



ALPHA

White paper

Life in the fast lane: the top five automotive global marketing campaigns

Dominated by a relatively small number of global brands, international marketing campaigns for the automotive sector have often attracted big budgets and no shortage of creative inspiration. Here we list our top five big hitters, featuring some iconic ads, unforgettable lines and, of course, the occasional winding mountain pass. Let's get this show on the road...

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Honda – The Power of Dreams

Described as “one of the most powerful campaigns in the history of advertising”, The Power of Dreams helped to position Honda as one of the most innovative brands in the world. But the legendary tagline, which featured across a whole range of TV and print ads, was almost discarded at the start. When Honda first approached W+K London with the line (which was a direct translation from the Japanese), the ad agency initially thought it was far too clunky to work with.

However, when the first ads featuring “The Power of Dreams” started to appear in 2002, the creative concept snowballed. The campaign, which included TV spots with rainbows, bunnies and flying engines, was all about Honda’s ability to turn inspiration into action. W+K London Partner Tony Davidson explained: “If you can make things, you can do amazing things. So that’s what The Power of Dreams is: to have an idea that is beneficial to humanity and then to make it happen”¹.

It’s also a campaign which included two of the most admired TV car ads of all time: [Grrr](#) (featuring aforementioned bunnies), which celebrated the launch of a new cleaner engine, rather than a car; and our personal favourite, the 120-second masterpiece the [Cog](#), which put the in-car CD player centre stage.



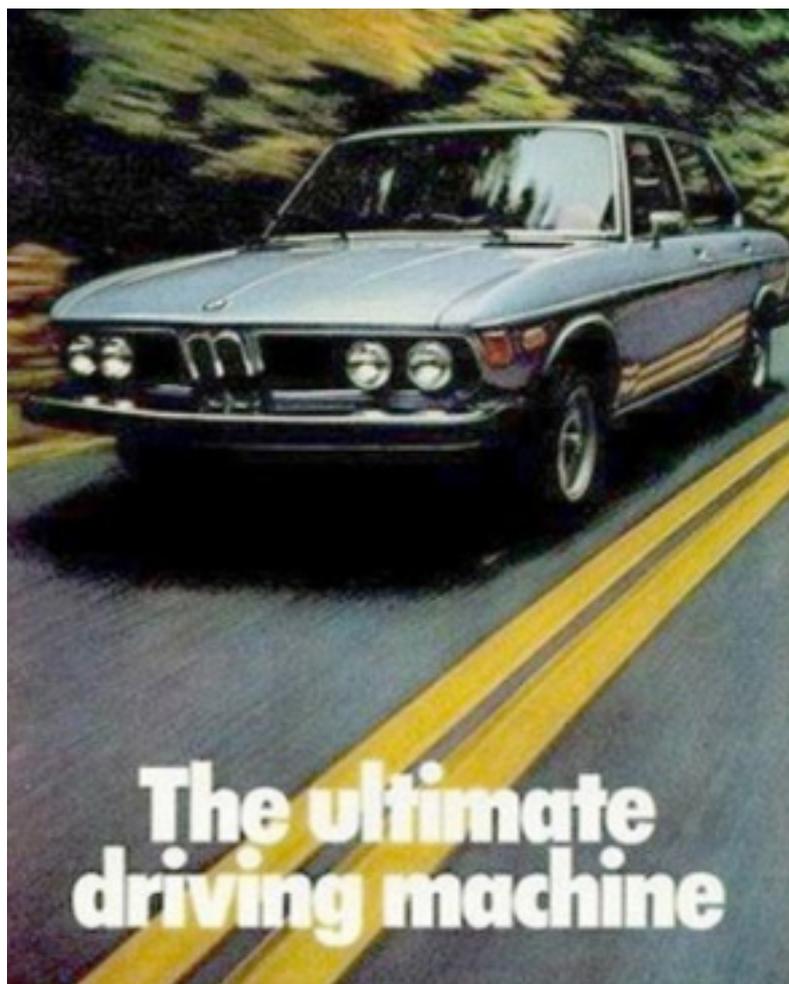
¹ <http://www.creativebloq.com/advertising/power-dreams-11135302>

BMW – The Ultimate Driving Machine

Sometimes, a campaign becomes so successful that its message becomes synonymous with the brand it is promoting. This is certainly the case with BMW and “The Ultimate Driving Machine”, which has become one of the most remembered taglines of all time.

The campaign was first launched in the US in 1973 as the German car manufacturer tried to break into a highly competitive market dominated by home-grown brands. “The Ultimate Driving Machine” positioned BMW as an aspirational choice for people who really knew about cars and made a brand promise that the manufacturer duly delivered upon.

