

AUTOMOTIVE

## Mercedes-Benz taps Jane Lynch to remind affluents of flying times

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*The new Mercedes-Benz GLC300. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz USA*

By NORA HOWE

German automaker Mercedes-Benz USA is highlighting humor in a nostalgic holiday social media campaign promoting its new luxury SUV.

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Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, commercial flights have dropped nearly 43 percent in the United States as people are opting to safely travel by car this holiday season. Mercedes-Benz's GLC In-Drive Safety Video campaign featuring American comedic actress and brand ambassador Jane Lynch aims to remind travelers of the joy of flying by playing on the traditional in-flight safety videos.

"Mercedes-Benz USA chose Jane Lynch to be a part of this campaign because of the comedic relief that only Jane can bring to the table," said Mark Aikman, general manager of marketing services at Mercedes-Benz, Atlanta. "Her humor and wit allowed Mercedes-Benz to communicate the key features of the GLC in an effective yet fun way."

### In-drive safety

The nearly two-minute video opens on Jane Lynch in an airplane hangar, inviting viewers to look inside the GLC300 and encouraging them to pay attention to the vehicle safety video.

"The GLC is your first class ticket to travel this year, so sit back, relax and enjoy this in-drive safety video," she says to the camera. "Before leaving, please make sure all items are properly stowed in the cargo area."

She then humorously and haphazardly tosses an open bag of knickknacks into the trunk and the majority of its contents fall out.

Throughout the video, Ms. Lynch goes through things like seatbelt and airbag safety, the same way a flight attendant would explain how to put on an oxygen mask or safety vest. In this case, she explains all the features of the new GLC300 and how they will allow for comfortable and luxurious travel.



American comedian and actress Jane Lynch for Mercedes-Benz. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz USA

The campaign was created, written and produced by digital transformation consultancy [Publicis Sapient](#) and showcases how the new GLC300 model epitomizes personal travel in comfort, style and safety. As COVID-19 continues to restrict the majority of airline activity, safety and comfort have become a major consideration for consumers this holiday.

"Almost a year into the pandemic, people are missing elements of travel that they never knew they'd miss, including in-flight safety videos," said Todd Houlette, creative director at Publicis Sapient, in a statement. "Publicis used this idea to conceptualize and develop the new campaign, positioning the GLC as a first-class ticket to travel minus the airplane itself."

Filmed last month, the social media campaign uses both comedy and cultural relevance to engage with a wider and more diverse audience, while exploring a new creative lane for automotive marketing.

Publicis' Customer Data Platform showed a significant need for GLC video content as in-market shoppers wanted to get an up-close and personal demo of this new model delivered in a new and interesting fashion.

#### *Mercedes-Benz Presents: GLC In-Drive Safety Video*

Long and short form video content will run across social channels Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and TikTok, demonstrating both the features and luxury interiors of the new GLC in an informative yet entertaining format, brought to life by Ms. Lynch.

The use of humor is a bit of a departure for Mercedes-Benz, which has typically placed an emphasis on technology in its marketing campaigns. While humorous storytelling is engaging, some believe it may not be enough to sell vehicles.

"The campaign has a clever idea, built on strong insights of consumers missing airplane travel," said Allen Adamson, cofounder of [Metaforce](#), New York. "But after a fun set up, humor fades."

#### Emotional push

This year especially, car manufacturers have turned away from promotional advertising and moved toward more emotional storytelling.

German automaker Audi offered a glimpse of a socially-distant holiday season in its comedic video campaign. The brand has typically used humor to convey relatable scenarios in its holiday spots and this year's promotion of the Season of Audi sales event was no different.

As many consumers will be spending their holidays at home, safely distant from friends and family, the advertisements utilized the same sense of humor in empathetic ways ([see story](#)).

Toyota Corp's Lexus rang in the holiday season with its iconic "December to Remember" campaign, showing how people came together during this difficult year. To show empathy after a year many would rather forget, Lexus puts people and their relationships at the forefront of the December to Remember campaign.

The vehicles play more of a cameo role in the videos, which recall the drive-by parades that became popular at the outbreak of the pandemic ([see story](#)).

"Video content in both long and short form can demonstrate the features and luxury interiors of the new car in an informative yet entertaining format," Mr. Aikman said. "Campaigns that use both comedy and cultural relevance help

to engage with a wider audience."

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