



## Case Study

Above & Below the Line Marketing

### Audi A2 in the BA London Eye

#### The Question

When we were approached to put an Audi A2 into the London Eye, our reaction was not "how?" not "impossible" not "never", it was "When?"

And so it started. Three weeks from the initial meeting date, we had to overcome hundreds of practical issues to make this feat possible. Our team engine, like an Audi is supremely balanced and efficient, and the moment this project was green lit, we assembled a world-class crew ready to make the seemingly impossible happen.

So many times since this project was completed have clients and friends asked the same question, "did you put it in there for real?" Our answer is always "yes, yes, yes", "but" they continue, "Where do you start with a project like that?"



*Used for a TV ad, Stills and PR. The Audi Eye campaign was visionary, amazing and just begged the question "how did they do that?"*

#### At the beginning:

Our brief was to get the car in the pod by 12.30am on the night of the shoot. That would give the film crew four hours 'night' shoot, till the sun started to poke it's head up.

#### The Recce

It was a warm night, and we needed lots of answers.

The Eye shuts at 9pm, and the last customer is off by 9.30pm. That would give us a three hour window to get the car in. Easy if you're driving the car in off the road, right?

Except in this case (as you'll know if you've been there) you can't drive a car straight from the road into the pod; the 'bottom' pod is at deck height, a good 1.5 metres above ground level. Complicating matters more, there is a zigzagging queuing slope with glass panels lining it, running up to the ticket booth and deck, blocking our way through. Complicating things further, there are also vertical structural beams, reducing our angle of entry.

So we needed to have the glass panels removed from the walkway, to create space for the thirty foot long on / off ramp, that would make it possible for the car to drive up and onto the deck. Would BA be happy taking those glass panels off?

On top of that, we had a major issue; the benches in the middle of the pod were not removable. They housed electronics and equipment that were integral to the pod. Added to that, the car was too wide to fit through the pod doorway at deck level (because the doorway curves outwards vertically when you look from the front). It would only fit through if the doors were taken off, and the car was driven through 700mm above deck height.

Other than close the wing mirrors on the car in, we had no options modifying the car. The only way forward was to create a raised deck inside the pod, just over the height of the bench seating in the centre. This also meant we would need to remove the doors to the pod; the car would squeeze in if the wing mirrors were closed. Would BA be happy with the doors being removed?

Also, the implications of having a false deck inside the pod, meant, as the car drove out of the pod (for the ad), the existing deck it drives onto would need to be raised to the same height; all fifty feet of it.

The other issue was the position of the pod. We needed the pod to stop within fifty millimetres of our mark, to allow the car to drive out between the vertical columns. The problem, is that the 'stop' button in the control room on the Eye, once pressed, has a built-in soft-stop, to protect the motor and mechanics of such a large unit. The size of the wheel also meant that there was a certain amount of play; stretch if you like that made it impossible to stop the pod in the same place every time (of course the wheel is in continuous motion during the day, so it had never actually



needed to stop on a specific point - until we came along... Nevertheless, ten minutes of shimmying backwards and forwards meant we would be able to stop it within fifty millimetres of our mark.

#### Answers

Thankfully BA were happy to help us with the removal of the glass panels, and the doors to the pod. The glass panels would take between an hour and an hour and a half to take out, and the doors would take an hour and a half. This reduced our installation timeframe to one and a half hours. Within reason, we would be able to unload and start a few bits and pieces. But in general, because of H&S procedures, it would be necessary to wait for the glass and doors to be fully removed.

#### The Upshot

So we had a one and a half hour timeframe to install a thirty foot aluminium-clad ramp, fifty feet of raised, aluminium-clad decking, a raised, aluminium-clad deck inside the pod, re-rig the pod doors to hang wider than normal, two custom built lights (that fit in the pod ceiling without marking it) and get the A2 car inside without making a dent or a scratch anywhere...

Two and a half weeks to prepare, fabricate, test and write a comprehensive Risk Assessment.

Which we did.

#### The Installation

Another warm, balmy night. While the glass panels and pod doors were being removed, we were unloading everything into designated spaces.

Every team member had a minute-by-minute schedule for the one and a half hour installation. It was a case of whoever was up on their schedule, helping the person most behind on theirs. As with a team marathon, you're only as quick as your slowest member, and this was the linchpin of the success within timeframe.

Once the glass panels and doors were off, we started. The team split into two; one ramp team and one pod team. The ramp team had the relatively simple job of building the steel ramp in line with the pod. The pod team had to squeeze the car into the pod (with 15mm clearance) and up onto specially built ramps that would support the car over the bench seating. Unfortunately because the door height was too low to allow the car in at the total raised height, we had to then jack the car up a further 300mm by hand on each of its four extra long jacks. Once jacked, the ramps could be removed, and replaced by the higher, aluminium-clad decking runners. 300mm wide, and built to take the extra weight of the car. The car was then slowly lowered with the jacks onto that deck. The car in position meant we could install the rest of the deck into the pod. This was a lighter weight, aluminium clad decking that could take the weight of people, but didn't need to take the extra weight of the car.

While the decking was going in, the pod doors were being fitted to look as though they had been slid open.

As the ramp and pod team started to finish their jobs, they began moving the raised deck into the main thoroughfare. Fifty feet long in 8'x4' sections. That done, we were done. Fini.

#### A Cup of Coffee

We hit the finish post ten minutes early. Not a scratch on the car or pod, and ready for a night shoot.

Eight tonnes of steel, one aluminium car, one large rotating wheel, a precision driver and a great team of experienced professionals.

#### Watch the finished commercial



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