

A close-up photograph of a person's hand on a black steering wheel. The steering wheel features the Volkswagen logo in the center. In the background, a car's infotainment screen displays a navigation map with a red route line and a green highlighted path. The image is partially overlaid with a large, dark grey diagonal shape on the right side, which is further accented by a bright orange diagonal shape at the bottom right corner.

Volkswagen Canada

Ask a Driver Usability Testing Findings

September 25, 2018



User testing background

Research objectives

1. Discover what questions users have about their cars, and where they conduct research outside the traditional manufacturer and dealer touch points.
2. Gather design insights & actionable findings from usability testing the *Ask a Driver* experience.

Research approach

Methodology:

- 7 one-on-one moderated interviews, broken into 3 parts:
 1. Interview about car research habits
 2. Open-ended car research, where the participant recreated a previous online search
 3. Usability testing of *Ask a Driver* on the Volkswagen Canada site. Note: the Jetta contest was NOT running when this usability test was conducted.

Participant criteria:

- 4 men, 3 women
- 50% of participants owned a Volkswagen car
- 50% of participants were planning to buy a car (Volkswagen or other) in the next 6 months

Research habits for car purchases & maintenance/repair

Questions about cars

We asked participants to recall a time they had a question about their car, and to recreate their research steps.

All participants started their online research on Google, and their questions fell into two categories: shopping for a new car or maintaining/repairing their current car.

- **Manufacturer websites are a starting point for car research.** Participants will discover a model, and then google for reviews about that particular model.
- **Car reviews on major journalistic sites like YouTube, AutoTrader and Car & Driver were most popular,** but participants took these reviews with a grain of salt from a fear they might be sponsored/paid.
- **Participants trusted online forums the most,** expressing that reviews or repairs shared by real car owners were the most valuable.

“You see if people liked it or not, if they had any personal problems. The manufacturer’s not going to come out and say there were problems with the engine that year.”



When do participants ask questions offline?

Individuals reached out to their social networks for advice, gathering information to compliment their online research.

- Participants sought out informal reviews from friends and family who had a car they were interested in (ie. what do you like about it, etc.)
- For advice on purchasing a new car, participants sought out opinions from the “car person” in their life.
- Participants who had long-standing relationships with their private mechanics were more likely to ask them questions about car issues vs. searching online first.

Usability testing findings for *Ask a Driver*

Initial reactions to *Ask a Driver*

Responses to the question & answer site were mixed.

Surprise at the presence of *Ask A Driver* on the VW site:

- Participants stated they wouldn't naturally go to a manufacturer website to read car reviews or research a potential issue with their car.

Trust in the Volkswagen brand:

- 50% of participants thought that Volkswagen trusted their cars enough to allow honest feedback and reviews on their site.
- 50% of participants believed that Volkswagen had moderated questions and responses so only positive content appeared.

