One of the most successful PR-ad campaigns in my opinion is the Volvo’s Hamster Stunt ad campaign for its FMX-truck series.

Although Volvo was a well-respected brand in the passenger vehicle industry, it was less preferred in the heavy vehicle segment due to higher price and its recent entry, and businesses preferred cheaper alternatives like Iveco and MAN.

The ‘Live Test’ ad campaign aired on major social media platforms shows a fully loaded Volvo FMX truck being steered by a hamster on the steering wheel, controlled by a driver using a carrot, while driving uphill on a narrow ledge of a quarry. This was a dangerous but marvelous feat and gained very good traction of major social media platforms.

The purpose of this campaign was to convey that Volvo’s trucks were engineered to be strong yet nimble even on a full load that a 200 gram rodent could control a 45 tonne truck.

The ‘Live tests’ campaign have since amassed more than 100M views on social media, and contributed to a 24% increase in sales one year after the campaign, as trucking companies saw it as an investment to their drivers. This campaign also helped Volvo transfer the brand image of Quality and convenience of its Car company to its new venture into the truck-making industry.

Volvo also released how it filmed and carried out the stunt in a follow up video, which further increased the credibility of the ad. This campaign was a great success due to the simplicity of the message conveyed, and the originality of the ad.