

Cadillac Designers and Engineers Ride Shotgun with Customers on Daily Drives

Five years ago, Cadillac designers and engineers started with a blank slate in designing a new user experience for its vehicles.

Fast forward to today, where Cadillac CUE allows new levels of user customization and function while embodying the art and science look of the brand.

"People often overlook how many factors go into the design and development of a system like Cadillac CUE," said Jason Diehl, design manager, Cadillac CUE. "A ton of consideration goes into seemingly minor elements like icon shape and size, fonts, color scheme, and layout."

While the physical buttons of CUE are set in place, the screens allow for varying levels of customization, Diehl said. An eight-inch capacitive touch screen in the center console allows for re-configuration of home screen icons, a personalized app tray, and the ability to save multiple rows of favorites.

Owners can drag prominent home screen apps to the top row of the screen, making them easily accessible from a different page or application, Diehl said. The screen's bottom row features a "favorites" bar that stores presets like navigation destinations, phone contacts and radio stations. Drivers can use their finger to drag this bar up, revealing three more rows of favorites, or slide the bar down to hide them.

Behind the steering wheel, a cluster of three configurable zones is broken into left-hand, center and right-hand views of the screen, Diehl said. These expandable zones allow drivers to cycle through different pages of information, such as speed limit, average fuel consumption, trip timers and the current media playing. The zones can be customized and scrolled through using a five-way controller button on the right-hand side of the steering wheel.

CUE was engineered and designed, in part, by observing people's everyday driving habits. Five years ago, the Cadillac team embarked on a massive research

study that included road trips with real customers.

"Our teams rode along in the back seat with customers, sometimes for two hours at a time," said Diehl. "The purpose was to observe their behavior inside the car: how they used everything from the radio to their electronic devices to where they stored things in the car to how they interact with other people in the car. It was important for us to go beyond just asking people how they used their system, because their answers don't always match up with what they actually do."

In addition to extensive brand, market and competitive research, this contextual research helped Cadillac compile extensive data on what works and what needs to be improved inside of vehicles. This data was crucial in the next stage of development: Post-it note workshops, Diehl said.

The Cadillac design and human-machine interface (HMI) teams compiled more than 2,500 Post-it notes of data gathered from their research and covered walls of a conference room, Diehl said.

"We took the data and feedback that fell under related categories and grouped them together to make it easier to digest," he said. "From there, the HMI engineers worked on functionality, wire frames and process flow, and the graphic design team collaborated on how this could best be displayed visually for customers."

"With CUE, we maximized our use of pixels, giving customers a full-color scale that is representative of the luxury Cadillac brand. We also spent a lot of time crafting the system's icons so that they pop for the customers while also meeting brand and federal guidelines."

In some high-end Cadillac models, CUE features a 12.3-inch reconfigurable cluster with four different layouts, Diehl said. These layouts match the different personas identified during



Cadillac display

the contextual research process:

- **Balanced:** A traditional setting with a three-gauge layout, which is the factory default setting;
- **Simple:** A digital appearance, limiting the amount of information displayed;
- **Enhanced:** A modern look with a large digital speedometer in the center. This view displays the maximum amount of information;
- **Performance:** A performance-oriented display, with a 3D rotating view of the vehicle.

Teens to Learn How Distractions Affect Driving

The Kart 2 Kart Indoor Karting and Conference Center on Van Dyke in Sterling Heights and the Sterling Heights Rotary are hosting a special "Get Sharp" alcohol and texting distracted driving awareness program for teens on Thursday, Sept. 26, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The program is at Kart 2 Kart's facility at 42705 Van Dyke. Under the supervision of driving safety professionals, participating teenagers will get behind the wheel of racing carts to learn, in a hands-on and practical sense, about the dangers of alcohol and distracted driving.

They will wear special goggles that limit vision while they are driving modified carts. The demonstration shows drivers what happens to their skills while under the influence of alcohol and other drugs.

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