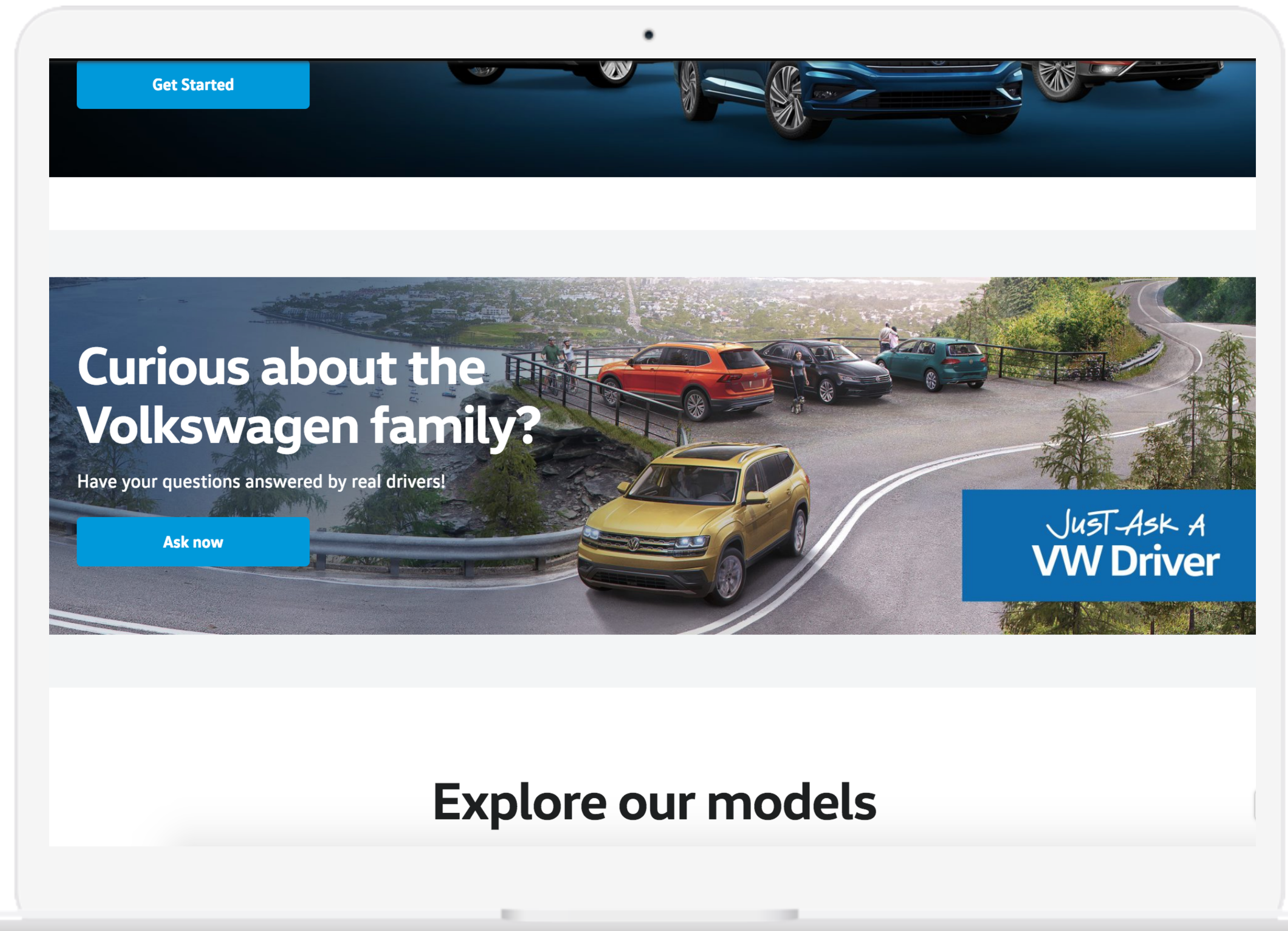
Navigating to *Ask a Driver* from the homepage

Homepage banner was not discoverable:

- Participants didn't read the copy on the banner, instead commenting on the car imagery.

"The picture is nice. I don't like the color of the cars. It doesn't talk to me specifically."

- They believed the banner linked to a car model page, and were surprised when it opened the *Ask a Driver* experience.



