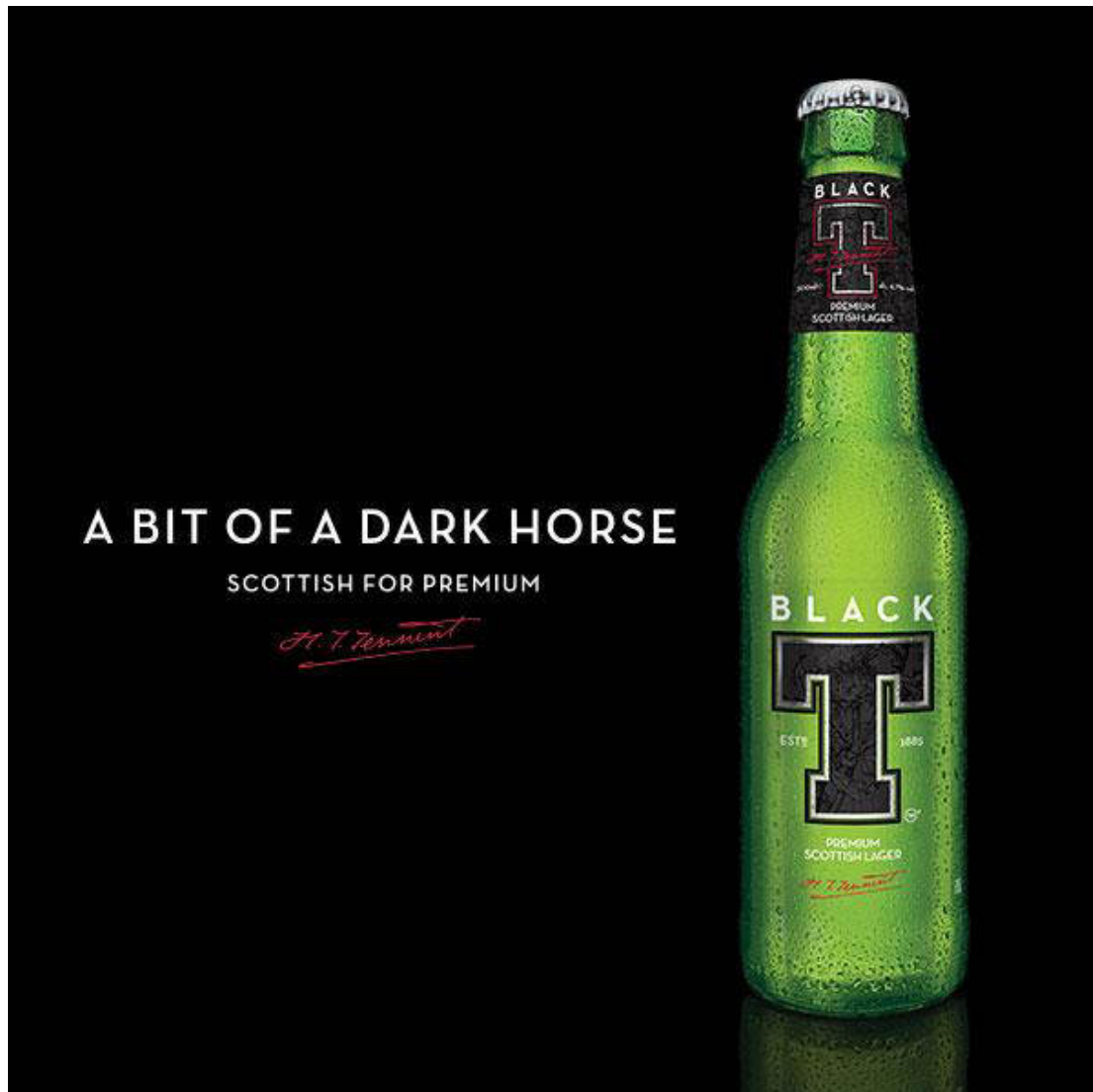


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# BLACK T; A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

## Tennent Caledonian Breweries



Category: Food & Drink

Word count: 1496

For the first time in its long history, Tennent's was set to roll-out an exciting family of brands.