Ads featuring the line were so well received that the campaign was soon adopted across other global markets. In fact, when BMW began to introduce some new slogans in the 2000s – “Sheer driving pleasure” in the US and “Joy is BMW” in Europe – many BMW fans voiced their dissent. BMW took the hint and the original campaign line has since been revived. As we might say of a car itself, if it’s not broken, why fix it?



MINI– Not Normal

As a template for how to conduct a successful global marketing campaign in the 21st century, MINI's "Not Normal" ticks all the right boxes. Celebrating the unique relationship which MINI owners have with their cars, the global campaign was launched in 2013 and placed a strong emphasis on online channels and social media.

A humorous TV spot entitled [Friend for Life](#) showcases a diverse group of owners of different ages who have one thing in common: their passion for MINI. In another ad entitled [Band of MINI](#), the individuality and non-conformist nature of MINI drivers is celebrated when they get together to lip-sync their favourite song.

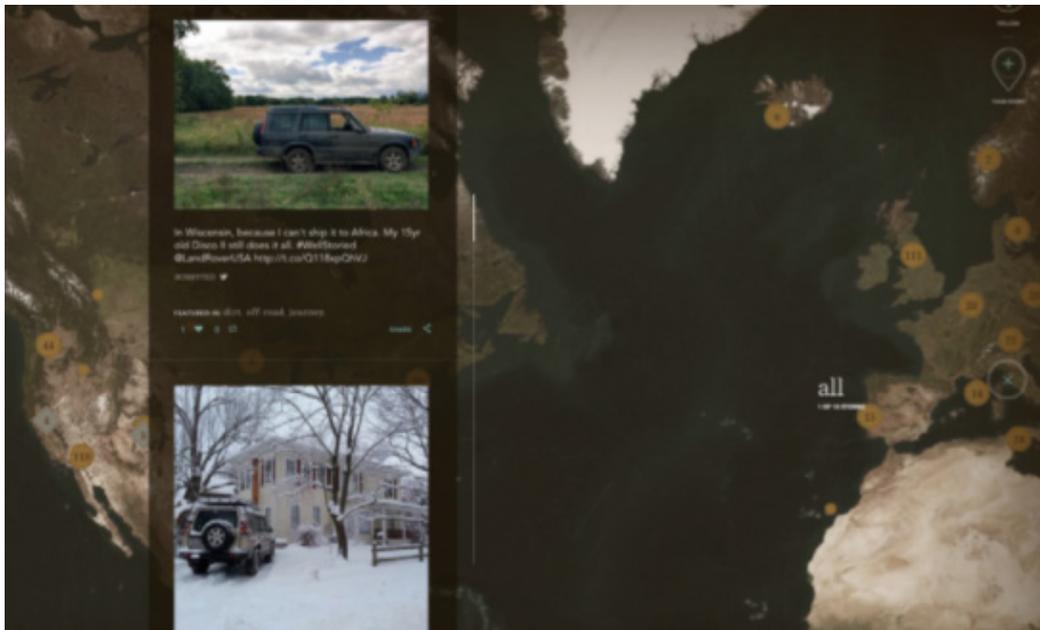
MINI owners were invited to get involved in the campaign itself via social media. In the UK, MINI lovers could upload their own "MINI inventions" (including MINI cakes, furniture and even body art) onto Tumblr or Twitter via the hashtag #MININOTNORMAL – images which were later uploaded onto digital posters and billboards. On a global level, the campaign helped to re-establish MINI as a fun and innovative brand that wasn't afraid to stand out from the crowd.



Land Rover - #WellStoried

There is another well-known automotive manufacturer with a British heritage that has been encouraging users to play a hands-on role in its marketing campaigns. In 2015, Land Rover released an interactive digital novella by award-winning British author William Boyd, celebrating the spirit of adventure and exploration and leading to 100,000 e-book downloads.

Following on from this, owners were invited to submit their own geo-tagged Land Rover tales onto the #WellStoried online hub. As the global map filled up with tales of four-wheeled adventure off the beaten track, the campaign attracted more than 5 million views in just three months. Engaging consumers by putting them in the driving seat, we think this campaign is the shape of things to come.



Toyota – The Real Deal

We thought we'd round up our list of the top five global automotive marketing campaigns with a very modern take on a classic theme: the sexy red sports car featured in all its high-octane glory. Released in 2012, [The Real Deal](#) was a high-profile campaign for Toyota's GT86 sports model which was aired on TV, at cinemas and (in an extended version) on YouTube.

The ad features a computer-generated futuristic world devoid of joy and feeling – full of “pixels, pretence and drive assist”. In search of an authentic experience, the hero has to go underground to get his hands on a GT86 smuggled in from the “real” world – and promptly launches off on a hair-raising journey into the night. It's fast, it's fun and with a clear debt to *Grand Theft Auto*, it's even got a neat little twist in the ending.



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