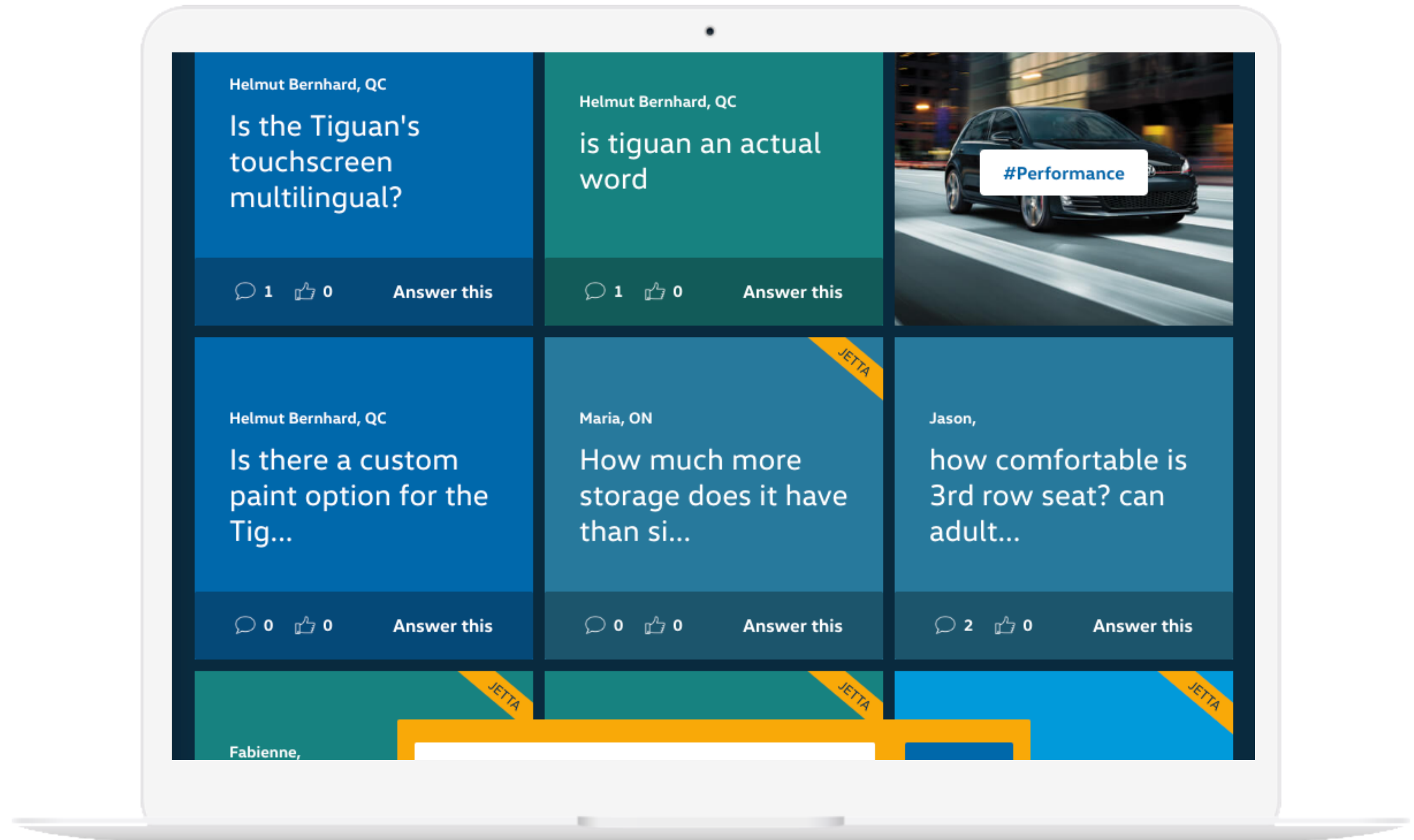
Attitudes towards *Ask a Driver* content

A low response rate made participants suspicious:

- Participants were concerned with the lack of answers to questions, especially when questions were posted months ago.

"It's weird that no one is answering. It's very strange."

- To address this, participants suggested that a verified Volkswagen spokesperson could answer questions. They trusted an official Volkswagen response to be factual.



