



INNOVATIVE TV SPOT PUTS TWIST ON ICONIC MOVIE SCENE

Smart garage solutions meet growing consumer interest

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Editor's note:

A new marketing campaign has become a viral sensation. We contacted Chamberlain Group (CGI) President and COO Jeff Meredith for his insights on why this commercial resonates with audiences, and how it will help inspire "smart" product sales for installers in the industry.



If you haven't seen the new LiftMaster spot yet, then you need to. It is a Super Bowl-caliber commercial and easily the best ad I've seen this year.

The commercial is based on the famous garage scene from the 1986 movie "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." It pits actor Alan Ruck, who played Ferris' best friend, Cameron, in the original movie, against his son and the son's best friend, who have masterminded a plan to play hooky and take Dad's classic sports car out in downtown Chicago.

The twist? Today, the red convertible is protected by LiftMaster's Secure View Garage Door Opener (GDO) with built-in camera and 2-way voice communications. It is a hilarious thwarting and a wonderful way to present the smart garage technology available today.

Jeff Meredith, president and COO of CGI, sat down for a teleconference interview to talk about the game-changing commercial and the springboard moment the garage industry finds itself in.

What is the backstory behind the Ferris Bueller-inspired LiftMaster commercial?

Referencing a classic film to show the evolution of the smart garage was really fun, and we were honored to work with Alan Ruck to showcase the Secure View GDO in this iconic garage scene.

We knew we wanted a breakthrough advertising platform to increase awareness and familiarize more homeowners with how the smart garage can add value to their homes and everyday lives.

In our initial briefing with our agency, we considered a variety of famous garages, including the Hewlett-Packard garage and the garages where Nirvana, The Who, and CCR got their start. Then Ferris Bueller came up.

It was the perfect way to demonstrate how the Secure View GDO and smart access solutions can provide peace of mind for homeowners.

Let's be honest, the garage is not the first place people look to install smart products. However, it should be at the top of the list. It is the most important and largest access point of a home, so why wouldn't you want more insight and control over the garage?

The new spot is perfect for viral sharing. Do you have major broadcast plans, and which are your target demographics?

We knew we had a winner on our hands when we saw the rough cut, and our excitement grew as the spot was finalized. We plan on running the ads for 12 months.

We've made a multi-million-dollar broadcast buy with several national networks, including NBC, ABC, and Fox. We also extended the buy to digital TV outlets like Hulu, Amazon, and other streaming services.

We are interested in a wide geographic and demographic distribution, targeting everyone from first-time home buyers to retirees. The goal is to showcase LiftMaster innovation and enhance the perception of our brand.

Smartphones have driven this technology revolution, but smart home products were around long before the explosion. What new possibilities resulted from the development of the myQ platform in 2011?

Over the years, the garage has evolved from just a place to park the car to a multifunctional space and the main point of entry for 70% of today's households. The combination of LiftMaster's products and myQ technology has enabled millions of homeowners to control, secure, and monitor the garage using their smartphones.

With the myQ app, homeowners can manage the door and daily activities. They can also receive real-time alerts, authorize remote access to the garage, and utilize it to keep packages safe and secure.

Too many smart home devices and capabilities are just tech for tech's sake. Is it necessary to control your toaster oven from your smartphone? Our industry has embraced technology as a way to solve real-world customer problems.

For garages, the technology is really useful. Smart access using myQ is literally opening doors to intuitive solutions essential for today's changing world, transforming how we use and think of common entry points to homes, communities, businesses, and beyond.

For example, the Key by Amazon In-Garage Delivery service, integrated with myQ technology, has successfully fulfilled over 1.5 million in-garage deliveries. It's only a matter of time until our industry expands secure package delivery through the garage for groceries and other deliveries.

Why the focus on technology brands versus the traditional "workhorse-style" garage door openers?

When we first rolled out myQ in 2011, it was designed to answer the common question, "Did I remember to close the garage door?" While myQ certainly provides peace of mind in that regard, it's evolved tremendously.

Today, millions of users rely on smart home technology to solve everyday needs, and that only happened because customers were ready for it and wanted it. As a result, we've been working to change our mindset from pure hardware to a mix of hardware, software, and services.

How important has the Amazon partnership been in adding value to the garage and turning it into a secure package-receiving area?

User adoption of in-garage package delivery has accelerated rapidly since its launch in April 2019, and we expect the growth of this contactless, secure service to continue to expand.

Suddenly, people have a new reason to consider buying a new garage door opener. By partnering with Amazon, we have been able to raise our game. We have learned a lot from them, and it's given us confidence that we are capable of being a player in the technology arena.

It has also opened our eyes to even more possibilities. Our focus is no longer just safely and automatically opening and closing the garage door. LiftMaster has expanded its myQ-connected ecosystem to include smart cameras and locks offering even more control and access.



How can dealers and installers, previously focused on selling and servicing doors and openers, become gurus in "smart tech"?

There are so many wonderful advances in technology and design available in the garage door industry right now. The number of technology and safety products has increased exponentially.

Today's dealers are installing and programming products that do much more than move a door or gate—from monitored safety devices like photo beams to software that enables homeowners to control, secure, and monitor garage doors and gates from their smartphones.

When you start to dig into consumers' technology preferences, you learn that cameras are the number one seller, followed by thermostats and doorbells.

Automatic garage door openers are ubiquitous, and those with smart technology are well on their way to becoming one of the most widely adopted smart home devices.

A growing number of dealers now understand that selling smart openers with cameras and 2-way voice communications can open new revenue streams and differentiate them from the competition. If you are customer-centric in your approach, you will be successful.

A dealer who installs a smart opener should demonstrate how it can link to customers' existing smart home networks. They should also educate customers on how to use the myQ app on their phones. This will enable dealers to sell an expanded portfolio of products, ranging from locks to cameras to lighting.

Any suggestions for the old-school installers who want to transition into the smart home and garage arenas?

I am hoping that the Ferris Bueller spot will be transformative for the LiftMaster brand and the industry as a whole. By capturing the public's attention with a relatable commercial, we hope to inspire garage door installers.

When installer understand how many garage-centric problems they can solve for customers through this new technology, they should be inspired to learn about the products that are out there.

If Alan Ruck can teach his son and his friend a thing or two about smart garage connectivity, we hope we can teach garage door dealers and distributors about the open-ended possibilities of smart home tech. Stay tuned. ■

Newton Associates is a Philadelphia based business-to-business advertising and PR agency representing various industry manufacturers.

