

AUTOMOTIVE

Volkswagen Group boosts partnership with Lucasfilm at SXSW 2023

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Volkswagen Group displayed its latest vehicles at SXSW. Image credit: Volkswagen Group

By [Kay Sorin](#)

AUSTIN, TX German automaker Volkswagen Group highlighted its ongoing creative partnership with Lucasfilm at SXSW 2023, where representatives from both brands spoke about the value of collaboration in marketing.

Volkswagen Group hosted an official panel discussion, "VW & Lucasfilm Join Forces," dedicated to the unique campaigns and innovative products that have grown out of the auto giant's partnership with Walt Disney Co.'s Lucasfilm.

"I think it's necessary for the future that you continue doing storytelling in a very emotional way with the passion of the brand and the passion of the fans to further develop us as a loved brand," said Gilbert Heise, chief marketing officer of Volkswagen Group.

"It's also a good place here, South by Southwest, to learn how we do storytelling in the digital age in the right way, how can we bring across these big emotions," he said.

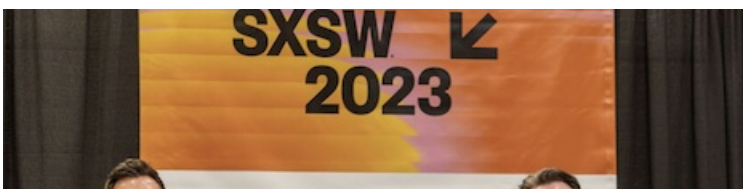
Unlocking potential through partnership

A selection of expert panelists shared their insights on how the Volkswagen collaborations with Lucasfilm have come to life and how the two brands have leveraged each other's strengths to create something new.

Panelists included Academy Award-winning artist, author and production designer Doug Chiang, Mr. Heise, and Walt Disney Studios executive Ty Ervin. The discussion was moderated by *Variety's* Cynthia Littleton.

Following the panel, Mr. Heise spoke with Kevin Lane Keller, professor of marketing at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, about how strategic partnerships have been beneficial for brands and what the future of innovation-driven partnerships looks like for the automotive industry.

The discussion highlighted the importance of collaboration and how it can drive innovation and growth for brands.





Walt Disney Studios' Ty Ervin (left) and Volkswagen's Gilbert Heise at the Volkswagen Group panel discussion at SXSW.
Image credit: Volkswagen Group

Futuristic cars, timeless stories

Volkswagen and Disney have taken a unique approach to their partnership by focusing on storytelling, which is at the heart of both brands.

By combining the storylines of the *Star Wars* universe with Volkswagen's electric vehicle lineup, they have created an authentic and engaging marketing campaign that resonates deeply with fans of both brands.

One of the highlights of the collaboration between Volkswagen and Lucasfilm has been the vehicle design collaboration between VW designers and Doug Chiang, vice president and executive creative director at Lucasfilm.

The custom vehicles unveiled last year at the *Star Wars* celebration in Anaheim, CA, were a fan favorite and a testament to the creative synergy between the two companies.

The panel kicked off with a discussion of the first collaboration between Volkswagen and Lucasfilm, which was for the launch of the all-electric ID Buzz last May.

The global campaign was released in collaboration with the Disney+ limited series, *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, and featured brand ambassador Ewan McGregor, who was also reprising his leading role in the series.

Following this endeavor, the partnership continued to flourish, celebrating the release of *Andor*, a *Star Wars* series that debuted on Disney+ in September, with another campaign. That project focused on the ID 4, emphasizing that what consumers can drive today, rebels will fly tomorrow.

The highlight of the panel discussion was undoubtedly the first look at the latest collaboration between Volkswagen and Lucasfilm, which celebrates the release of *The Mandalorian* season 3, currently releasing episodes weekly on Disney+. The panelists shared a sneak peak of the currently unreleased *Mandalorian* Season 3 design.

Driving innovation together

The key to this successful collaboration lies in the authenticity and relevance it brings to both brands.

By fully integrating their products and stories, they have managed to create strong mental associations that resonate with consumers.

The success of the Volkswagen and Disney partnership serves as a lesson for marketers looking to create powerful and effective campaigns.

By focusing on authenticity, relevance and storytelling, brands can forge strong connections with consumers that last far beyond the duration of a single campaign.

Moreover, embracing the opportunities presented by the digital age and finding innovative ways to share these stories across various channels will ensure that the emotional impact of the partnership remains strong.

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, marketers must adapt their strategies to maintain the authenticity and relevance that have made partnerships like this so successful.

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