

CHAPTER 5

Breakaway Campaigns

“Just do it.” “Think Different.” “Drivers wanted.” “The #1 ball in golf.” “A Diamond Is Forever.” “got milk?” “Priceless.”

Breakaway products become breakaway brands because of breakaway branding campaigns. Without a strong campaign, a breakaway product can fail and a breakaway brand can fade away.

For a new brand, a campaign is its introduction to the public. For an existing brand, a campaign can increase interest and drive up sales and profits. For a declining brand, the right campaign can renew consumer interest and rejuvenate sales.

A campaign is a large undertaking that could involve millions of dollars of investment in an intricate program of integrated advertising and promotional strategies and tactics. Every element of a breakaway campaign is carefully orchestrated to play off the other, and each element must ultimately support the brand and the brand promise.

The breakaway campaign is a defining moment for a new brand, because the campaign can literally make or break the brand. It is at once the most likely place for success and failure—high risk for high reward. Developing breakaway campaigns takes brains. It is part science; but it is also part art—the great campaigns involve vision, creativity, and passion as well.

A breakaway campaign stands out in the crowd because it cuts through the clutter, connects with the consumer, differentiates the brand from all of its competitors—and *it sells*. It can be for any product in any market. The breakaway campaign is one that “has legs” and can live beyond the initial launch. It not only brings a breakaway brand to market, it also sustains that brand by evolving over time. While the tactics may change, the

Breakaway Campaigns

underlying strategy and message of a breakaway campaign often remains for many, many years.

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Apple’s “Think Different” campaign led to the company’s turnaround, creating a different perception about the computer maker that had a lasting impact on the consumer. Miller Lite’s “Tastes Great. Less Filling.” campaign not only launched a new brand, it launched a whole new beer category, causing competitors to scramble to introduce light beers. Volkswagen’s “Drivers wanted” campaign redefined automobile advertising with a human, endearing element—so reinvigorating the brand that VWs became the coolest cars to drive.

Nike’s “Just do it” campaign defined not just a brand, but a lifestyle. While the tag line and the ubiquitous “swoosh” are the world’s most recognized advertising elements, it is Nike’s relentless application of these elements to everything it does that makes the company a legendary marketer. Nike’s overarching campaign isn’t about athletic shoes, it is about the achievement and performance of athletes. In sport after sport, Nike has applied the “Just do it” magic to achieve breakaway status. While competitors like Reebok have marketed sneakers, Nike has marketed mindset.

Even when Nike gets involved in philanthropic campaigns, something special happens. Nike committed \$1 million to the “Live Strong” cancer education program of the Lance Armstrong Foundation to jumpstart the sale of yellow wristbands with the words LIVE STRONG on them. Each wristband would sell

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

for \$1, with every dollar going directly to cancer research. The wristbands quickly became hot properties, in part because of Nike's support—worn by athletes and celebrities, and sold on eBay. While the goal was to sell 5 million wristbands, 15 million of them had been sold by the fall of 2004.

Breakaway campaigns like Nike's, Apple's, and Volkswagen's have something else in common: teamwork. Great campaigns are a team sport—they require a partnership between a brand owner, all of its divisions, and its agency to create great campaigns. Just as important, it takes a CMO and CEO with the vision, guts, and determination to take risks, to innovate instead of imitate, and to demand that their organization and advertising agency deliver a breakaway campaign.

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It's Magic

Look at a memorable breakaway campaign and you sometimes wonder, “How did they come up with that?” Companies and their agencies alike will tell you a lot goes into a campaign—naming the product, consumer research, smart media buys, flawless execution. But there's a certain amount of magic in there too. At some point, a team of creative people thinks up the ideas that bring a campaign to life. The hard part isn't coming up with lots of creative concepts—many agencies are quite capable of throwing ideas up on a wall. The real magic is *picking the right one*—the big idea that really works, the breakaway concept that becomes the driving force behind a breakaway campaign.

