



FIRESTONE PRESENTS ROADHAWK

Swinging between performance and lifestyle

It is a challenge to inform about the topic of “tyres” outside industry circles. The brand Firestone has been extending its commitment to events in the environment of younger customers during the past years. The people responsible for the European market invited to a Roadhawk presentation in Barcelona as sponsor of the PRIMAVERA Festival. Several so-called influencers were invited – a swinging between performance and lifestyle.



Julia Krönlein, responsible for marketing, and Christian Mathes, press officer, explained the advantages of the Roadhawk.

Product presentations in the tyre industry usually follow a stereotypical pattern: theory is transferred by means of presentations about technological details and development goals, whereas driving demonstrations are supposed to check content in a practical way. The quality of presentations normally goes hand in hand with the price segment the respective manufacturers aim at. As a consequence, premium products and brands seldom disappoint. According to company information, Firestone is supposed to revolutionize the European market for tyres in the medium price segment with the Roadhawk. Nonetheless, it is daring to speak about a revolution, although the driving impressions extraordinarily confirm that the Roadhawk is able to turn into a benchmark in its price position. Firestone, however, will move into another direction, which was

also demonstrated by the presence of several so-called influencers who are supposed to address a new group of customers. When presenting the tyre newcomer the brand belonging to the Bridgestone Group undoubtedly showed the renunciation of traditional patterns.

Revitalization of the brand

In 2014, Bridgestone started the revitalization of the brand Firestone in Europe. Since then, a fresher form of marketing directed at younger customers has been noticeable. In Barcelona, a swinging between performance and lifestyle was obvious during the Roadhawk presentation. Braking to a standstill on wet and dry roads in order to test the grip maximum – in the meantime, however, the scenery makes an experienced specialist journalist wonder, as e.g. an Italian blogger duo from the fashion in-



First of all, the Roadhawk will be offered in 32 sizes and will finally be available in 76 sizes.



The brand was present at the PRIMAVERA Festival in Barcelona.

dustry uses the time to lay on lipstick in a rather thick way and to pose close to the black rubber for an Instagram snapshot. Checking the social media profile of the graces from Milan after the presentation confirmed first suspicions to be right: pictures of the hotel room in the luxurious W hotel and of the visit to the PRIMAVERA Festival did not offer any clues concerning the real reason for this “business trip”. Looking for hints of the Roadhawk in the picture documentation was in vain. That definitely was not any nice move especially as the new Firestone rubber was a convincing representative of the tyre species. This does not really seem to matter for the fashion enthusiasts of the younger generation. It remains to be hoped that the presence of the brand at the PRIMAVERA Festival via several brandings and a special Firestone stage will be enough to have a long-lasting impact on festival visitors.

Line-up completed

Firestone completed its line-up with the launch of the Roadhawk. The Firestone Roadhawk is supposed to get top ratings with regard to “lifelong performance”. In the framework of the presentation, tests from TÜV SÜD were mentioned as proof in order to confirm that the tyre is much better concerning both wet grip and wear when compared with competitors. Accord-

ing to responsible people, wear of the Roadhawk was decreased by even 20 per cent when compared with its predecessor, the Firestone TZ300. According to criteria of the EU tyre label, the Firestone Roadhawk received the top rating “A” for wet grip because of its tread pattern and the special rubber compound. Moreover, the construction of the new tyre offers a low-weight carcass aiming at low rolling resistance and thus providing low fuel consumption. The new Firestone Roadhawk will be offered in a broad range of products from 15” to 19” and will follow the trend of bigger rims on passenger cars and family vehicles. Firestone focused with the Roadhawk above all on car drivers covering totally different driving courses with their vehicles on a daily basis. That includes driving on motorways, country roads or in cities. Thierry Jupsin, Director of Brands Marketing at Bridgestone Europe, explained: “Firestone has represented quality products for more than 100 years. We exactly know what challenges car tyres have to be able to endure and adapt our products again and again to the drivers’ needs. The new Roadhawk was designed to offer a high degree of safety and long-lasting performance to drivers during their daily car driving activities.