Among these extensions was Black T; a premium lager made in Scotland for Scotland.

From product design and social media, to PR and sampling, all marketing touch points benefited from clear,

insightful brand positioning.

Taking into account a number of challenges (including preconceptions and the liquid's previous incarnation) Tennent's created a careful marketing plan that deftly used intrigue, influencers and imagination to gain

immediate impact for Black T.

The resulting launch surpassed all expectations; **11,000** people sampled, **13m** OTS in press coverage, more than **300k** reached via social media and **sales** that outstripped competitors, securing crucial grocer listings.

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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

### OBJECTIVES

Tennent's Lager; a pioneering Scottish brand that's thrived for 130 years, from a business that's been around for almost 500 years.

As Scotland's number one beer by volume and value, Tennent's has the highest rate of sale of any beer brand in GB take home and is listed in 8 out of every 10 pubs, clubs and bars.

However, as a business, Tennent's recognised the increasing consumer trend for choice – drinkers seeking out different drinks for different occasions.

In answer, a Tennent's 'family' of brands was planned for the first time ever, targeting low-alcohol, no-alcohol and premium bottle beer segments with brand extensions like Lemon T, Hee Haw and Black T respectively.

Black T held one challenge that significantly differed to Lemon T and Hee Haw; the liquid inside the bottle was not new.

Instead, this was the award-winning premium lager that had previously been known as 'Tennent's Original Export'; a brand that, whilst revered amongst beer lovers for its taste, had not connected with drinkers on a wider, more mass-market level.

The challenge for the Tennent's marketing team was to devise a strategy that would deliver a number of things:

- Communicate the excellent taste and **premium nature** of the Black T lager
- **Challenge any preconceptions** the target market may have about a premium lager being launched by Tennent's
- **Avoid being dubbed** 'Tennent's Original Export redone'
- **Drive sales** in order to secure listings in grocers (Tesco, Sainsbury's)

### STRATEGY

Our marketing strategy had to establish a distinctive personality that would set Black T apart, both on-shelf and in consumers' minds, drawing them in immediately.

On tasting Black T, we were confident that consumers would be pleasantly surprised and would appreciate its premium status – but we had to get it in their hands first.

Using this 'pleasant surprise' observation to help formulate our thinking, we set out to create activity designed to intrigue people and challenge expectations.

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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

### **‘A bit of a dark horse’;**

meaning “*a competitor about whom little is known but who unexpectedly wins or succeeds*”. Whilst an undeniable nod to the dark of the Black T name, the marketing team decided on this positioning to reflect the understated yet confident nature of the brand.

To capture the attention of our target market of discerning male drinkers, aged 25+, we understood that every element of our marketing had to reflect the quality that we assured others was inside the bottle.

However, taking ‘a bit of a dark horse’ as our direction, it was agreed that activity – whilst needing to communicate the product’s premium status - should never be showy or ostentatious. Instead, it should be self-assured and unpretentious; a confident brand representative of the best of modern Scotland.

### **ACTIVITY**

Taking the lead from brand positioning, the launch plan for Black T had to intrigue and interest. Nothing was to be obvious. Instead, the campaign needed to be simple, well-executed, bold, assured and without pretension.

Every week until launch, Tennent’s marketing team reviewed plans, opportunities and progress with their agencies (D8, Multiply, Bright Signals and Wire Media), resulting in an integrated and cohesive launch plan, which included:

#### **PRE-LAUNCH:**

- Bottle and pack design

#### **LAUNCH:**

- PR and digital
  - Sampling programme
  - ATL
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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE



### Bottle & Pack

Ahead of launch, fresh new packaging had to be created for Black T. A simple, clean design was developed, which subtly referenced the brand's heritage but in a modern, quality way.

Design partners D8 turned the iconic red T black but with understated embossing to give texture. Viewed close-up, this embossing is in fact a sketch of a thistle, which is also echoed on the bottle-top. This cue underlines the brand's Scottish provenance without being overly obvious or heavy-handed.

Other well-placed cues which nod to the brand's provenance include the Tennent signature, the date that the brewery was established and the direct statement - 'Premium Scottish Lager'.