Breakaway Campaigns

It's how Michelin decided to sit babies in their tires to dramatize safety. It's how Altoids used packaging to differentiate breath mints from all others on the market. It's how ABSOLUT turned the shape of its bottle into the centerpiece of a breakaway promotional strategy. It's how AFLAC used a quacking duck to create brand awareness, which has increased from about 10 percent to 90 percent since the duck first appeared in January 2000. It's how Volkswagen turned "Drivers wanted" into the most recognizable phrase in automotive advertising. It's how Citizens Bank became known as "not your typical bank" by being friendly and approachable. It's how Royal Caribbean changed cruises into exciting vacation experiences. It's how marketers of Las Vegas thought to tell the world, "What Happens Here Stays Here."

The Campaign Is the Core

A campaign uses a combination of coordinated, integrated media to capture the personality of the product, generate awareness among the right target audiences, and create demand. Past campaigns almost always relied heavily on network television, but modern campaigns are much more varied. Today, campaigns incorporate both network and cable TV, as well as print, online, radio, direct mail, and often nontraditional media—everything from street marketing to publicity stunts to contests that may appear on the product packaging itself.

Marketers and their advertising partners talk about brands that "buzz." Great campaigns go beyond the rational to touch peoples' lives and generate interest and excitement.

The core campaign is the filter for all promotional activities surrounding the brand. Developing a breakaway campaign is

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

easy to talk about but hard to do. The breakaway campaign has the potential to catapult a brand into the culture, create an aspirational connection, and endure for many years. Following are a few classic breakaway campaigns.

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GOT MILK?

The California Milk Processor Board (CMPB), established in 1993 to “make milk more competitive and increase milk consumption in California,” is behind the wildly successful “got milk?” campaign, credited with injecting new life into the U.S. dairy industry.

Conceived by the ad agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, the tag line, “got milk?” was introduced in a television ad that ran in October 1993. The ad featured an American history buff who is eating a peanut butter sandwich and tries to answer a radio station’s trivia question, “Who shot Alexander Hamilton?” to win \$10,000. He knows the answer is Aaron Burr, but he is unable to enunciate the words because his mouth is full of peanut butter...and he has run out of milk, so he can’t wash it down. The ad ends with the now classic line, “got milk?” This ad swept the advertising industry’s most prestigious awards and was named one of the top ads of all time in numerous polls.

This was the beginning of a breakaway campaign that changed the American public’s perception of milk. It was a campaign not without risk. Every previous message about milk conveyed how good it was for you and how it built strong bones. This may have been accurate, but it was dull, dull, dull. Many beverages had

Breakaway Campaigns

passed milk by “got milk?” recognized not the classic health benefits but rather the contemporary “benefits” of milk. Milk became relevant again, because it was the perfect companion beverage to junk food like peanut butter, cookies, and chocolate cake.

In 1995 CMPB licensed the “got milk?” trademark nationally and the rest, as they say, is history. Other “got milk?” ads won major ad awards in 1994, 1996, 1997, and 2003. Print ads showing celebrities with “milk mustaches” became a national sensation.

By the late ‘90s, “got milk?” became so ingrained into American culture that countless takeoffs (“got wine?”, “got catnip?”, etc.) turned the celebrated tag line into a pop culture icon.

In 2004 Great Britain’s Milk Development Council licensed “got milk?” to begin a promotion for dairy farmers in the UK—the first time the American campaign had gone international. Meanwhile, back in the U.S., “got milk?” has been licensed on a variety of consumer goods, including t-shirts and other apparel, kitchenware, Hot Wheels, and Barbie dolls. And the “got milk?” slogan has been paired with such cookie manufacturers as Keebler and Nabisco to advertise cookies and milk together.

“got milk?” has achieved over 90 percent awareness nationally.

According to CMPB, “got milk?” has achieved over 90 percent awareness nationally. It has single-handedly revitalized a moribund industry after a 20-year sales slump.

