



Volkswagen and *The Blues*

The most successful integrated marketing sponsorship in PBS history

When Volkswagen was preparing to launch several new models, it began looking for a multi-tiered, fully integrated marketing opportunity that would reinforce its brand essence while reaching millions of potential customers through a highly visible, ongoing campaign. It chose exclusive corporate sponsorship of PBS's *The Blues*. The resulting partnership would not only be one of the largest corporate sponsorships ever undertaken by Volkswagen, but also the most fully integrated sponsorship in PBS history—delivering more than half a billion impressions and giving the Volkswagen brand unprecedented exposure through on-air spots, live events, advertising and promotion as well as a host of books, CDs, DVDs and more.

Company:

Volkswagen

Target audience:

18–49 year-olds

Sponsorship:

PBS's *The Blues*

Term:

**January 2003 –
January 2004**

Goals

- **Introduce and generate buzz for three new Volkswagen models**
- **Provide maximum, nationwide visibility throughout the year**
- **Connect with existing Volkswagen owners, dealers and employees to reinforce brand loyalty**
- **Reinforce its brand essence**
- **Allow the company to connect with potential buyers in person, on a one-to-one basis**



Volkswagen banner at Scorsese Blues Event

Strategy

Working closely with Volkswagen, Arnold Worldwide, and *The Blues* promotional team, SGPTV expanded the scope and reach of the sponsorship to provide Volkswagen with a full year of high-impact promotional opportunities and events—from Congress declaring 2003 to be the “Year of the Blues” and a star-studded kickoff concert at Radio City Music Hall to a Kennedy Center tribute concert and the Fall 2003 debut of the television and radio series.



Volkswagen profited by direct contact with prospects with product displays and test drives at concerts in the summer of 2003.

CASE STUDY



Tactics

- **The TV series:** 14 30-second primetime spots (2 spots per broadcast).
- **The radio series:** 39 10-second radio spots (3 spots per 1-hour episode).
- **The Internet:** Logos and message on 4 *Blues* project Web sites.
- **Paid advertising:** \$1.5 million PBS ad campaign to drive viewer tune-in, consisting of:
 - Full-page ads, including the Volkswagen logo in major print publications such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times* and *Vanity Fair*
 - Online advertising and viral marketing initiatives
 - In-flight marketing campaign with major national airlines
- **Events marketing:**
 - Radio City kickoff concert
 - Pre-event promotion including print ads, ticketing, and press releases
 - On-site visibility including display vehicles, signage, commemorative gift bags, and a post-concert party hosted by Volkswagen
 - On the Road tour to generate buzz for *The Blues* and Volkswagen: Presence at key film and music festivals through a dedicated *Blues/Volkswagen* tent, 30-second intro spot, VIP receptions, postcards, CD samplers and signage
 - Kennedy Center celebratory event with Washington dignitaries featuring Volkswagen vehicles as shuttles
 - Traveling blues exhibit featuring Volkswagen signage, text and audio credits
- **Ancillary products:**
 - Volkswagen logo and text credit on 25 CDs, 7 DVDs and home videos, including a 30-second VW spot
 - Volkswagen logo on jacket of Harper Collins companion book, and VW included in all Sony and Harper Collins promotional materials
- **Educational outreach:** Letter from Volkswagen and logo presence in Teacher's Guides sent to 45,000 teachers nationwide.



Online visibility: In addition to a linked logo on the popular *Blues* Web site, VW also had a special linked "Drivers Wanted" page.

"The Blues surpassed our highest expectations. The amount of exposure Volkswagen received through this sponsorship was truly phenomenal and demonstrates the kind of results companies can achieve through such fully integrated, multi-tiered marketing opportunities with public television."

– Kevin Boyle
Brand Marketing Manager,
Volkswagen

SGPTV'S next sponsorship success story: Yours!

To learn how SGPTV can develop a customized, turnkey sponsorship opportunity to help your company achieve its marketing goals, contact SGPTV's Mike Nelson at 800-886-9364 or visit the SGPTV web site at www.sgptv.org.

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