

EVENTS/CAUSES

Rolex, James Cameron dive to unfamiliar depths to demonstrate watch technology

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Deepsea Rolex

By NANCY BUCKLEY

Swiss watchmaker Rolex is introducing its new Deepsea watch along with the release of director James Cameron's and National Geographic's film "Deepsea Challenge."

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The new watch was part of Mr. Cameron's historic dive, enduring pressures hardly known to humans, proving to be a truly waterproof design. The release of the Rolex Deepsea watch during the week of the film's debut allows Rolex to remind consumers about the brand's involvement with the dive and provides a story for fans to connect with.

"James Cameron's adventurous spirit lends credibility to Rolex's ability to push watchmaking to new extremes," said Michael Mirafior, vice president of strategy at [Zenith Media](#), New York.

"His Deepsea Challenge expedition absolutely pushed the limits of engineering and ingenuity, and the same can be said for Rolex's dedication to developing a timepiece that would withstand the insane ambient pressure of deep sea exploration," he said.

“I would expect the halo effect of both Cameron's historical dive and the Deepsea Challenge timepiece to positively affect brand perception and favorability of Rolex's entire Submariner line.”

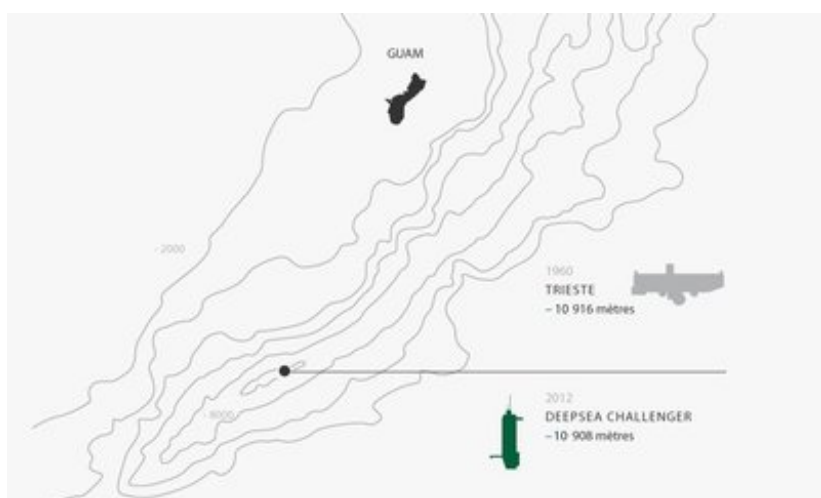
Mr. Mirafior is not affiliated with Rolex, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Rolex was unable to respond by press deadline.

Ocean time

Mr. Cameron, most notable known for the films “Titanic” and “Avatar,” adventured to the deepest parts of the ocean floor, the Mariana Trench in the Pacific Ocean. The deepest point is known as Challenger Deep and is nearly 7 miles below the surface.

On March 26, 2012, Mr. Cameron plunged into the trench piloting the Deepsea Challenger alone. He was the first man since the 1960 Trieste dive to undertake the trench.



Mariana Trench

Rolex was involved in both expeditions. The brand sent an experimental watch with both dives to the bottom of the sea. Both watches emerged in perfect condition.

The more recent dive travelled down with an experimental version of the new Deepsea watch. Mr. Cameron wore the model during his dive. This model helped design the Rolex Deepsea Challenge, which is waterproof to a depth of 39,370 feet.



Rolex on submersible arm

The “D-blue” dial color represents the deepest blue of the ocean, right before the last light from land can be seen, the ocean’s twilight zone.

Rolex released several videos regarding the watch. One features Mr. Cameron talking about the process and the craftsmanship behind the watch and the speed in which the timepiece was finished.



Deepsea Rolex

Mr. Cameron talks about the motivation of the Rolex team to do the impossible and relates the submarine to the watch through their innovation and pioneering spirit.

The page on Rolex’s Web site is dedicated to the brand’s involvement with deepsea adventure and novel ideas. This page brings viewers through the process of creating the watch, including the extreme tests that the timepieces undergo to be considered for a diver.

Rolex water tanks can create pressures greater than those on the bottom of the ocean, which permits the brand to market a watch as waterproof or designed for divers.

The brand’s dedication to ocean exploration allows individuals like Mr. Cameron and organizations like National Geographic to continue exploring the 95 percent of the world’s oceans that are predicted to be unexplored.

Mr. Cameron’s dive alone discovered 68 new species after just three hours on the ocean floor.

Brand exploration

Being innovative is necessary for brands to stay fresh, and articulation of technological components can attract consumer attention.

For instance, Swedish camera brand Hasselblad Bron honored the 45th anniversary of Apollo 11’s moon mission by completing a user’s manual for astronauts to photograph their space expeditions.

The 40-page online manual aimed to instruct astronauts about the Hasselblad 500 EL/M camera and about the general techniques behind taking space photographs. The manual brings attention to Hasselblad’s involvement with the space expedition and the brand’s

camera collections ([see story](#)).

The simple notion of exploration is sometimes also inherent in brands.

For example, British department store Fortnum & Mason is sponsoring an expedition across the Indian Ocean this summer as a continuation of the brand's historical focus on adventure.

The newest expedition that the retailer is supporting is Fast Row West, a group of four men who plan to break the record for the fastest crossing of the Indian Ocean. Fortnum & Mason's sponsorship of this endeavor has sprung a look into the brand's previous support of adventurous undertakings and is presenting to consumers a better understanding of the brand and its ideals ([see story](#)).

By seeing the Rolex watch take the dive with Mr. Cameron, consumers are aware of his trust, the watch's endurance and the brand's commitment to underwater exploration, features of the brand that are greater than a single watch.

"Film director and deep-sea diver James Cameron's involvement with Rolex's new Deepsea Challenge watch adds an immeasurable amount of credibility to the campaign," said Aaron Kirchner-Loeser, marketing assistant at [Aurnhammer](#), New York.

"Not only does his name garner more publicity, it authenticates and legitimizes Rolex's new campaign," he said. "Moreover, as a premier film maker and deep-sea diver, it elevates the watch to an even higher and more elite plateau than that which Rolex is already on.

"The videos, particularly the one with Cameron himself, greatly affect the consumer's take on the watch as it adds a story to the product. With a narrative that consumers can relate to or just be intrigued by, the Deepsea Challenge Watch's promotional campaign will greatly benefit from the videos. It will attract a large variety of (new) customers."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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