

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes debuts branded comics for upcoming Justice League promotion

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*Mercedes-Benz vehicles will be featured in the upcoming movie. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

By DANNY PARISI

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is integrating a few of its newer models into an expansive native marketing campaign centered on Warner Bros.' upcoming blockbuster, "Justice League."

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In addition to television and digital video ads surrounding the movie, three of Mercedes-Benz's new models will play an integral role in the movie's plot itself. This level of native marketing in a blockbuster film shows a level of confidence from Mercedes-Benz that suggest further high-profile partnerships may be profitable for luxury brands.

### Justice League

While many have proclaimed that TV is the new movies, blockbuster films can still bring in huge audiences.

November will see the release of Warner Bros.' Justice League, a hotly anticipated superhero ensemble film bringing together characters and plots from comic book publisher DC's most recent run of superhero films.

Mercedes-Benz is attaching itself to the film with a new marketing campaign that makes use of digital video, TV, out-of-home, native content and, uniquely, a series of one-off branded comics launching on the automaker's Instagram.

Ahead of the movie's release, Mercedes' Instagram will host six one-shot comics featuring characters from the films and adventures involving some of the brand's new models, including the E-Class Cabriolet, the AMG Vision Turismo and the G-Class4x42.



*Mercedes-Benz's branded comics. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

These cars will be featured in branded comics as well as playing a role in the film itself.

The sole comic that has been released so far shows two characters from the upcoming film, The Flash and Cyborg, taking one of Batman's cars a Vision Gran Turismo for a joyride.

The Gran Turismo will appear in the film as well as part of the car collection maintained by Batman's alter ego, Bruce Wayne.

The E-Class Cabriolet, the newest of the three cars appearing in the film, will serve as the ride of choice for Wonder Woman as she goes on a mission in her civilian persona, Diana Prince.

Native content

While other types of luxury brands are far less likely to make these kinds of robust partnerships with mass-market, blockbuster films, auto brands have shown a proclivity for partnering with big tentpole films.

German automaker Audi showed off its latest artificial intelligence features on the big screen, aligning its technology with the superhero film "Spider-Man: Homecoming."

The movie, released in the United States in July, was the first time that consumers could see the Audi A8 sedan in action. Audi frequently turns to product placement in action franchises to solidify its vehicles' innovation and performance ([see story](#)).



*A panel from one of the first comics. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz*

As for the branded comics, these two have a precedent. While superheroes and luxury brands are not the most intuitive fit, brands have made the combination work before.

French fashion label Jean Paul Gaultier is enlisting the crime-fighting prowess of Wonder Woman and Superman in an original narrative with a fragrance focus.

In honor of the limited-edition Classique and Le Male scents bearing the DC character's visages, the brand is getting into the superhero spirit with an episodic film series modeled after comic books. Associating these scents with the well-known characters enables the brand to tell a new story surrounding the perfumes that originally debuted in the 1990s ([see story](#)).

Mercedes-Benz's native content push is a risk, given the relative underperformance of Warner Bros.' previous films leading up to Justice League, but if the movie is a success, the comprehensive marketing campaign the brand has built around it will be worth the effort.