

Best Creative Work + Best Use of YouTube With a Small Budget

# Unboxing the Truth

Thomson Reuters, TBWA\Chiat\Day

## Background & context

The Thomson Reuters Foundation, the philanthropic arm of global data firm Thomson Reuters, has a large presence in brand activism. The majority of its efforts focus on the under-reported issue of modern day slavery, an illegal economy which generates an estimated \$150 billion in illegal profits annually. There were an estimated 40 million slaves worldwide in 2018—75% of them forced laborers. Reuters’ mission was to shed light on a largely unknown issue and open consumers’ eyes to slavery in the worlds of fashion, beauty, and tech commerce.

## Campaign objectives

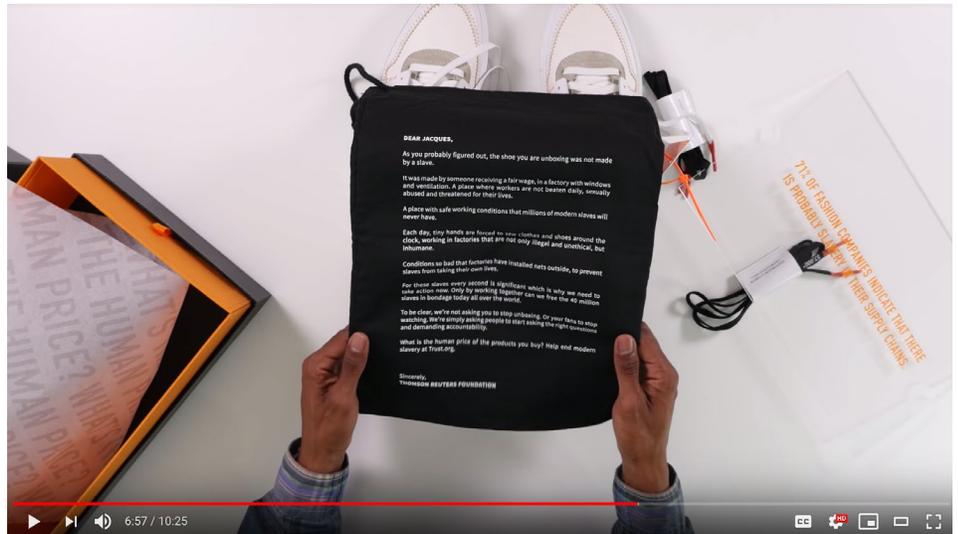
The main objective was to raise awareness and generate conversation among shoppers about forced labor in the supply chains of their commonly-bought items. To measure success Reuters used the following metrics:

- ▶ Organic views on YouTube and other social media channels, without paid media support.
- ▶ Organic campaign conversation across social media and organic PR coverage.
- ▶ Unique visits to the campaign website and an uplift in visits to the Thomson Reuters Foundation website.

## Creative strategy

While Reuters could make a plea to consumers at the purchase point, they figured it would be more effective to catch them midway through the purchase funnel. As many consumers look to vloggers and unboxers on YouTube as a crucial step to their purchase journey, Reuters found this a perfect opportunity to leverage.

Reuters had the idea to “Unbox the Truth.” They custom-designed and launched three original products within the fashion, beauty, and tech industries, and sent them to YouTube vloggers to “unbox” each on camera. Each product was made to appear normal on the surface, but as the unboxer looked closer, they saw hidden messages in the design: facts, first-person accounts of modern slavery, and symbols of the unethical forced labor that went into creating these products.



## What role did YouTube play?

Reuters enlisted the help of popular YouTubers Jacques Slade, The Unlockr, and Shameless Maya to unbox their original, unknown products on their widely-viewed channels. With a media budget of \$0, they managed to capture the attention of thousands of unboxing fans with **purely organic views**. YouTube’s unrivaled reach gave Reuters access to the engaged and global audience of shoppers they needed - a feat that would not have been possible without the unboxer community, and the YouTube’s central role in it.

## Overall effectiveness

Campaign success was measured among various channels:

- ▶ **Social conversation**
  - 2,132 posts with the campaign hashtag #UnboxTheTruth
  - Over 16 million total media impressions
  - 1,071 shares of the videos on Twitter and Facebook
  - 447 YouTube comments
- ▶ **PR coverage**
  - Jacques Slade’s video generated 16 media articles, becoming the most widely-covered shoe drop of 2018
- ▶ **Website visits (Thomson Reuters)**
  - 20,611 unique page views of the campaign landing page
  - 154% increase in traffic to the Foundation’s general website

Sources: YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Thomson Reuters Campaign Report January 2019, Crimson Hexagon with all final figures collected on 7 February 2019

## Why did this campaign win?

Reuters developed unique, hand-made products to disguise a plea to end the unjust modern slavery industry - doing so with **no budget whatsoever** other than popular YouTubers to reach their audience.

## Lessons learned

- ▶ **Make your brand a part of the culture;** Reuters created work that harnessed the culture, community and creators of a YouTube subculture specific to the platform - Unboxers. 79% of submissions tapped into consumers’ culture, beyond those unique subcultures YouTube.
- ▶ **Connecting emotionally** plays an important role in consumer decision making, where “86% of ads evoking high emotional connection drive strong engagement (Data Source: Kantar Millward Brown global Link database for digital ads).

“It was something so unexpected as a solution that also needed the platform to work.”

Kevin Lilly, EVP of Engagement Strategy, Leo Burnett

“Talking about an issue on the human condition, it’s hard not to draw people in. I thought it was super well done.”

Louis Jones, EVP, Media and Data Services, 4A’s