

Best at Leveraging YouTube Formats

Will it Clog?

Liquid-Plumr (Clorox), Reach Agency, AKQA, OMD

Background & context

Drain openers are not something people want to think about, making driving sales uplift challenging. Liquid-Plumr, being a category underdog, needed to create a campaign that would make them stand out among consumers who faced the stress of clogged pipes. With a small media budget, the brand showed consumers the sheer power of the product, increasing awareness and driving purchase at the shelf.

Campaign objectives

After traditional media campaigns failed to turn around declining sales, it was time for a campaign that Liquid-Plumr—and competitors—had never tried before.

Because many consumers go to YouTube first for product advice before heading to the store, Liquid-Plumr wanted to stand out in YouTube culture and make Liquid-Plumr relevant, since our brand was struggling with far lower awareness than the competitors.

Creative strategy

Liquid-Plumr saw the rise in gross-intrigue videos and wanted to play into this with unappetizing but captivating clogs (think a gross veggie casserole or a seafood “turfruckenson”). They tested and validated a new frontier, including some unexpected items, to show consumers a more authentic, down and dirty depiction of clogs while also evoking the sense the relief when the issue is resolved.

To bring this to life, they tapped popular VAT19, a YouTube channel dedicated to producing outrageous challenge videos, which could naturally take on the series in a spectacular way. Over three episodes released at key search periods (Thanksgiving and Holidays, when consumers were most often faced with the stress of clogged pipes), VAT19 put Liquid-Plumr up against common clogs (Massive Chocolate Clog), the extreme (Giant Bacon Grease Clog), and the ridiculous (the World’s Largest Gummy Worm).

What role did YouTube play?

Liquid-Plumr used insights on what people are actually watching to capitalize on YouTube’s popular “Will it” format. In addition to leveraging VAT19, the team effectively executed a multi-faceted YouTube campaign using TrueView in-stream ads, bumpers, long videos and strong search presence to drive business results.



Overall effectiveness

After previous unsuccessful marketing tactics, this campaign drove success across all metrics for Liquid-Plumr—and revolutionized the way the category approached visuals and influencers in advertising. The share decline reversed, and Liquid-Plumr experienced positive growth for the first time since 2015 (Liquid-Plumr).

- ▶ The VAT19 partnership resulted in over 7M organic views and trended in the Top 11 videos on YouTube.
- ▶ Banner assets saw above-average awareness, consideration and favorability, as well as significant lifts in brand attributes.
- ▶ Drove perception that Liquid-Plumr is a powerful product that could destroy the toughest clogs.
- ▶ Based on Google’s Brand Lift results, the top performing asset increased awareness by 38.2% and favorability by 39.6%.

Why did this campaign win?

Using challenge-oriented influencer videos to drive engagement around cleaning products transformed the drain cleaning category, bringing in millions of organic views and making Liquid-Plumr’s video trend on YouTube.

Lessons learned

- ▶ The power to differentiate is a critical driver of brand growth and allows brands to command a premium even in a commoditized category - the most meaningfully different brands grew at a 78% faster rate over the last year alone

(Source: BrandZ™ US Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands, 2019). By exploring new and differentiated territories with both its approach and its content, Liquid Plumr used YouTube to take a low interest category and make it interesting and buzzworthy.

- ▶ Play off the platform’s idiosyncrasies by asking what people do on YouTube that they don’t do anywhere else. Liquid-Plumr, among 79% of submissions, found a subculture to take part in with the rise in gross-intrigue videos and jumped on board with unappetizing but captivating clogs.

“This is a product that you only use in disgusting circumstances—it was the blood normal of the drainage category. This showed a clear way of not being ashamed of what your product is. And it worked especially well on YouTube, since it represented what people love to watch on that platform.”

Tiffany Rolfe, US Chief Creative Officer, R/GA

“It took something that is not generally interesting and relevant, and without mentioning product claims, made it interesting and relevant for this particular platform.”

Stacy Stewart, EVP Investment, UM

“Liquid-Plumr leveraged the right use of YouTube by using the insights of what people are actually watching, like the pimple popper videos. As my kids say, it was oddly satisfying to watch.”

Kevin Lilly, EVP Strategy Director, Leo Burnett