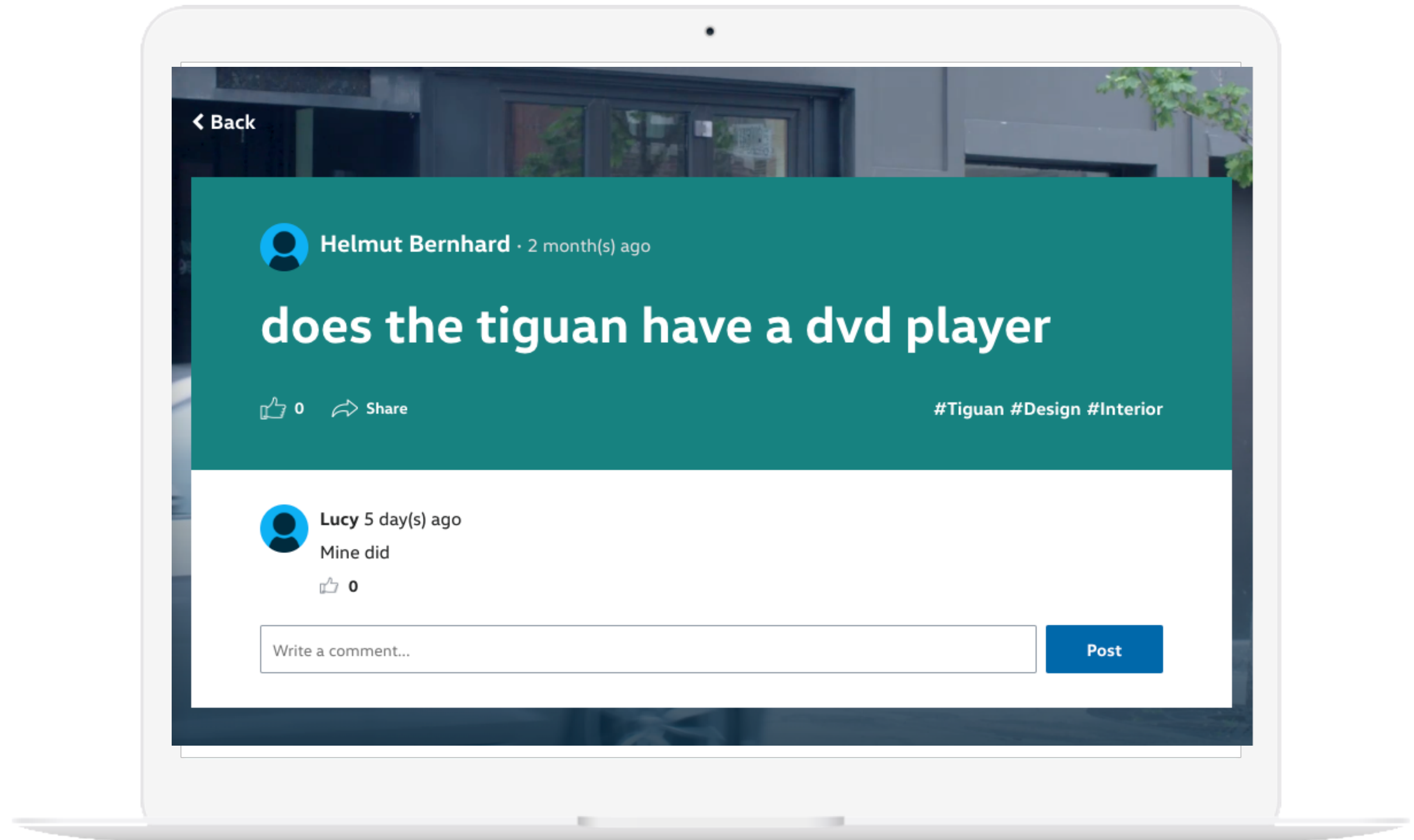
Attitudes towards *Ask a Driver* content, continued

Simple questions & answers made participants assume the content was sponsored:

- Participants thought the questions and answers were too rudimentary to be helpful.

"I look for forums that have more of a discussion or argument. These are more yes or no questions."