With Black T being launched as an off-trade product, the addition of a basket pack was made to give that quality edge, as well as stand-out in store. Nesting six bottles, the pack reflected the bottle cues of clear branding, heritage and thistle motif.

For the bottle, green glass was used to balance the use of black in the label, keeping the overall look light and allowing the lager inside to be seen.



### Launch Plan

To gain maximum impact, a combined strategy was developed across PR, Digital and Sampling. A two-stage approach was taken:

#### **Stage 1**

- Use surprise and intrigue for launch – engage our target market through pleasant surprises, helping to challenge expectations

#### **Stage 2**

- Create a series of surprising, quality events, experiences and associations with a premium and interesting dimension
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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

### STAGE 1

#### Teaser bottles

Directly challenging those pre-conceptions that we guessed may be brought to the launch of Black T, we decided to create intriguing, unbranded 'teaser' bottles.

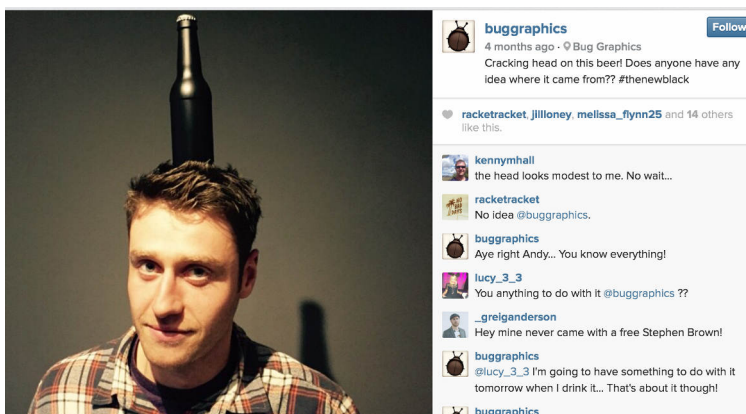
These opaque, custom-made black bottles were delivered to more than 500 key influencers and media a few days before Black T was officially unveiled. No other information was shared, except for a black card with the copy:

**'Stay in the dark until 30th October #thenewblack'.**



This prompted a great deal of speculation and questions online; 'What is it I'm drinking? How can I find out more about this bottle?'. The hashtag was widely used on social channels and the stunt became a talking point, creating a sense of anticipation ahead of our launch date.

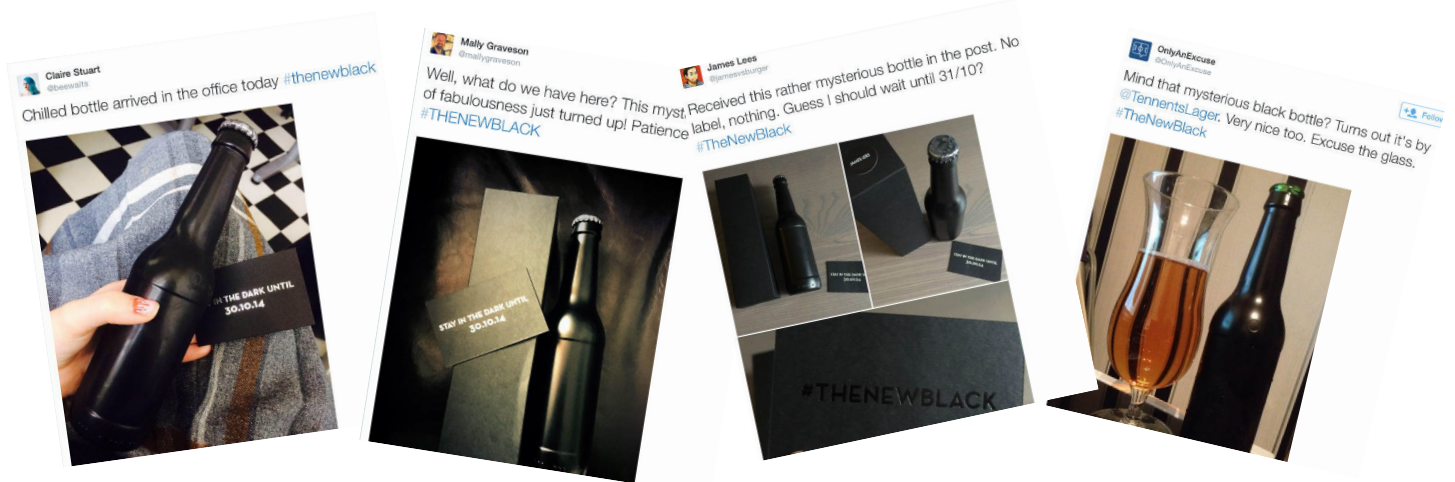
In this way, people were able to sample the product without prejudice. The absence of bottle branding (other than the enigmatic thistle bottle cap) allowed a completely blind tasting, meaning that the liquid was judged on its own merit.



