



EDITOR'S PICKS 20 SEPTEMBER 2021

Helmet Has Always Been a Good Idea /

Danish Road Safety Council

Charity harks back to Viking Age to prove the benefits of helmets for cyclists

► <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKLrxNaUWQ>

Challenge / In Denmark, 90% of the population owns a bike and Copenhagen has been ranked the world's most cycle-friendly city by the World Economic Forum. But while Danes are avid cyclists, they are not that keen on wearing helmets. Only half the adult population chooses to wear a helmet, according to the **Danish Road Safety Council**, even though cyclists are hurt in 70% of all serious road traffic injuries in the country and 42% of road casualties in Copenhagen are cyclists. So, the Danish Road Safety Council wanted to encourage more cyclists to wear protective headgear.

Solution / Working with Copenhagen agency **&Co**, the Danish Road Safety Council released a film called **Helmet Has Always Been a Good Idea** reminding Danes that their ancestors wore helmets too. The ad tells the story of a Viking leader Svend, in the year 893, who refuses to wear a helmet ahead of a raid. When asked why not, Svend shares a list of silly excuses, including that his helmet is annoying, it makes his scalp itch, it ruins his hairstyle and besides, he's a good horse rider. The Viking only concedes when his wife tells him matter-of-factly, 'Svend, you can go looting and pillaging all you want, but you have to wear a helmet.'



The campaign ran throughout this past summer across TV, out-of-home and social media. The ads were also on display at Abus shops, which sell bike helmets and locks.

In addition, the Danish Road Safety Council partnered with the **National Museum of Denmark** on its summer exhibition: Join the Vikings – On Raid. Banners tracking the Vikings and their helmet use with today's bicycle helmet were on display at the museum's bike racks. Visitors to the museum received stickers with helmets and a booklet with a list of Viking-style excuses for not wearing helmets, as well as a timeline of the helmet's history. The mirrors in the museum bathroom also featured real-size helmet stickers so that visitors could see how they looked wearing the gear.

The National Museum of Denmark supported the campaign on its social media channels by sharing facts about the use of helmets throughout history.



Results / According to the agency, **four out of 10** people considered buying a helmet because of the campaign and **4%** of non-helmet-wearers went ahead and purchased a helmet after having seen the film. The film had a **79%** view-through rate and **84%** organic reach, with an **87%** positivity rating. The agency also found that **1 in 5** people talked with others about the campaign, and **90%** of people who had seen the film agreed with its message that wearing a helmet when biking is a good idea and **86%** agreed that wearing a helmet was more important than vanity. **Seven out of 10** non-helmet-users found the film relevant, while **91%** of viewers thought the film would be relevant for others.



Contagious Insight /

Historical consistency / This campaign builds on Danes' national pride when it comes to the Vikings, something that comes through in the country's many festivals and historical reenactments celebrating these ancestors. The Visit Denmark site links ruling Queen Margrethe II to a 1,000-year-old Viking dynasty, while Denmark's official site heralds the 'glamorous, violent Vikings'. Psychologist Robert Cialdini's principle of consistency states that people are more likely to do something if it's in line with their past actions. While modern Danes might not be wearing helmets, their ancestors certainly did and this campaign makes the point that if a helmet was a good idea for Vikings a 1,000 years ago, their descendants should follow their example.

Safe and strong / Rather than focus on the dangers of not wearing a helmet, the campaign focuses on the barriers for usage: the silly excuses that people have. As Kristian Eilertsen, senior copywriter at &Co, said: 'Throughout history, wearing a helmet when facing danger has always been the obvious thing to do. But for some reason we've become so vain that we'd rather risk serious injury than ruin our hairdo.'

By framing the reasons not to wear a helmet in a historical context, it really makes them seem even more ridiculous. As &Co's senior art director, Kristoffer Winther, said: 'A big, burly Viking hiding behind modern day excuses really hammers home the point.'

Depicting Vikings, a people celebrated for their strength and bravery, wearing helmets also shows that there's nothing weak about putting on a helmet. It's a similar strategy to one that was adopted by New Zealand's Transport Agency for its Belted Survivors campaign, which depicted muscular men heroically posing with the seatbelt bruising suffered in car accidents. By showing how even tough guys take safety precautions the campaign reported a 74% perception shift for its target audience.

Beyond TV / The cornerstone of the Danish Road Safety Council's campaign is a beautifully made film where excellent production values really make the message shine. But the campaign is so smart because of how it extends the thinking of the film through other media. This ensures that the message of the campaign is hammered home again and again, particularly when people are either out riding their bikes (outdoor ads, ads on bike racks) or thinking about their bikes (the Abus stores). The partnership with the National Museum is particularly clever because it lends a stamp of authority to the campaign (the museum experts even worked as advisers to check the details of the film for historical accuracy).

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