



Focus on your Speed, NOT on your Feed

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Since the introduction of cell phones in the 1980's, distracted driving has become a real issue. Never more than since the introduction of smartphones and apps. Yes, these devices keep us connected to the world around us, but they have also created one of the biggest technological spiderwebs for drivers.

We now have unlimited 24-hour access to every social media channel via mobile apps, with endless beeps and dings and vibrations to let us know someone is trying to connect. The urge to look at your feed, or snap a picture while driving is hard to ignore so I am championing a public awareness campaign around the slogan "Focus on your Speed, NOT on your Feed". Drawing attention to the fact that drivers need to be focused on driving rather than on their social media apps and feeds is a critical message to convey. While some states already have laws around texting and driving, many people would like to think that doesn't apply to social media since technically it's not texting, but in my opinion, it should.

I will use billboards, TV, radio and social media ads to introduce the campaign and start the conversation among social media junkies. I would like to work with local and national law enforcement agencies to help spread the message and help this go viral. I even envision shorter hashtag versions like #SpeedNotFeed or #Focus4Life to get the attention of drivers worldwide. The devastation from a tragedy caused by a social media distracted driver knows no boundaries. Making people aware of the campaign in Germany is equally as important as in Oklahoma.

In the spirit of the old saying "Go Big or Go Home" I feel this campaign and the message behind it has wings. Wings broad enough to encompass any driver, in any country on any continent. Why should we stop with the United States? Gathering statistics about accidents and unnecessary deaths attributed to distracted driving is a very powerful tool to tie the use of social media apps to the root cause of these accidents. It's the hard numbers that are key in getting people to pay attention.

In as much as I think going global is worthwhile, I also believe in the power of local. Using granular data to whittle down to a specific area could have a huge impact. Taking the "Focus on your Speed, NOT on your Feed" campaign on a roadshow could open the eyes of drivers in every community. Showing very specific death and accident rate numbers for a locality really drives home the fact that it could happen to you. Erasing the

feeling of immortality that is too often present in young adult drivers, could make the difference in the decisions they make while behind the wheel.

There are amazingly successful awareness campaigns headed by organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to use as examples. MADD's campaign to "End Drunk Driving" and the NHTSA's "Click it or Ticket" seat belt campaign have both become staples of every driver's safety course. I would like to replicate the impact of those campaigns with my "Focus on your Speed, NOT on your Feed" project. To show that the dangers of using social media while driving are equally as dangerous as texting and to bring widespread public awareness to the risks, would be a win for everyone. Making that message a part of the curriculum for driver's training courses and continuing the messaging through both digital and print channels will reinforce the importance and keep it top-of-mind.

As I enter college next year, I know that I will see friends and acquaintances impacted by someone distracted by some form of social media while behind the wheel. Whether they are the victim or the accused, there is no positive outcome. Mitigating the risks before it happens is our only hope to stop these needless accidents. If we save even one life by making someone think about focusing on the road instead of on their social media, then I will consider the campaign a success.

I hope to save hundreds of lives around the world by garnering support and enlisting activists to continue to spread the message long after the billboard has come down, or the TV ads have stopped running. There is power in numbers and we will use all means necessary to keep the message front and center every day to remind drivers that it can wait.

Given the opportunity to execute on an awareness campaign such as this, I know I could lead the charge to make a real difference in my community and communities around the world. It takes being bold to get the attention a campaign like this requires. It takes determination, passion, tenacity and a willingness to accept the "no's" to get to the "yes's". I have all those characteristics and more to launch this campaign and see it through to success.