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Volkswagen to recall and re-test “defeat device” vehicles worldwide

The German auto manufacturer will recall tampered vehicles and redo
emission reports

COPENHAGEN, DK – German auto manufacturer Volkswagen will be recalling around 11

million vehicles worldwide and re-testing its emission rates in collaboration with the

Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA. A report by the EPA found that a portion of VW

vehicles sold in America had been fitted with a testing software referred to as a “defeat device”

that reported their pollutant emissions inaccurately.

After an internal review, VW can confirm that around 11 million vehicles sold worldwide were also fitted with said “defeat device,” all of which will be recalled so that the software can be removed. Once removed, VW plans to remodel these engines to ensure that the vehicles both function efficiently and also stay within the emission limits that were originally envisioned.

In order to ensure the highest level of honesty and transparency throughout this process, Volkswagen will be working alongside the EPA to ensure that the recalled vehicles are made with the environment in mind first and foremost.

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Volkswagen Creative Brief

1. Customer Journey Map
 - a. Surveying Volkswagen customers showed that TV commercials served as a major touchpoint, and will be highly effective in ensuring the highest amount of viewers possible.
2. Strategic Objective
 - a. Release two commercials to be aired on cable channels showing the process of remodeling previously tampered vehicles and highlighting VW's environmental commitment
3. Mission & Vision
 - a. Mission: To create high-quality vehicles while also minimizing environmental impact throughout the entire lifecycle
 - b. Vision: To make the world mobile, sustainable, and accessible to all
4. History, Tradition, Philosophy, and Values
 - a. Founded in Germany in 1904, first foreign sales company in Canada
 - b. Innovation, technology, and quality
 - c. Timeless, classic designs
5. Target Group
 - a. Primary: Upper-to-middle-class 26-36-year-old Americans that are passionate about the environment
 - b. Secondary: Upper-class, retired, 45-60-year-old car enthusiasts that are interested in Volkswagen
6. Stakeholders
 - a. Consumers and employees
 - b. Brands owned by Volkswagen AG; Lamborghini, Audi, Porsche, etc.
 - c. Shareholders in Volkswagen
7. Positioning
 - a. Strengths: Brand community, repairability, service, brand reputation
 - b. Weaknesses: Price, brand integrity
 - c. Strong: Brand community, similar position to competitors
 - d. Focus: Improving brand integrity through emphasizing brand community and reputation
8. Benchmark
 - a. Main competitors are Mercedes-Benz Group, General Motors, and Toyota
 - b. Volkswagen stands out due to its history of innovative designs
9. Past, Current, and Future Campaigns
 - a. Past: re-imagining what a traditional ad can look like, changing public perception away from brand origins, "Lunar Landing" and "Lemon" ads in 1959
 - b. Current: Heavy on visual metaphor to emphasize individuality, "Precision is Everything", and "Fast Just Got Faster" ads in 2015
 - c. Future: "NEW AUTO" campaign, focused on transitioning to electric and autonomous driving
10. Portfolio Management
 - a. Our focus on corporate branding does not require a portfolio analysis.
11. Call to Action
 - a. For consumers to see VW's integrity and go and purchase VW vehicles in support of environmentalism and sustainability
12. Communication Platform Words
 - a. Innovation, quality, sustainability, integrity, compliance
13. Schedule & Deliverables
 - a. Immediate release: press release to major media outlets
 - b. March 16: Filming/production starts on the first commercial
 - c. March 22: Finish editing the first commercial
 - d. March 30: release of the first commercial on all major cable channels
 - e. April 26: production starts on the follow-up commercial
 - f. April 22: finishing touches on follow-up commercial
 - g. April 30: release of the follow-up commercial
14. Budget Resources
 - a. \$5 million sourced from Volkswagen's creative department to be spent on film equipment and location

I chose the Amsterdam press release format so that the information would be delivered in a way that is clear and easy to understand quickly. I also wanted to make sure that the facts were delivered in the first sentences so that whoever reads this press release knows exactly what the core of the story is right away and can take away the most important facts. I chose not to include a picture at the top to make the press release more formal, since this is not a lighthearted topic and I wanted to let the reader know that this is a serious issue that VW is not taking lightly.

I chose to include the EPA in the response because I felt that having a neutral second party to hold VW accountable would be important to a consumer. The majority of the backlash to VW's response was because the company was lying and twisting facts, so I wanted to make sure that accountability was a big part of my response. Making sure that consumers know that Volkswagen is still a responsible and reliable company was the most important message I wanted to portray when writing this press release. I wanted to make sure Volkswagen's response had an emphasis on honesty, accountability, and transparency.

I chose cable commercials for my strategic objective because one of Volkswagen's main touchpoints is TV commercials, so I figured that would be an effective way to ensure the highest amount of viewers within a short amount of time. Broadcasting the commercials on top cable channels would make sure that viewers would see the commercials regardless of what they are watching. I wanted the first commercial to be released quickly so that consumers knew that Volkswagen was working on a solution quickly and thoroughly. I chose to include a follow-up commercial after the release of the first one to emphasize Volkswagen's commitment to authenticity and to let consumers know that the company is making a long-term commitment to sustainability and to the environment. By creating a follow-up commercial, viewers can realize

that Volkswagen is integrating this issue into the fabric of its brand and is transforming itself into a sustainable and environmentally conscious company.

I chose innovation, integrity, quality, and compliance as my value words. Volkswagen is known for pushing the boundaries of the auto industry with its innovative designs and high-quality vehicles. This made it feel necessary to include innovation and quality into the core of this campaign. Integrity and compliance stem from the fact that Volkswagen lost a lot of trust in its stakeholders as a result of the diesel scandal, so I wanted to ensure that consumers knew that Volkswagen was genuinely committed to fixing its wrongdoings and to becoming a more sustainable brand.