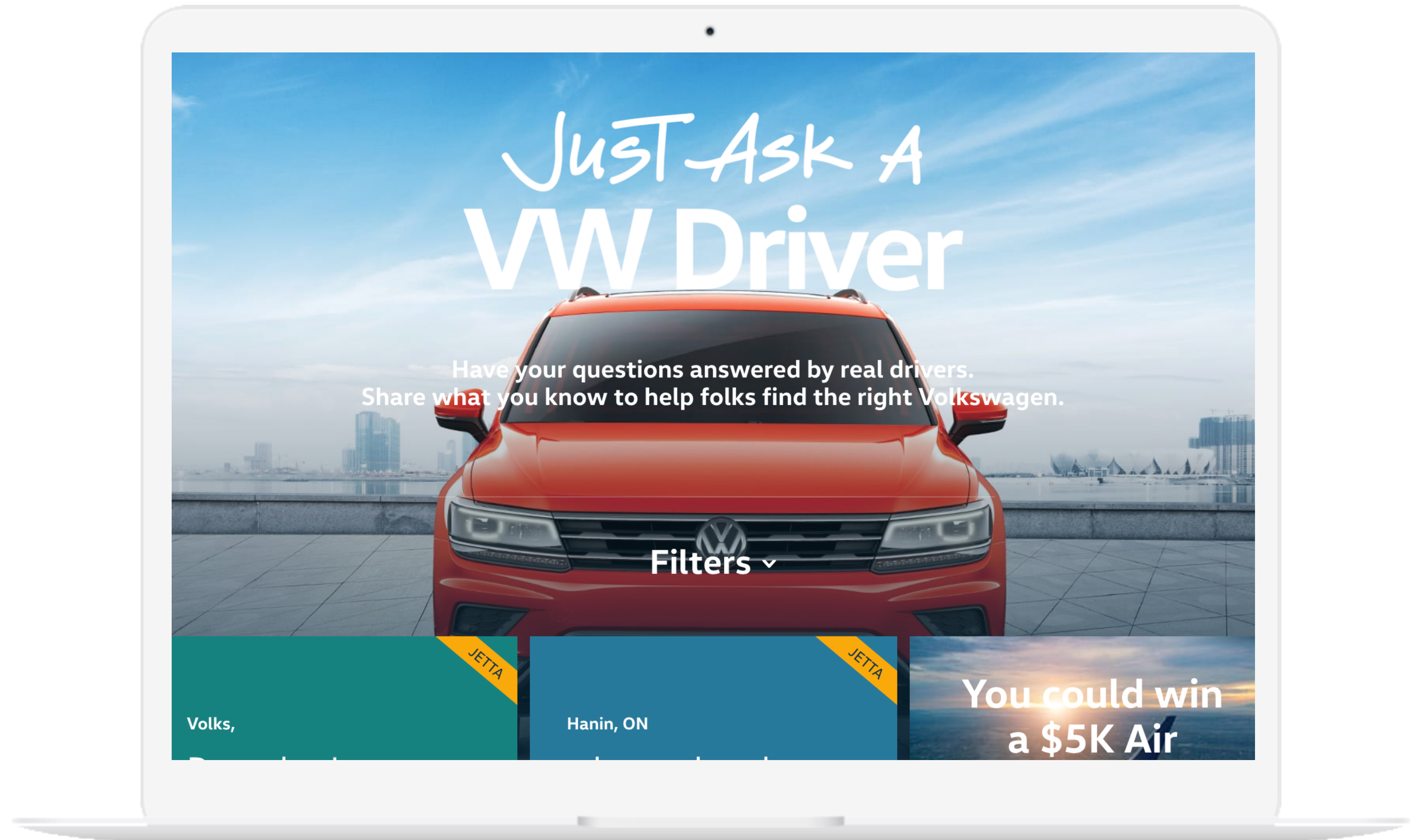
- Participants expressed distrust at seeing the same few people asking and answering questions, assuming these people had been paid to participate.



Filters on the *Ask a Driver* page

Filters were not discoverable and ineffective at narrowing down results:

