



# Shifting into top

HOLDEN SPECIAL VEHICLES (HSV) IS AN ICONIC RANGE OF HIGH-PERFORMANCE MOTORS, DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO THE ENTHUSIAST. BRAND LOYALTY VERGES ON THE FANATIC, WITH THE CHOICE OF VEHICLE OFTEN DEFINING A LIFESTYLE CHOICE. EVERYONE WANTS TO BE PART OF THE FAMILY, SO WHY DID THEY NOT FEEL APPRECIATED? IT TOOK A NEW KIND OF LOYALTY PROGRAM TO TURN WHAT HAD BECOME DEPRECIATION INTO APPRECIATION ONCE AGAIN.

**B**uying a Holden Special Vehicle (HSV) is a lifestyle statement. It declares that you are a person who is not content with a run-of-the-mill factory auto, that styling and power matter and that you recognise the iconic lineage of the brand. It also declares that you prefer the Australian marque to any of the European or Japanese contenders. It aligns you with the high-profile HSV racing teams, their activities on the track around the country, the drivers, and the events. And it also means you will more than likely wear the HSV colours, caps and t-shirts.

To some HSV owners their car is one of the most important parts of life. For the privately owned HSV these customers are the lifeblood of the business. In the 21 years of the company's existence approximately 6,000 of the high-design cars have been sold through the 65 Holden dealers throughout Australia and New Zealand. Such a high-value niche market seems a natural catchment for a loyalty program, but up until last year HSV's attempts to reward customers with 'appreciation packs' had met with disappointment. Long delays in getting generic gifts to the buyers meant that for most HSV dealers the scheme was more trouble than it was worth.

"They were telling us ... 'It's not worth the aggro, get rid of it,'" said Andrew McKenzie, general manager strategy & business development, HSV. "What started out as an appreciation scheme was rapidly becoming known as the 'depreciation' scheme. Incomplete information coming in from the dealers meant we didn't know who our customers were, while the cheap gifts and slow fulfilment made the whole program into a negative."

Resisting a rising consensus to ditch

the whole scheme, McKenzie came across an article on digital fulfilment in a trade magazine. He contacted Xerox Corporation in the USA to find out a local supplier who could help him reinvent the loyalty program. Soon after he got a call from Paul McGarity of Digital Logic just a few kilometres up the road in Moorabbin.

"Paul was great. He came around and we sat down to discuss what we could do and came up with the idea," recalled McKenzie. "I was amazed that I had to go through Xerox in the US to find someone so close to us."

## New program, new start

There are about 4,000 HSVs sold every year, ranging in price from \$65,000 to \$85,000 (although last year there was a \$160,000 model sold). The idea for the appreciation scheme was to create a proper CRM program, upgrade the data coming in, redesign the collateral in the gift pack and develop an automated contact scheme to touch the customer a minimum of three times a year over the three-year buying cycle.

McKenzie had a clear vision of what he wanted the scheme to deliver and the benefits it could produce. With McGarity on the outside he needed someone on the inside to work toward getting buy-in to the concept at every level of the company and throughout the HSV dealerships. Enter Janelle Dedini, CRM marketing coordinator, to assist in setting up the data gathering systems and develop creative concepts as well as corporate presentations.

"We needed to change the corporate culture. For many years HSV had been doing the appreciation pack scheme in-house, with various goodies, such as car cleaning kits and tool kits. But the

program has grown stale. Six-month delays in getting the 'I just got one' pack to the customers were not uncommon, the gifts were not of a high quality and it often looked as though they were cleaning out the store," said Dedini. "We had to convince them that we could do better."

The two put together a series of dealer presentations on the new *myHSV Customer Appreciation Program*. "The idea was to show the same level of passion to our customers as they had towards our brand," said McKenzie. "We wanted to have an ongoing relationship with them and to reassure them they had chosen the right car."

The presentations to the management proved successful, with Janelle enrolling the corporate general managers into the scheme so they could experience first hand what the customer would receive. The revamped 'I just got one' pack focused on quality rather than quantity; a HSV cap, a USB lanyard with a link to *myHSV.com.au*, stylish key ring, pen and desk clock with a leather compendium. The pack was banded with personalised wrapping showing the colour model of the vehicle and personally addressed to the member.

"It is a first-class introduction to *myHSV* and it comes as a complete surprise to the customer within the first three weeks of the purchase. Customer feedback is that they think it is the best so far. People love it," said McKenzie.

## First, second and third contact

*myHSV* was launched on September 1 last year and by the end of the year up to 1,000 packs had been sent out. In addition over 700 personalised Christmas cards and personalised calendars found their way to members. The plan is to initiate 24 person-