

## **BMW vs. Audi: German Billboard Wars in America**

Germans are known for being direct and quite the straight shooters. And this tendency perhaps translates to their brands as well. Because we know the two big German auto manufacturers BMW and Audi have a long history of dueling it out in the advertising arena – trying to one up each other to win the hearts and minds of the public.

But ad wars of this type were relegated to that side of the pond, until recently when Audi dared to break the unspoken rule and put up an ad in Santa Monica, California challenging BMW:



Audi: “Your move, BMW.”

Audi had launched a completely redesigned version of its A4 line, which is a direct competitor to BMW’s 3 series. And it wanted BMW to know about it.

And know about it BMW did.

But did BMW sit quietly? No, BMW never sits quietly. It responded in a befitting way with a billboard ad fit for champions. Only the response was... wait for it... wait for it... right across the street! Take a look:



BMW's response: "Checkmate."

With that it was official, these two German icons now had their gloves off and were going for it.

Next, it was Audi's turn. But Audi didn't just keep it to real life ads, oh no. They took it online. Realizing that this was the perfect bratwurst for its fans to devour and get much larger returns on its ad investment – Audi invited its social media followers to comment and reply on this challenge.

Many amusing tweets and photoshopped renditions followed including:



Audi took inspiration from its social media fans and decided to reply with a new ad on the same billboard. One that questioned BMW's luxury status:



Audi: "Time to check your luxury badge. It may have expired."

Alas, BMW didn't respond to this very hard hitting question and the billboard wars came to an end.

Or maybe not.

Perhaps there is a sequel after all to the German Auto Billboard wars. No one really knows.

What we know for sure looking at social media activity is that fans of both automakers enjoyed this duel.

For advertisers, it illustrates how a brand can use unusual marketing tactics to spread their message far, without blowing the budget. And how you can integrate real life, billboard ads with social media outreach to increase brand loyalty among your customers.