A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

Perhaps more historic than “got milk?” as an industry-changing tag line is “A Diamond Is Forever.” Created by the ad agency N.W. Ayer, the tag line itself was written in 1948, but the

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

campaign started in earnest in 1939 as part of a concerted effort by the De Beers diamond cartel to market and sell more expensive diamonds.

In his book *The Diamond Invention* (Arrow/Random House, 1982), Edward Jay Epstein exhaustively details the story of how De Beers created demand in the United States for larger, more expensive diamonds through a carefully orchestrated advertising and publicity campaign. In 1939 diamond prices had collapsed in a Europe that was approaching war. In the United States the diamond engagement ring was already an American tradition, but the size and quality of the diamonds being presented left much to be desired—at least in the opinion of De Beers.

The Ayer advertising agency studied the market and determined that the way to sell larger, higher quality—and, therefore, more expensive—diamonds was to embark on a broad campaign designed to create societal change. Epstein located Ayer documents from the original campaign that addressed the challenge:

Specifically, the Ayer study stressed the need to vitalize the association in the public's mind between diamonds and romance. Since "young men buy over 90% of all engagement rings," it would be crucial to inculcate in them the idea that diamonds were a gift of love: the larger and finer the diamond, the greater the expression of love. Similarly, young women had to be encouraged to view diamonds as an integral part of any romantic courtship.¹

Ayer devised a strategy that was the forerunner of today's "advertainment"—using entertainment as a primary vehicle for product promotion. The agency suggested that diamond engagement rings become a featured attraction in motion pictures; in fact, Ayer said, they wanted to arrange for scenes to be written into movies being produced at the time. Because movie stars represented romantic figures, their fictional presentation

Breakaway Campaigns

of diamond rings as symbols of lasting love would undoubtedly influence mass audiences.

Ayer took the strategy further than movies alone, placing stories and society photographs about diamonds, creating extravagant ads in elite magazines, and even enlisting Queen Elizabeth to promote the royalty of diamonds.

By 1948, when the copy line “A Diamond Is Forever” appeared, Ayer’s campaign had already helped increase the sale of diamonds in the U.S. by 55 percent. The agency and De Beers continued to innovate. Ayer used the successful movie-placement strategy to again influence programming, this time in the new medium—television. The agency also created a “Diamond Information Bureau”—in essence, a self-serving publicity arm distributing volumes of material about diamonds that wound up in newspapers and magazines.

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Today, “A Diamond Is Forever” lives on as the official slogan of the “Diamond Trading Company,” the De Beers Group’s marketing arm. De Beers calls its tag line the “forevermark.”² The slogan is still the basis for contemporary campaigns that extol the virtues of diamond engagement rings.

According to Edward Jay Epstein, it was this breakaway campaign strategy originally conceived by N.W. Ayer in 1939 that helped increase De Beers’ diamond sales from \$23 million in 1939 to over \$2 billion at the wholesale level by 1980. This was on an advertising investment that scaled from \$200,000 a year initially to \$10 million annually. “A Diamond Is Forever” remains an enduring symbol of how an advertising message can

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

have an extraordinary impact on the value people place on an object—and how that value can reflect society’s values.

PRICELESS

MasterCard’s “Priceless” campaign is so ubiquitous that the copywriting style has become an intentionally imitated format. *The New York Times* advertising columnist Stuart Elliott mimicked the advertising:

Annual spending by MasterCard to advertise in major media:
about \$300 million.

Portion of that spending earmarked for advertisements in magazines and newspapers: about 15 percent to 20 percent of the total.

Having a print campaign that not only stands out from other ads in magazines and newspapers but is also distinct from the MasterCard television commercials: priceless.³

This unique copy style has been the basis for a campaign with the theme, “There are some things money can’t buy. For everything else, there’s MasterCard.” But it is the word “priceless” that immediately caught on and has become part of the American vernacular. As with “got milk?”, the slogan “Priceless” has been often repeated, adapted, and even parodied.