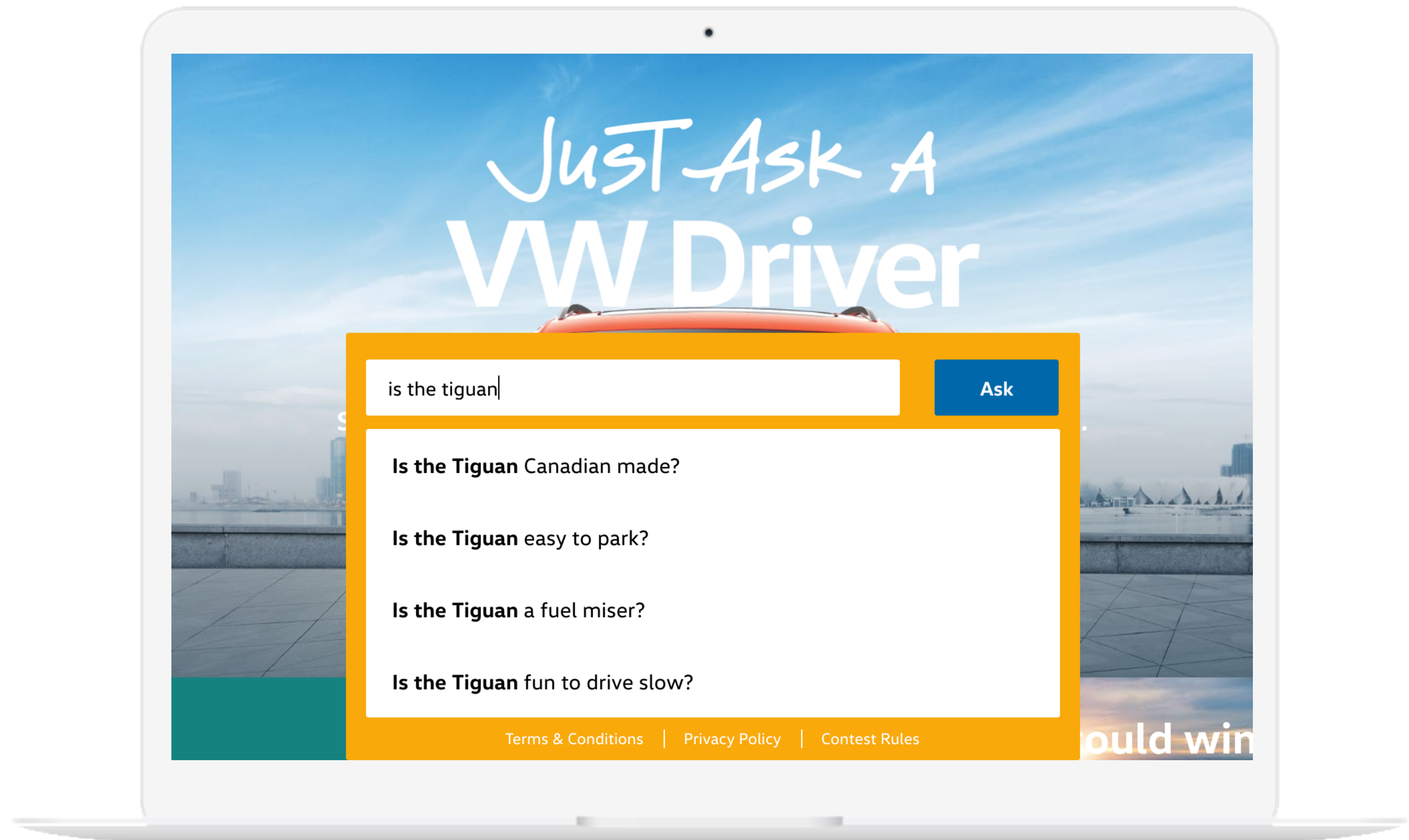
- Participants scrolled past the filters upon first visit, and then expressed difficulty finding content for a specific model they were interested in.
- 3 participants did go back to filter by a model (Golf, Passat, Jetta) but expressed confusion when the page returned Tiguan results. (Many questions are tagged with all models, rendering the filters useless.)



Hybrid search/ask bar on the *Ask a Driver* page

Question auto-complete in the search bar tested positively:

- When the search bar auto-populated with a question the participant was interested in, participants were pleased and easily clicked to view the answer.

