

MOBILE

## Hugo Boss conquers the elements to show off new eyewear

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Alex Thomson in Hugo Boss eyewear

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German fashion label Hugo Boss is promoting its eyewear to a new batch of clients with a daring #SkyWalk.

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For the stunt, solo-round-the-world sailor Alex Thomson, clad in the brand's products, is combining sailing and kiting to overcome both his fear of heights and the elements. The broad appeal of extreme stunts will help Hugo Boss convey its confidence and ambition to new audiences.

"The #Skywalk video positions Hugo Boss as an active, modern and upscale lifestyle brand," said Jim Gentleman, senior vice president of account management and strategy, **SK+G**, Las Vegas. "Its partnership with British yachtsman and round-the-world sailor Alex Thomson furthers this dapper and daring angle.

### Skywalk

The Skywalk stunt is Hugo Boss' third with Mr. Thomson, after the Mastwalk and Keelwalk. The two amassed more than 4.5 million views, meaning that the Skywalk video has a good chance of going viral and exposing the brand to new clientele.

Aboard a Hugo Boss branded board, Mr. Thomson chases a branded yacht upwind with a kite, attaching himself to a line in the water fixed atop the yacht's mast. As the pressure on the line increases and the boat speeds up, it propels Mr. Thomson nearly 300 feet into the air, double the height of the yacht.



### *Boss 0800/S Hugo Boss sunglasses*

For the trick, which the brand shared via its online channels, Mr. Thomson wore BOSS 0800/S sunglasses, produced and distributed by Safilo Group, the licensee of Hugo Boss eyewear. The style's flexible rubber coating and mirrored, polarized, water-repellent lenses make it optimal for a seafaring expedition or undertaking.

Forming a visual connection, the adjustable end tips are based on the design of the branded racing yacht. Completing the outfit is a stretch-wool suit that guarantees a full range of movement and a Yachting Chronograph Silicone Strap Watch.



### *0800/S Hugo Boss sunglasses*

The video begins showing Mr. Thomson prepare to undertake the stunt in Alvor, Portugal.

Hugo Boss' video begins with Mr. Thomson trailing behind the yacht. From a helicopter above, a line is thrown down to Mr. Thomson, who hooks it on himself and almost immediately thereafter is lifted into the air.

When he reaches his max height, he severs his connection to the boat, gliding back down to the sea with only the help of the kite.

At the end, he gives a high-five to Susi Mai, a professional kite surfer who helped him prepare for the stunt. The slow-motion shot gives a clear look at Mr. Thomson's boss outfit, until this point generally shown in close-ups of individual items.

Hugo Boss | The Skywalk by Alex Thomson | Extreme Sailing #SkyWalk

The video does not insist upon the brand's role, but the yacht and board, as well as Mr. Thomson's outfit, make Hugo Boss' presence known. This subtler placement is more attractive to a younger audience that dislikes overt product pushes. At the same time, close-ups of the Boss apparel convey the quality of the products, which are able to perform even in extreme circumstances.

More broadly, however, the brand's presence associates it with confidence, risk-taking and success, all qualities of the young professional demographic that Hugo Boss is courting. An extreme stunt with a potential to go viral will give the brand exposure to new audiences.

"The Alex Thomson partnership and #Skywalk video are first and foremost initiatives meant to promote the Hugo Boss brand as sporty, stylish and spirited," Mr. Gentleman said. "The idea is that this lifestyle play will create a halo effect of sorts around the brand, leading to product consideration and sales for Hugo Boss's clothing and accessory lines."

Scrolling below the video on the host site is an infographic about the stunt. A chart shows that Mr. Thomson had three successful landings in 13 attempts, a statistic highlighting the difficulty and danger of the stunt.

The boat traveled at a speed of 12 knots, while Mr. Thomson traveled at 15 knots and the wind blew at 25. A graph charting his height breaks down the challenge into five steps, from Mr. Thomson's beginning avoiding the sail's wind shadows to catching the line from above his ascent and return.

Further down is a guide to Mr. Thomson's style, including links to shop every aspect of his look, from his sunglasses

and watch to his suit, shirt, tie and shoes. Lastly, the site includes a behind-the-scenes video.

*Hugo Boss / Behind-the-Scenes of the Skywalk by Alex Thomson / Extreme Sailing #SkyWalk*

Although the campaign is designed primarily to promote the Boss Eyewear 2016 collection, including easy access to other products will help the brand generate revenue from coordinating products.

Extreme sporting

The appeal of extreme sports beyond a brand's usual following has made it a favored tool across numerous sectors.

For example, British automaker Jaguar is taking its aerodynamic expertise onto the slopes with the help of Olympic skier Graham Bell.

The Olympian and automotive brand have announced a technical partnership with the goal of setting a Guinness World Record for fastest downhill ski speed, currently held by Italian speed skier Simone Origone. Emphasizing principles of design and speed in other fields builds the Jaguar brand in an organic and unobtrusive manner ([see story](#)).

In addition to fashion and automotive sectors, the Mandarin Oriental, Singapore hotel invited consumers to embark on a series of curated action experiences with a GoPro camera.

The "Ready Set Go With Mandarin Oriental" package shepherded guests to adventure parks in the nearby area, where tailored activities awaited. Adding a GoPro camera to the mix made the experience more interactive, allowing guests to relive certain challenges and likely spurring more attempts ([see story](#)).

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