

Volvo Trucks: Live test series

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Summary

This case study describes how Swedish company Volvo Trucks set out to maximise awareness of its new range of trucks.

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Forsman & Bodenfors

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What were the objectives for the creative work?

Commercial objectives: Increase the market share of Volvo Truck through an increase of sales.

Marketing objectives: Launch a series of five new Volvo Truck models.

Communication objectives: Maximize awareness of Volvo Trucks and the new range of trucks.

Increase consideration for Volvo Trucks among the core target group.

Get the core target group to take action, for example, visit the website or contact a dealer.

High level statements on core brand values:

- A truck brand I really would like to own.
- A truck brand that is leading in safety.
- A truck brand that cares about the environment
- A truck brand that cares about the customers.
- A modern truck brand.
- An innovative truck brand.

What was the strategy behind the creative work?

The target audience is a diverse group of purchasers. Mostly, these purchasers are not the people using the trucks. And so they seek help and advice from a wide network of contacts: drivers, colleagues, workshop acquaintances, financial advisors, competitors, customers, friends and even family members. So no matter how small the core target audience looks on paper, we saw no option but to go wide in order to penetrate the vast number of people involved. Without a significant global media budget, we decided to embrace the new media landscape and use YouTube as our main channel.

But viral marketing and social media alone would not be enough to reach a critical mass in the trucking industry and among those who have a relationship to the trucking industry, we need [Skip to content](#) momentum. Both mainstream and automotive and truck-specific varieties.

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publishers and news channels. For each new film, the message was adapted to suit the segment and theme of the different media channels, so that the most relevant angle was used.

What was the creative work?

The Ballerina Stunt: Can a slackliner walk between two moving trucks? A nerve-racking way to show truck handling.

The Hamster Stunt: Can a hamster drive a 15-tonne truck? The new steering is up for a spectacular test.

The Hook: The president of Volvo Trucks puts his neck on the line, testing the robustness of the Volvo FMX.

The Chase: A red-painted truck is being chased by a herd of bulls, testing the manoeuvrability of the Volvo FL.

The Technician: The technician responsible for the improved ground clearance shows that he's a man of his word.

The Epic Split: Jean-Claude Van Damme carries out his famous split between two reversing trucks, testing the Volvo Dynamic Steering.



The videos were aired solely on Volvo Trucks' YouTube channel. Then they were followed up in Volvo Trucks' social media channels and combined with extensive PR. The Live Tests were also accompanied by in-depth interviews with the engineers behind the new technology. This was done both in printed and digital form.

Please explain if there were any other factors that may have impacted on the effectiveness of your campaign.

Sales are a very difficult thing to measure in the trucking industry. First, you have all the different things that happen in the world, such as war, economic downturns and changes of government. The second part that adds to the complexity is the constantly changing regional laws and national protectionism. The third part is the actual purchase process and delivery of the truck. Since most of the trucks sold are customized, the time between a delivery and a finished deal can stretch out over a long period.

Having said all that, the sales increase for Volvo Trucks was due to much more than just a campaign. It was the involvement of thousands of people that made this possible. Our contribution was to make the Volvo brand and the new trucks visible, in a way that generated a lot of interest – both in the new trucks and in the brand.

What was the commercial gain for your Client as result of running the creative work?

Already after the first film was released we knew that we were on to something. After 48 hours the Ballerina Stunt had reached 1 million views on YouTube (*Ballerina.Media p.3) and TV channels from America, Germany, Australia, Japan etc. started to run the content in both mainstream media and in the trade press(*Ballerina.Media p.3). Our strategy worked. And from that point we continued producing and delivering content all the way to the final film -The Epic Split. This film featured Jean-Claude Van Damme performing his celebrated split between two reversing trucks.

All in all, the Volvo Trucks Live Test Series has had an earned media value of €115,000.(*Be On_Summary p.14-16) It has been shared 8 million times online and generated more than 100 million views on YouTube (plus an extra 50 million views in spoofs (*Be ON_Summary1 p.129-137)). There have been more than 20,000 editorials published in global media. (*Be On_Summary1 p.41-52)

The impact on the truck buyers was massive. 69% of customers [Skip to content](#) non-customers mentioned *spontaneously* that they had seen communication about/from Volvo (*GFK Launch p.14). After hearing the truck brands, the recall of the communication was 81%

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After the core target group had seen the communication, between 40-50% (depending on the film) of the truck buyers were "significantly more likely" or "more likely" to consider a Volvo truck in future purchases. (*GFK Launch p.30).

And last and maybe most important, sales. In the fourth quarter of 2013 (after the campaign period) sales increased by 24% making it Volvo Trucks' best year ever.

"Volvo Trucks has exceeded our expectations and contributed to the Volvo brand increasing its market share in Europe to historically high levels". Olof Persson, President and CEO of Volvo Group.

What do you think this case adds to our understanding of how creativity can be effective?

Sometimes a small media budget is the worst thing you can imagine, but sometimes it helps to open new doors. The overall lesson learned in this case would be the opportunity that the new democratized media landscape brings. Firstly, that it is possible to get a global reach without a massive media budget. Secondly, probably, is that you can do it with such high efficiency. A proof that sometimes a smart strategy and idea can outspend any budget.

And thirdly, probably, is the way the traditional advertising role is changing. Before, we used to say that the media is the message. But that was during a time when we actually could control the media delivery. Today we have to accept that we come up with the content and someone else (or everyone else) delivers it.

Topics

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