Until recently, MasterCard and Visa have owned the bank credit card market.⁴ To the consumer, the brands MasterCard and Visa may appear to be interchangeable, given their subordinate position to the issuing bank. These two brands remained largely undifferentiated until each began major advertising campaigns of their own.

Breakaway Campaigns

Visa's promotional campaign, "It's everywhere you want to be," was launched in 1985. This campaign has largely positioned the Visa brand against archrival American Express, not MasterCard; in recent years, Visa has pointedly referenced establishments that "don't take American Express."

On the other hand, MasterCard's "Priceless" campaign, created by McCann Erickson and launched in October 1997, had a different objective. Emphasizing the consumer credit utility of the credit card, the "Priceless" campaign adds an emotional element to the purchasing process. The campaign makes the point that the cost of certain items is one thing, but the emotional value of those items is quite another. It may be a special moment with a grandchild, or it may just be something that makes life a little easier; whatever they are, these "priceless" things have undoubtedly raised brand awareness for MasterCard.

Seen in 96 countries and in 47 languages, the "Priceless" campaign has earned more than 100 individual advertising awards. MasterCard says "Priceless" has been heralded as one of the most successful campaigns ever created.

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Beyond the Launch

Notable among the breakaway campaigns cited above is an all-too-rare characteristic: longevity. Breakaway campaigns become legendary when they contain a core idea so true and executions so fresh that they sustain and actually improve over the years. Yet many brand marketers tire of a campaign long

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

before it has run its course. Agencies and advertisers alike fall prey to changing a campaign before they need to—and the result is a new approach that may disregard or, worse, contradict the original campaign.

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The breakaway campaign should be designed to last for five years or more. This doesn't mean it becomes trite or boring; rather, it evolves to a new place. "got milk?" stays fresh by reinventing itself with variations on the theme, as in a series of ads that shows a number of creative and amusing ways to shake up a bottle of chocolate milk. The tag line, "got chocolate milk?" is a smart way to extend the campaign without deadening the original's quirky appeal. At the same time, it promotes a product (chocolate milk) that is an extension of the brand itself (milk).

"A Diamond Is Forever" continues to be as relevant now as it was over forty years ago. The love story has been modernized: In one ad, a man is shown proclaiming his love for a woman by first shouting it at a public square, and then presenting her with a diamond anniversary ring. The messaging about the quality of the diamond is no less prominent in the contemporary television and print advertising that still appears today.

MasterCard's "Priceless" campaign could have stopped at promoting the brand image. Instead the company took the campaign to the next level. In 2004 MasterCard began to reference other retail product brands that can be purchased with a MasterCard credit card. The extension of the original campaign is a win-win: MasterCard continues to ram home its brand

Breakaway Campaigns

message while associating itself with brand names familiar to the consumer. Those brands become direct beneficiaries of the MasterCard campaign.

Keeping a campaign fresh and vibrant—and maintaining its breakaway status—is a major challenge. The competitive landscape is turbulent and consumer perceptions are constantly shifting. It takes courage and perseverance to sustain a breakaway campaign.

THAT'S THE TRUTH

An example of just such an effort is the highly successful yet controversial “truth” campaign. Created by the American Legacy Foundation,⁵ truth is a first-of-its-kind national youth antismoking effort. The campaign’s goal was to “outbrand” Big Tobacco and create an antismoking brand for teens that would be cooler than smoking. Arnold Worldwide and a close partner agency, Crispin Porter + Bogusky, were selected in 1999 to launch the truth brand.

For truth to work, the teen audience had to be researched, studied, and understood. Teens who were most open to smoking were found to have a common mindset, defined as “sensation seekers.” These teens liked new experiences, breaking rules, and doing risky and dangerous things. Such behaviors are all about control. Smoking cigarettes is an ideal way for the sensation seeker to take control. It’s a way to look rebellious, fit in, take a risk, be cool.

