

SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ANDREW H. CARD, JR.  
VINCE AND LARRY PRESS EVENT  
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Today marks another important milestone for a couple of bruised and battered characters who literally crashed onto the scene seven years ago.

Who would have thought that after years of fruitless effort to convince Americans to use safety belts, a couple of dummies could get us to change our minds?

I'll tell you who : the creative people in the Ad Council, at Leo Burnett USA, and at the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration -- a team that worked brilliantly together to develop two of the most recognized public service characters of all time. And the most effective.

When Vince and Larry, the irrepressible crash dummies, burst through a windshield for the first time, safety belt use in America hovered just above 14 percent. Today, 59 percent of Americans wear belts and we estimate the number will reach 70 percent by year-end.



Vince and Larry had a lot to do with that. They show us the tragic consequences of being without a safety belt. So when they recommend safety belts to prevent serious injury, it makes perfect sense. We can all learn a lot from these dummies.

In particular, 27,000 Americans can be very thankful that they did. That's how many lives have been saved by belts since Vince and Larry made their public service advertising debut.

Frankly, I don't consider this a public service campaign as much as a public health campaign. Its a lot like a vaccination program -- vaccination against being killed in a car crash -- and it works extremely well.

The public justifiably questions much of what comes out of Washington. But the Vince and Larry success story is that fabled silver lining -- a sterling example of which we can all be proud.

The television networks rightly claim responsibility for a big share of our success, because they provide the electronic bridge -- a bridge over which Vince and Larry travel into tens of millions of American homes. We count on that participation, which has amounted to more than \$300 million in donated media time.



Vince & Larry would not have achieved national recognition without such unstinting participation.

Now, television's commitment is wavering a bit because of the apparent connection between Vince and Larry and the marketing of toy crash dummies by the TYCO company. We believe the adult dummies who speak to adults with adult humor are separate and distinct from the crash dummies, which speak only to kids in a child's idiom.

When TYCO approached us, we agreed to a limited venture which would achieve an important objective : reaching youngsters who had never before been approached with a safety belt message. The toy dummies offered the opportunity. And not incidentally, it works. The kids do understand.

More importantly, we specified that Vince and Larry could not appear in any toy commercials -- not their names, not their voices, not their costumes. We insisted on separating the two images, and we think that worked.



It should come as no surprise that in the free marketplace, the popularity of Vince and Larry might lead to a commercial spin off. What resulted was a generic toy that capitalized on the concept of surviving a crash with a buckled safety belt.

We hope the networks and television public service directors will help to see to it that Vince and Larry's vital contribution to public safety remains unchanged and strong as ever. There is much at stake; Vince and Larry are not salesmen, they are symbols of everything that's right about wearing a safety belt. If they fade, the power of the belt message fades in direct proportion. We can't afford that.

Today I am gratified to unveil the newest Vince and Larry television public service campaign. Every year when we think Leo Burnett couldn't possibly come up with something better, they do, and we're delighted. We think you will be too.

But the worth of these ads goes far beyond the amusement they bring us. These spots will help America attain the 70 percent usage rate that <sup>THE PRESIDENT HAS</sup> ~~we have~~ targeted by year-end. And with the generous and vitally necessary participation of television networks and public service directors, we will maintain our momentum.



Now I'm pleased to ask Jill Baskin, who is a vice president and account supervisor for Leo Burnett USA, to introduce the new spots and discuss them. Jill . . . . .

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