Firestone offered a rather convincing product performance with the Roadhawk. Judging the commitment in the framework

of the music tour will turn out to be far more challenging. The people responsible for the brand assure that music and Firestone belong together. Nevertheless, it will not be easy for the responsible people in the marketing department to measure the effects of presence at festivals. “Firestone has a long tradition of supporting music talents. Already in 1928, the founder, Harvey Firestone, brought together musicians and music enthusiasts with ‘The Voice of Firestone’, where well-known and less well-known musicians received a platform for their performance. This show was the first sponsored radio programme and was soon one of the most successful entertainment shows of its time”, said Kasia van Balen, Firestone Brand Manager at Bridgestone Europe. The tyre brand will definitely increase its visibility among younger customers as sponsor of a total of seven European festivals in Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom and France. Firestone placed promotion stands and a Firestone stage at the PRIMAVERA, where aspiring artists presented themselves to a bigger audience. It is of course a challenge to present the topic of tyres to younger customers. The people responsible at Firestone accepted this challenge – the quality of the completed product line-up confirms the seriousness of these efforts.

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HUF ELECTRONICS BRETTEEN

On the go in matters of TPMS for 20 years

Huf Electronics Bretten has directly measuring tyre pressure monitoring systems in its portfolio for 20 years. The company, which was called BERU Electronics in former times, lists a higher number of car manufacturers as its customers – among others renowned names like Audi, Aston Martin, BMW, Bentley, Bugatti, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, Mercedes Truck, Porsche, Volkswagen or Volvo Truck.



About 230 employees develop and manufacture directly measuring systems for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and busses.

Ralf Kessler, Development Manager TPMS at Huf, considers the company as player in the automotive sector always committed to quality standards. This was not only confirmed by winning several awards but also by the large customer base. Currently, it offers as well a universal sensor, which can be used in the replacement market too, apart from many individual customer sensors. According to company information, it can be used for all the popular tyre pressure monitoring systems. "The design of our sensors perfectly fits with all the different rims because of an optimum screw connection idea. As a consequence, Huf received the Red Dot Design Award, though not only for this sensor concept", says Kessler.

"During 20 years, our product has not only tremendously been improved, but has also changed concerning the design", adds Ralf Kessler. He refers to sensors belonging to generations one to five, which have

decreased the case and increased performance at the same time. Directly measuring systems show precise tyre pressure of each individual tyre, so that drivers can react to loss of pressure. Moreover, Huf's tyre pressure sensors are supposed to be rather robust in order to withstand environmental requirements. The sensors are able to deal with temperatures from minus 40 degree to plus 150 degree Celsius according to information from the development department. Furthermore, they have to cope with mechanical stress like 2000 times the acceleration of gravity.

Last year, Huf Electronics Bretten also found an answer to the increased demand for training based on the topic of TPMS. A new training centre was opened in Bretten and information and training programmes communicated as integral part of its service offers. The workshops are tailor-made for the needs of tyre mounting, specialized tyre trade and employees in garages.



Huf Electronics Bretten is able to make use of 20 years of experience for the development of tyre pressure monitoring systems.

The trainer team consisting of Rob Viset and Udo Ginsterblum pass on expert knowledge, procedures and products also to trainers of Stahlgruber Stiftung, Snap-on Trainingsakademie, Michelin Schulungszentren or PV Automotive. All the educational measures focus on the Huf universal sensor called IntelliSens. Udo Ginsterblum illustrates: "It is no longer sufficient to offer workshops at the centres of wholesale. Thus, we equipped our own facilities in order to train people concerning the functionality of TPMS and the universal sensors IntelliSens in an optimum way". Rob Viset, who is responsible for international workshops, adds: "Everything being necessary for our workshops is available in our centre in Bretten. At the same time, we are also able to show participants the cutting-edge manufacturing process of IntelliSens during a factory tour." (kle)