Truth had to fulfill these same needs to achieve success. To compete with the tobacco companies, truth’s countermarketing efforts had to be more aspirational and more rebellious than smoking itself.

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

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Truth did that by challenging the tobacco industry and demystifying smoking. The breakaway truth campaign simply but powerfully tells the truth about the industry, their products, their marketing and manufacturing practices, and, ultimately, the consequences of it all. In so doing, truth inspires teens to rethink their perceptions about smoking and cigarettes. The campaign also took teens' need to rebel and directed this rebellion at the tobacco industry, allowing teens to turn away from cigarettes in the process.

Sustaining the campaign has been nothing short of exhausting because of the ever-changing interests of teens. truth strives to modify its delivery of the message by looking for fresh, innovative, edgy ways to talk to teens. truth is always striving for new ways to break through and surprise its target audience in unconventional ways. While the delivery may change over the life of the campaign, the core creative platform is always grounded in truth's brand truth—dispensing honest facts and information that exposes Big Tobacco, but wrapping them in rebellious, risky, empowering, independent, and intelligent emotion.

Truth relies on a strategy that calls for an overall campaign with many subthemes. Each mini-campaign typically lasts no longer than six months. Regardless of the theme, numerous teen-appropriate media are used; television, radio, a web site, online and mobile advertising, promotional events and tours, and truth merchandise are tightly integrated for maximum impact.

One truth campaign centered around the fact that the tobacco industry gets away with murder. A television ad used body bags to shock teens into awareness. Another ad showed 1200 teens falling to the ground outside a tobacco company's headquarters.

Breakaway Campaigns

One teen holds up a sign that reads “Tobacco kills 1200 people a day.” Another teen holds up a sign that reads “Ever think about taking a day off?” This ad, a frame of which is shown in Figure 5-1, won numerous industry awards, but more importantly, research shows that teens notice and talk about each new truth television spot.

Another truth campaign featured Crazyworld, a mythical amusement park. One television ad shows a carnival barker leading contestants through “The Ingredient Game.” Dripping with sarcasm, the object of the game is to find any product without a list of ingredients. Only a pack of cigarettes wins. The campaign was augmented with a Crazyworld web site, complete with interactive carnival games.



Figure 5-1 This frame from an award-winning television ad for the truth campaign shows a teen holding up a sign in front of a tobacco company’s headquarters.

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

During the 2004 Super Bowl, truth launched a bold campaign called “Shards o’ Glass.” A television ad introduced viewers to “Shards o’ Glass Freeze Pops,” a spoof product the supposed company CEO admitted was dangerous and “for adults only.” The commercial advertised a web site for the make-believe company. The ad ended with the headline “What if all companies sold products like tobacco.” The ad generated extraordinary traffic to the web site and became an industry sensation as advertising critics lauded its breakthrough approach.

As with all true breakaway brand campaigns, the most important fact about the truth campaigns is that *they work*. Over the past six years, since truth’s launch, youth smoking in America has declined significantly. Exhaustive research by American Legacy Foundation scientists has proven that 25 percent of these smoking-rate declines can be directly attributed to the truth branding campaign. Over 300,000 lives have been saved and billions of dollars of health care costs avoided. The facts are clear: The more teens see the “truth,” the less likely they are to smoke.

UNDER THE HOOD OF A BREAKAWAY CAMPAIGN

In Chapter 3 we talked about the way in which Volkswagen drove a wedge between the Japanese and German automakers to create a category of one—a German-engineered car that was fun to drive yet affordably priced. Under the slogan “Drivers wanted,” VW launched a breakaway campaign in 1995. After ten years, it continues to run. The slogan is the most recognized in the automotive industry, and the campaign is one of the most admired in advertising.

From the very beginning, the master plan of the campaign was to revitalize VW sales and build a rejuvenated brand image.

