

INTERNET

## McLaren mixes folklore with innovation in campaign

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*Black Swan promotion by McLaren*

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By JOE MCCARTHY

British automaker McLaren is drawing inspiration from black swans in a campaign for its sports series model that will emerge in 2015.

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**Luxury Daily**

The brand aims to generate an energetic social media campaign leading up to the launch date by asking fans to post their own black swan stories. Although the original black swan tale is specific, the campaign zooms out to encompass anything that challenges expectations.

"The campaign is not only unique for McLaren but unique for a luxury automotive company," said Wayne Bruce, head of communications and public relations at [McLaren Automotive](#), Woking, England.

"By not overtly featuring the car at this early stage, we hope to reach out to luxury lifestyle buyers attracted by beautiful stories and beautiful things," he said. "And the Sports Series is truly beautiful.

"In parallel we will be running a more traditional tease campaign aimed at the car enthusiast."

## Challenging routine

The Sports Series will be the latest McLaren model in the SpeedMark family, joining the McLaren 650s and P1 models.



### *McLaren P1 GTR*

To generate interest in the launch, the brand released a short social video that positions the vehicle as a "black swan," or a development that challenges what has come before.

Originally, European scientists had thought that swans could only be white. When the black swan was first discovered by them in Australia in 1697, it upended their conception and became an enduring lesson for listeners that not all ideas are fixed.

McLaren strives to embody this notion by always disrupting what it has achieved in the past. This does not necessarily mean dramatically changing design aesthetic or functionality, but instead looking at every component in new ways, never becoming complacent.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/0ff\\_kV1wqYE](https://www.youtube.com/embed/0ff_kV1wqYE)

### *#BlackSwanMoments*

Now, the brand is inviting fans to get involved with the hashtag #BlackSwanMoments.

Additionally, McLaren will be rolling out more #BlackSwanMoments from history, likely moments when some dramatic change was introduced.

The brand will likely aggregate the user-generated content in some capacity to augment the campaign.

### Divergent paths

The idea of breaking away from expectations and striking new ground is a marketing cliché, but brands work hard to make it feel fresh.

Audi of America parodied rehearsed living with the final spot in its Emmy Awards promotions.

The automaker began the series with a number of commercials featuring actors such as Fred Armisen going off-script in seemingly improvised moments. The final spot takes a more relatable approach by showing how easily a person's life can slip into a rehearsed routine, and presents the Q3 model as the antidote to an otherwise constraining script ([see story](#)).

Lifestyle magazine Condé Nast Traveler recruited global explorer Bryn Mooser to embark on a 12-episode video series in a Land Rover.

The episodes are around two minutes long and deliver compressed yet generous views of remote areas of the United States. "The Road Less Traveled" series accentuates the 25th anniversary of Land Rover's Great Expedition and aims to bolster the automaker's reputation as the quintessential provider of adventure vehicles ([see story](#)).

For McLaren, the "black swan" twist seems to have cleared the originality hurdle.

"In the first 24 hours since launching the campaign, we have already had more than 1000 people registering their interest in following the developing story of the Sports Series and the Black Swan Moments campaign," Mr. Wayne said. "This is a great start.

"We expect to reach out to even more as the campaign develops over the coming months," he said.

Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York*

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