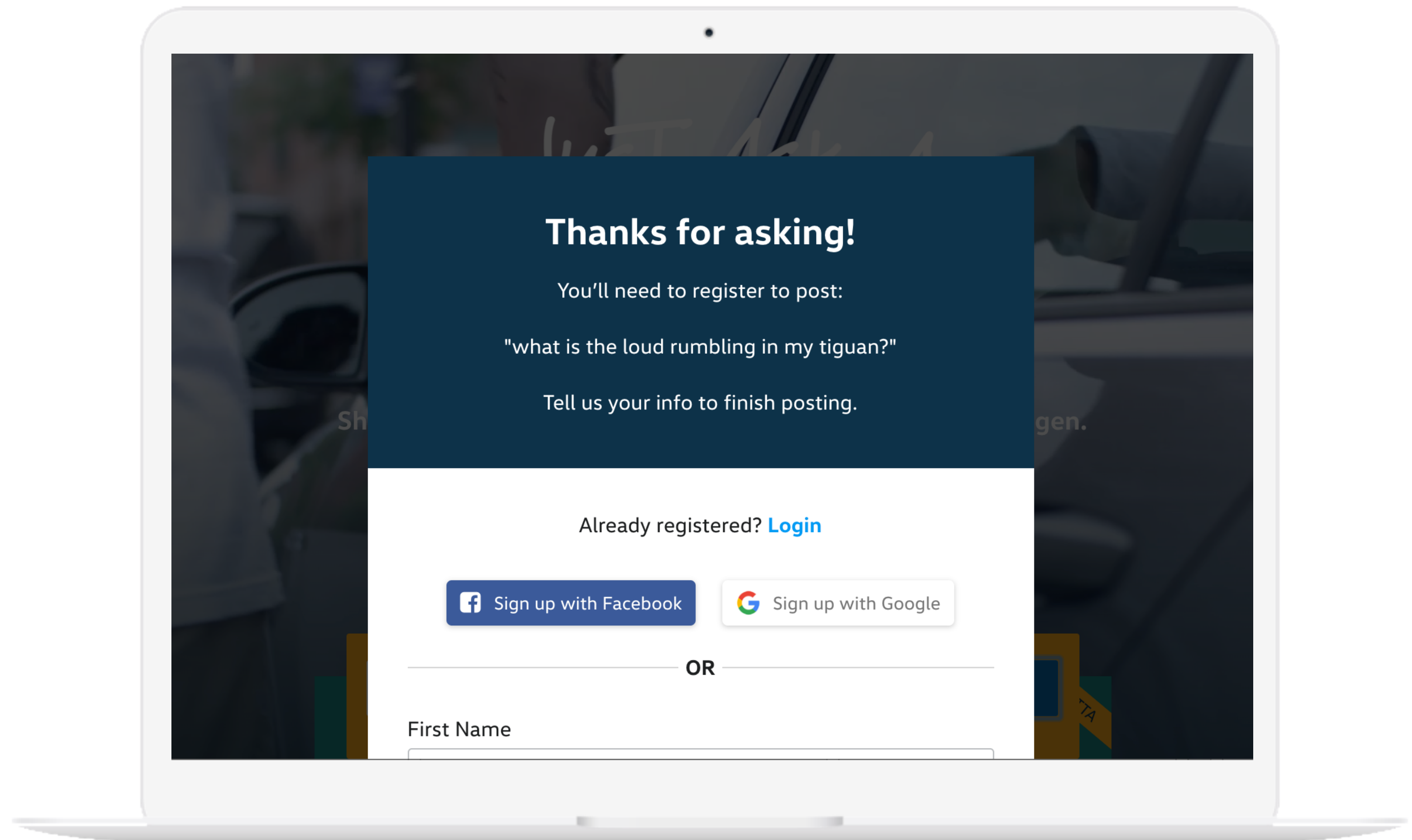


Reactions to account registration modal

Prompt for registration was a trigger to abandon the site:

- When trying to post a new question, all participants expressed displeasure at being asked to register for an account.
- All participants stated they would not sign up or give personal information to participate, and would abandon.

“This would be where I close this down. It’s maddening.”



Navigation & layout

The *Ask A Driver* page layout tested fairly positively:

- Most participants praised the card layout, stating that it was easy to scan questions (vs. a traditional message board).
- Participants suggested not truncating questions and including the car model for even easier scanning.