Breakaway Campaigns

When we first started working with Volkswagen, agency personnel lived and breathed the product, driving Volkswagens for over 50,000 miles around the U.S., visiting 95 of the top 100 VW dealers, and talking with over 500 dealers in total.

That provided one perspective, but the other side of the story was just as important—the consumers and their perceptions of the product. Extensive research led to consumer insight suggesting that the Japanese driving experience, while nice, mainly appealed to “passengers”—but the German driving experience attracted “drivers.”

What exactly did “drivers” mean?

Research showed that Volkswagen drivers could be differentiated from average drivers. They are five to ten years younger than typical drivers, more of them went to college, and more of them have a higher household income. Volkswagen drivers also have a different mindset from typical drivers. They enjoy taking risks, they exercise more—and they love to drive. They enjoy challenging roads. They don’t view cars as just a way to get them from place to place. They don’t always obey speed limits. And they never, ever want to be seen as conformists.

Volkswagen drivers, it appears, are young at heart regardless of their chronological age. They are affluent without the attitude and they are spirited nonconformists. When it comes to driving, they appreciate German engineering and are willing to pay a little more to enjoy it. That led to a mantra for this driver: “On the road of life there are passengers and there are drivers.”

The winning brand positioning: Volkswagens were more drivable and individual than the boring Japanese or cheaper American models, yet more affordable and likeable than the overpriced European models. The bottom line: Your VW was a member of the family who lived in the garage.

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

*Volkswagen's Brand Truth***Rational**

The only brand offering the benefits and “feeling” of German engineering within reach

More feeling

More connected

More fun

More alive

Emotional**Excitement**

Different driving feeling

Different way of living

“Drivers wanted.”

From the brand positioning, the Volkswagen brand truth emerged. On the rational side, Volkswagen is the only brand offering the benefits and “feeling” of German engineering within reach. On the emotional side, the Volkswagen brand represents excitement, a different driving feeling and a different way of living. Driving a Volkswagen is fun, and makes you feel more connected and more alive.

These words are the platform for the Volkswagen brand and its unique style of advertising and promotion. Forming an emotional connection with the right kind of driver continues to be the driving force behind the larger branding campaign and every product campaign that has followed over the past ten years since the “Drivers wanted” campaign debuted.

“Drivers wanted” is the anchor for the brand—not weighing it down, but keeping it focused and grounded.

Could Volkswagen’s Passat model compete in a higher-priced segment? Yes, because “Drivers wanted” could speak to the same mindset in a different stage of life. Older VW drivers were about having kids, not becoming their parents.

Breakaway Campaigns

Could Volkswagen sell the Golf and Jetta models that everyone loved for so many years at higher price points? Yes, because “Drivers wanted” could support the fact that the cars were catching up to the drivers. For these drivers, it was about getting their money’s worth, not being taken for a ride.

Could Volkswagen reintroduce the Beetle, a car that would mean many different things to many different people? Yes, because “Drivers wanted” could be a platform for the car with the most unique shape in the automotive world—timeless design combined with innovative German technology. The New Beetle represented joy, possibilities, individuality—life at its best. And, as shown in Figure 5-2, its shape alone was a wonder to behold.

Could Volkswagen become a lifestyle choice? Yes, because “Drivers wanted” could apply to the experience of living for fun, not just driving for status. That meant Volkswagen could