Once conversation had started to heat up online, deliveries were once again made to these people but with branded bottles instead – the mystery now revealed as Black T. These deliveries also coincided with the media reveal.

The reaction was outstanding. More than 40% of those who received a bottle posted online and the reaction from recipients was 100% positive.

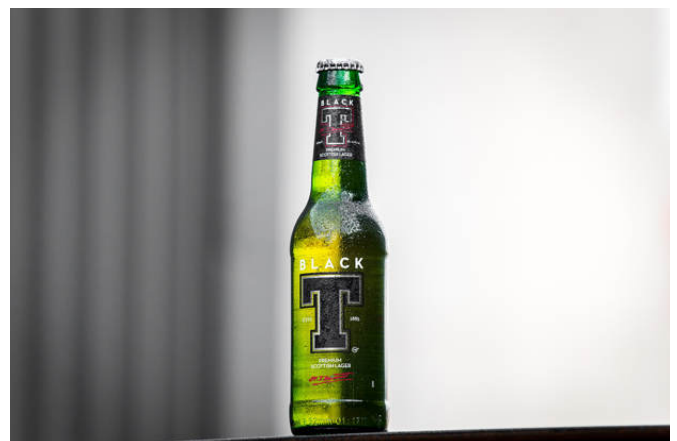
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This idea delivered trial amongst the target market, interest from media contacts who received the bottle (effectively a pre-sell before the release was distributed) and great engagement on social media.

#### Media launch

Accompanying the press release - which highlighted the quality of the product, as well as the fact that Black T was part of Tennent's first-ever 'family' of brands – were beautifully shot images of the product, which echoed the streamlined, clean look of the bottle.





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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

In order to give picture desks a suite of images to choose from, we also created pictures featuring Paul Condron, Marketing Director at Tennent's. We echoed the teaser activity online by painting a wall outside the brewery black, along with the date of launch and the hashtag #thenewblack.

This served as our backdrop for photography – but its prominent location outside Wellpark brewery (a busy arterial route to the city-centre) had the added benefit of helping to support growing speculation and anticipation.

The press release also included mention of Black T being “a dark horse” within Paul Condron’s comment. This line was used by almost 70% of media.

The ensuing coverage was excellent: 18 pieces of quality coverage were achieved (8m+ OTS).



### Raise a glass for the new premium lager launched by Tennent's

Thursday 30 October 2014

A new, top quality lager described as being 'the best of Scotland, brewed for Scotland' is to be introduced by Tennent's.



Named Black T, the 4.7% ABV premium lager has been created using the finest ingredients - the majority of which are home-grown.

Black T will now be available in Tesco and Sainsbury's from the weekend.

The bottled lager is brewed at the historic Wellpark brewery in Glasgow using hundreds of years of know-how and a recipe that calls for 100% local barley.

### Tennent's launch new 'premium lager

(Oct 30, 2014 09:45) By Scott McCulloch

Tennent's said Black T, a 4.7% ABV premium lager, will be brewed at its Wellpark location in Glasgow.

3 Shares



Pic: Comp

Tennent's Glasgow Breweries has launched a new 'premium' lager brand, Black T. The bottled lager, which is brewed at the historic Wellpark brewery in Glasgow, will initially be stocked by supermarkets Tesco and Sainsbury's in Scotland from this weekend.

Tennent's marketing director, Paul Condron, said: "Black T is a bit of a dark horse in the premium lager category -- but we think people are going to be very pleasantly surprised when they try it."

