but still lags the market leaders. Design and marketing groups need to identify what G6 features and functions are being identified as competitive strengths or significant weaknesses by consumers. Intelligence can be used to improve next generations of the G6 and other Pontiac products.

The Solution

QUAD Report analysis of internet blogs or CGW reviews.

The Benefit

Information on the consumer sentiment in the blog world and field intelligence on reported strengths and weaknesses.

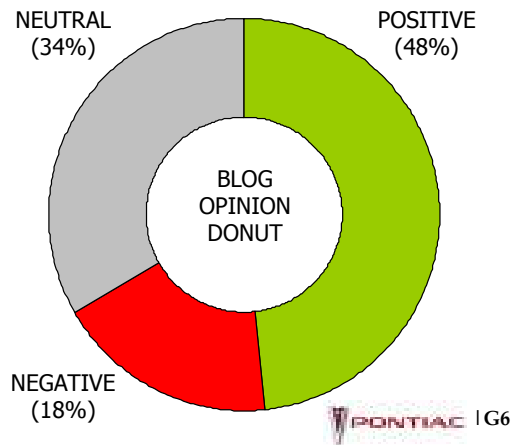


 **PONTIAC | G6**

Vehicles (Grand AM), and second, a discussion on product quality experiences. The analysis generated 24 significant level-2 consumer metrics, and a total of 128 attributes at level-3.

Executive Summary

The table to the right summarizes the blog strength and weakness evaluations for the Pontiac G6. The QUAD Strength Score is 40% while the Weakness Score is 29%. Overall in the set of 600 blogs there are a total (frequency) of 728 strength comments compared to 384 weakness comments. This indicates that a majority of blogs have a positive bias on the product. The Blog Opinion Donut characterizes the likely outcome of a Blog Review search on the Pontiac G6. The QUAD Report projects that 48% of consumers will come away with a positive opinion, 18% with a negative opinion, and 34% with a neutral opinion.



PONTIAC G6	QUAD STRENGTH	QUAD WEAKNESS
QUAD Score	40%	29%
Dominant Category (Level-1)	Design – Functional	Quality - Reliability
QUAD Action Matrix (Level-2)	SUCCESS STRENGTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DF2 - Driving Experience Power, and Acceleration DE2 – Exterior Styling is Sporty and Trendy QF2 – American Built Car QF5 –Price Performance Value 	PRIORITY WEAKNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> QR1 – Problems Defects in First Year of Use QF1 – Overall Noise Level from Engine, etc. QR3 – Satisfaction with the Dealer Service Network
Causal Attributes (Level-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DF2-8 : Acceleration much better than previous GM cars DE2-4 : Finish and body styling clean and no traditional GM lines QF5-3: Excellent relative price when discounts are factored in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QR1-1 : Starting failure and ignition keeps getting stuck QR1-6 : Power steering failed while driving QR3-7 : Customer service at the GM level is simply horrible

BLOG STRENGTH PROFILE – Consumers report that *Design – Functional* is the highest rated strength category for the Pontiac G6. The level-2 analysis shows that the primary strengths relate to the driving experience, audio systems, and the abundance of standard features. The weakest mean strength score was for *Quality-Reliability*, but the frequency was very low. Consumers were pleasantly surprised with the few problems/defects experienced in the first year. The *Quality - Form Factor & Perception* category scores were also strong but the frequency low. Many blogs relate to this being an American Built (big 3) product, and this is indicative of the brand loyalty in a segment of the population.

Next Steps

The QUAD Report summarizes consumer assessments and extracts relationships between quality metrics, design metrics, and detailed product attributes. Product designers, quality engineers, and sales/marketing can immediately use the QUAD Report to:

- identify product strengths and weaknesses,
- plan consumer driven marketing strategies or design changes, and
- proactively solve consumer reported quality problems.

You may commission a *QUAD Report* for any product that you produce and market or even a competitor's products. Our experts will create a confidential report exclusively for your use.

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