

INTERNET

## Automakers leveraging film to build loyalties, tap new audiences

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By JOE MCCARTHY

While automotive commercials tend to be singular in their push for sales, commissioned short films generally step away from self-promotion and celebrate broader areas of life.

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**Luxury Daily**

Consumer relationships begin with the vehicle, but brand loyalty often arises from the values a brand embodies outside of commerce. Film happens to be an effective tool for broadcasting these values, and luxury automakers regularly commission videos where they play a minor role.

"The key is to make the movie viral, in a way that supports their existing customer base yet brings attention to their brand on many levels," said Lauren Fix, automotive expert and author of "[Lauren Fix's Guide to Loving Your Car](#)," Lancaster, NY.

"Consider the Super Bowl Jaguar commercial about 'Good to be Bad', using British villains," she said. "It was extremely successful and resulted in a huge increase in web traffic as well as people going to the dealership to drive and purchased their vehicles.

"So is it worth the investment? It sure is. As long as it's produced at a high-level."

Stirring the pot

Television spots are understandable in their commitment to product, since they require large investments for slivers of time. However, automakers can still be graceful while spurring sales.

The Super Bowl allows marketers to put their most product-neutral foot forward as the post-conversation will do most of the work.

Jaguar and Maserati both entered households during the Super Bowl for the first time with campaigns that will persist for much of the year.



*Video still from Maserati's "Strike"*

Maserati's "Strike" commercial promotes the Ghibli model, the brand's first under \$100,000 vehicle, evincing a movement toward inclusivity. The commercial's "Beasts of the Southern Wild" feel starring actress Quvenzhané Wallis tried to propel the brand away from its elitist reputation ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/KmpiwU50f5w](https://www.youtube.com/embed/KmpiwU50f5w)

### *Maserati's Strike*

Jaguar's commercial was the center of a campaign with a broad circumference. In the months leading up to the commercial, the automaker teased the British Villain theme and will add to the campaign in the months to come.

The "Good to be Bad Spot" featured British actors Sir Ben Kingsley, Mark Strong and Tom Hiddleston musing on what accounts for the high percentage of British villains in Hollywood movies. The spot also functioned to realign the brand's core attributes as dangerous, masculine and playful ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/2BlS1KKDwmo](https://www.youtube.com/embed/2BlS1KKDwmo)

### *Jaguar's "Rendezvous"*

"When brands identify themselves with successful celebrities, athletes and entertainers, they are aiming to position themselves as being in that same league, more over I think they are giving their brand a more human connection and defining their brand personality," said Jose Gomez, founder and director at [Shilo](#), La Jolla, CA.

"It puts a personal touch on a brand and gives people someone to relate or aspire to," he said. "It's safe to say that fans of Jackie Chan, or Bob Dylan for another example, will see the star in the content and, assuming the messaging is favorable and goes over well, will have a positive association with that brand."

"Although there are risks to the approach, it is tried-and-true, it generally works extremely well and we can all rest assured, it won't be going away anytime soon."

Beyond sales

For the brand enthusiasts committed to automotive history and the intricacies of rare cars, film series like Aston Martin's will be applauded.

Aston Martin, a brand celebrated for its racing prowess, produces weekly Friday films that explore the brand's history, examine certain models, travel to exclusive events and discuss design aesthetics, while amassing a devoted social media following ([see story](#)).

The brand recently winded down its Centenary celebrations by exploring the significance of its DB line in a four-part film series.

Aston Martin's films fit into the larger framework of the Friday Film series but stand out by lingering on a specific line for consecutive videos, establishing a meditative tone that may be fostered throughout the year ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/FjHXFfE9Kdw](https://www.youtube.com/embed/FjHXFfE9Kdw)

*Aston Martin DB9 episode 2*

Some automakers show the uniting force a brand can have in a community.

Mercedes-Benz honored Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa, with a video that illuminates how a team of South African factory workers crafted a vehicle for the international hero following his release from prison in 1990.

The "Labour of Love" short film portrays a team of Mercedes-Benz employees that worked for free to create Mr. Mandela's vehicle ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/ZLtYr3d0wvs](https://www.youtube.com/embed/ZLtYr3d0wvs)

*Mercedes' Labor of Love*

To appeal to a broader swath of consumers, however, some automakers look outside of their personal domain. In doing so, brands show an awareness of what their consumers are passionate about beyond vehicles.

Bentley Motors, in particular, explores its network of influences to convey global reach.

Most recently, Bentley celebrated its affinity for winter with a short film that shadows professional skier Chris Davenport.

The automaker's attraction to snow stems from the four wheel drive that allows its vehicles to navigate treacherous conditions, as it showcased in the film. "In Search of Snow" also allows Bentley to align itself with Mr. Davenport's guiding philosophies ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/X8ha90eJ-c](https://www.youtube.com/embed/X8ha90eJ-c)

## *Bentley's In Search of Snow*

Also, the brand honored visionaries ranging from actor and philanthropist Jackie Chan to Lalique CEO Silvio Denz in its Mulsanne Visionaries Series ([see story](#)).

The videos stand out from other branded films in their deference to the primary subject. Rather than taking the opportunity to explicitly draw parallels to itself, Bentley sparingly showcases its vehicles.

As Lincoln continues its recent transformation, it will maintain a strong relationship with film.

The automaker teamed up with Vanity Fair and Film Independent to produce a series of short films that reimagine the classic screwball comedy, 70's road heist and thriller-noir genres.

Lincoln's films are titled "Factory of Dreams," "A Likely Story" and "The Incident" and distort the linguistic and symbolic landscape of their respective genres ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: [//player.vimeo.com/video/74113697?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0](https://player.vimeo.com/video/74113697?title=0&byline=0&portrait=0)

### *Lincoln's Thriller Noir Reimagined: "Factory of Dreams"*

The automaker is currently partnering with The Tribeca Film Festival for a music film challenge where storytellers and content creators will work on an interactive music film for three songs by Aloe, Damon Albarn from the Gorillaz and Ellie Goulding.

"The holy grail is obviously for these celebrity endorsements of a brand to be more organic," said Kyle Wong, CEO of [Pixlee](#), San Francisco. "With platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, celebrities share their lives with fans at a more intimate level level than ever before.

"There is a huge opportunity for brands to leverage their most influential fans and celebrities to promote their brand not from a branded video, but with user-generated content," he said. "In general, I think that the use of celebrities can be an effective way to attribute specific lifestyles to a business and a good form of brand marketing.

"Taking a celebrity with an established brand themselves and creating a link between that person and your brand is an easy connection for customers to understand and embrace. I've seen a lot of companies have huge successes using celebrities to marketing their brand in ways similar to auto lifestyle films."

### Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/QiZBLkMtaYM](https://www.youtube.com/embed/QiZBLkMtaYM)