



# If you don't like this ad, you're simply not Subaru material

A DDB Toronto ad which interrupts a Snuggie infomercial to depict a man taking a crowbar to the popular viral ad for the blanket with sleeves has drawn a lot of attention to Subaru Canada. The Ad Missions team weighs in.



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■ **André Richelieu** is professor of marketing at Université Laval, Québec. This ad emphasizes the brand attributes of the new Subaru Outback — ruggedness, adventure, manhood — and compares them to Snuggies': cocooning and ... dullness. The ad plays on humour but also on the image of a virile man. This ad should not be mistaken with a frontal attack toward the Snuggie, which would be irrelevant. The Snuggie and its style of ad simply provides the perfect background for Subaru to clearly underline its own brand attributes and differentiate its ad. Indeed, at a time when a lot of ads (see Rogers, Bell) portray men in a very mellow way, this ad has the courage to display a man who asserts his manhood. It is effective in terms of brand awareness, but does it really trigger a positive predisposition toward the Subaru brand? Time will tell if, indeed, such an ad reverberates through to the bottom line of the company.

■ **Andrew Potter** is a *Maclean's* columnist, an editor at *The Ottawa Citizen* and author of *The Authenticity Hoax: How We Get Lost Finding Ourselves*, due out in spring 2010. All taste is distaste, as Pierre Bourdieu taught us: We are more defined by what we can't stand than by what we actually like. Subaru offers a wickedly original take on negative advertising here, targeting not its direct competition, but the complacent and sedated lifestyle that makes its target audience want to barf. This is brand positioning by brute force, perfectly in tune with the *Fight Club*-ish themes of post-recession remasculatation that are in the air right now. If you want a sense of just how successful this ad is, check out the comments under the ad on YouTube. As one chucklehead put it, "Snuggies got pwnd!" If you don't like this ad, its because Subaru doesn't want you buying the car in the first place.



■ **Lyle Goodis** is president of Toronto-based marketing communications group Lyle Goodis and Associates. I love this ad — the surprise and payoff were terrific! Having been a Subaru Outback owner in its debut year (1996) it was a great car, with a definitely different attitude. The first time I saw this ad I did one of those "What ... hey ... where's the..." The "surprise" and use of a crowbar to tear down the TV screen and reveal the car and great outdoors setting was beyond refreshing; it was welcome! It certainly held my attention. The actor and the voiceover were just right and the spot does stand out. It should help position and drive consumer inquiries for Outbacks. I just hope viewers will remember the ad was *not* for the Snuggie blanket (which I do not own, and cannot attest to its performance).

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