

Microsoft® Online Services
Customer Story:
Nissan

I don't shop
on your terms.



Microsoft

I'm test-driving in virtual reality.

From finding local restaurants to finding auto dealers, Internet users have been mapping and searching online for years. But at what point do consumers begin to expect more from the search technology they use every day? And how can advertisers be ready and waiting at that new digital touchpoint when the consumer arrives?

“Broadening our relationship with Microsoft will enable us to deliver targeted messages to consumers across a diverse online network.”

—Jan Thompson, Vice President of Marketing,
Nissan North America

Even for the non-gaming-inclined, it's hard to deny the allure of today's visually immersive video games. Of course, the consumer-g geared potential for that progressive technology goes far beyond gaming—it opens doors for people who use the Internet every day to search and map. And forward-thinking companies like Nissan are betting that while eye-catching graphics are generally a great way to get consumers' attention, they can go beyond the flash to really provide a service.

It was that very notion that sparked an exciting collaboration between Nissan and Microsoft® Digital Advertising Solutions. With the release of Microsoft Virtual Earth™, a cutting edge online mapping tool, Microsoft was taking what it believes is the next step in search—visual search. The imaging technology actually allows people to “fly” through cities such as San Francisco, as if playing a very sophisticated video game. As users zoom into the intersection of Haight and Ashbury, for example, they'll actually be able to see the corner from street level.

That's where Nissan saw a superb opportunity to dynamically engage its audience. By placing large, colorful 3-D billboards over the cityscapes, they would have a compelling vehicle to encourage users to click through to their Web site.

“Nissan's target audience is adopting an increasingly mobile

lifestyle, and the amount of time consumers spend online is rising significantly,” says Jan Thompson, Vice President of Marketing at Nissan North America. “Broadening our relationship with Microsoft will enable us to deliver targeted messages to consumers across a diverse online network.”



And Nissan's vision goes beyond the visual “wow” factor of Virtual Earth. The goal, in a sense, is to become a part of the virtual neighborhoods. Because Microsoft plans to create maps for approximately 100 cities by the end of 2007, Nissan's billboards will take on a true geographical context. In the



same way that real billboards mark the location of local businesses, Nissan can promote not just Nissan North America, but local dealerships as well.

“Nissan North America is demonstrating exceptional vision and bold leadership with its commitment to make the Internet a cornerstone of its advertising,” says Eric Hadley, General Manager of Global Marketing at Microsoft. “Nissan is extremely well-positioned to reach consumers at every stage of the automotive buying cycle.”

So how are people responding to the ads in Virtual Earth?
“The virtual billboards bring

Virtual technology goes far beyond gaming—it opens doors for people who use the Internet every day to search and map.

online map advertising to a whole new level,” says Elinor Mills of CNET News.com. And the current billboards are just the beginning.

In fact, the success of the Virtual Earth campaign has spurred a much larger partnership between Nissan North America and Microsoft. Nissan’s progressive approach to Web advertising and Microsoft’s multi-channel access to an audience of more than 465 million seem to be a perfect pairing. Nissan will now be able to more powerfully engage with consumers through many Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions touchpoints—including MSN®, Windows Live™, Live Search, Xbox®, and Windows Mobile®. Some highlights in the partnership include a sponsorship of the “Forza Motorsport™ 2”

console game on Xbox 360®, as well as a co-branded, design-focused “blogazine” for Infinity on MSN.



For Nissan, this means they’ll be a pioneer in utilizing and fostering current enthusiasm for some of the most progressive technology available—and that they’ll be highly visible to a growing audience in virtual cities all over the country. For consumers, this means that Internet search, mapping, and advertising strategists are becoming *almost* as forward-thinking as they are.