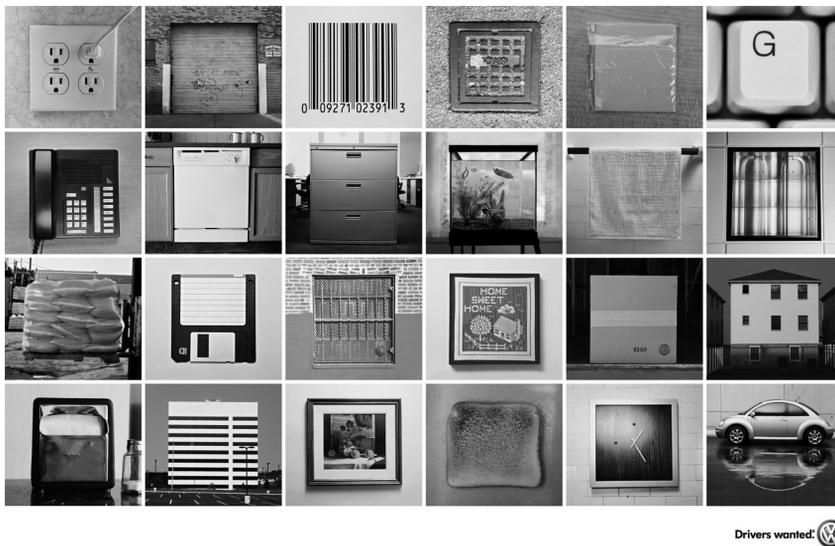


Figure 5-2 This 2002 print ad for Volkswagen’s New Beetle dramatized its singular shape by comparing it to “squares.” (© Malcolm Venville)

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

associate with other lifestyle brands—the Jetta and Golf partnered with Trek bikes and K2 skis, and the New Beetle partnered with Apple’s iPod. When the Beetle needed some freshening of its own, Volkswagen introduced two limited edition colors, Vapor and Reflex, leveraging its audience’s affinity for the Internet by selling these models exclusively on the Web.

“Drivers wanted” continues to be effective, regardless of the product introduced by Volkswagen. When Volkswagen brought the Touareg SUV to market, the messaging maintained the underlying brand position of a German-engineered SUV offering unsurpassed driving capabilities with superior design and technology, at a good value. Emotionally, the Touareg is a true VW—honest, more fun, and unpretentious.

The “Drivers wanted” campaign drives a brand identity that permeates all Volkswagen advertising and promotional efforts. From television and print ads, to brochures and billboards, to direct mail and online advertising, to dealer support and special events, there is a persona that emanates from the “Drivers wanted” tag line that always appears with the VW logo—a look and feel that is distinctly, recognizably, consistently Volkswagen. It is one of the best examples of a breakaway campaign introduced in the past decade.

SUSTAINED SUCCESS THROUGH BREAKAWAY CAMPAIGNS

We hope the campaigns we’ve shared in this chapter prove that breakaway brands are not fleeting. Behind these campaigns are five- to ten-year ideas that are sustainable despite market and competitive conditions. These campaigns are memorable and timeless because they are breakaway right down to their core. Every breakaway campaign is fully integrated, with the winning mindset and the product’s brand truth forming a filter

Breakaway Campaigns

for every activity—print, television, online advertising, e-mail, direct mail, radio, advertainment, and nontraditional promotions. And that’s why every campaign has achieved long-term breakaway success.

Chapter 5 Break Points

- **THINK ABOUT IT:** Which brand slogans and campaigns have stayed with you over time? How many of those slogans and campaigns have lasted more than three years? Have the campaigns, and the brands themselves, kept up with the times?
- Breakaway products become breakaway brands because of breakaway campaigns.
- The real magic is picking the core campaign that really works—the breakaway concept that becomes the driving force behind a breakaway campaign that improves year after year.
- A breakaway campaign uses a combination of coordinated, integrated media to capture the personality of the product, generate awareness among the right target audiences, and create demand.
- The breakaway campaign has the potential to catapult a brand into the culture, create an aspirational connection, and endure for many years.
- Breakaway campaigns usually target a mindset, not a demographic, and that mindset helps coordinate all elements of the brand’s marketing program.

THE BREAKAWAY BRAND

- Breakaway campaigns start out good, but they become legendary when they actually improve year after year. This requires aggressiveness, product innovation, continuous investment, and creativity.
- Most important, breakaway campaigns *work*—they deliver superior results. Isn't it surprising that more marketers don't insist on developing breakaway campaigns?