This is the first time we've looked to build a family of Tennent's beers, which is exciting. Tennent's has never stood still and has kept pace with the times throughout its 450-year history.

## Social Black-outs

Carrying on the teaser theme, the cover, header images and profile pics of Tennent's social media were turned entirely black for four days prior to the launch, except for #thenewblack included in white text – a stark change that got people talking ("I think this is the new beer I've heard about" "Does this have anything to do with the Twitter deliveries?").

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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

A reveal was made to coincide with press coverage on 30th October. The launch post alone reached over 45k Facebook users and generated over 3k interactions.



## STAGE 2

Once the reveal of Black T had taken place, a second stage of its launch was designed to continue momentum and reinforce the quality message behind the brand.

This phase focused on taking everyday moments and adding something surprising and special to them.

### Black T Fridays

We identified an opportunity to offer an unexpected reward to our target audience at the end of a hard week. Black, luxury Mercedes Viano vehicles were stationed in Glasgow and Edinburgh, ready to pick people and their friends up and take them home, or onwards to a night out. The interior had a luxury fit-out with subtle branding – logo-embroidered cushions, throws – and Black T was on ice, waiting for passengers to crack one open.



Our service – which was launched at the height of winter – was ‘called’ via social media using the hashtag #BlackTFriday.

Making the most of a talked-about date in the media calendar, our Black T Fridays were launched on Black Friday. By using this opportunity, we were able to gain further coverage through inclusion in wider news articles.

Black T Fridays continued throughout December and early January; a time when luxury door-to-door transport was in demand – and much appreciated.

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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE



### BlackList

Black T curated a BlackList – a list of people that we were engaging with and rewarding online who we knew were on-brand and influential.

Post launch and in the weeks approaching Christmas, we released a series of 'black boxes' for these people, which were created by observing their likes / dislikes on social media. High-end boxes of personalised treats were created and hand-delivered. These boxes also included Black T but were surrounded by other aspirational items.

For example, Sheri from blog duo Betty & Bee received a black tee-shirt created by a Scottish designer, a black compact and other black fashion inspired goodies, whilst The Sun editor Gordon Smart received a black Hibs Training trackie top, black Playing Cards, a black Le Creusier Bottle Opener and Google Chromecast – a reflection of his own particular likes.

This concept was also extended to our general fans - all they had to do was tag themselves either 'Going Out' or 'Staying In' to receive a customised box of treats.

### Sampling

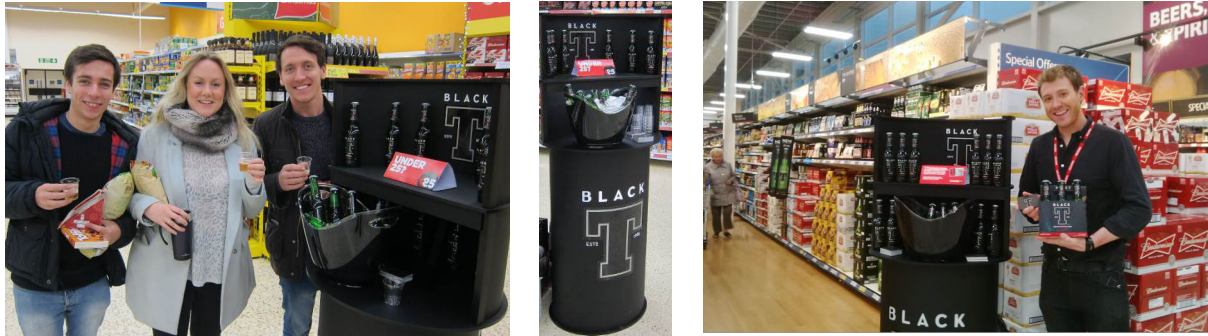
Following the teaser activity of Black T pre-launch, sampling continued in quality retail locations. From Abandon Ship and House of Fraser in Glasgow, to Common People in Edinburgh. Twelve locations in total were visited across four cities.

Unbranded bottles were served to male shoppers, which again prompted the question “*What am I drinking?*”, which was often quickly followed by “*Is this the Black T I've been hearing about?*”. More than 3,500 people were sampled in the weeks following launch.



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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE



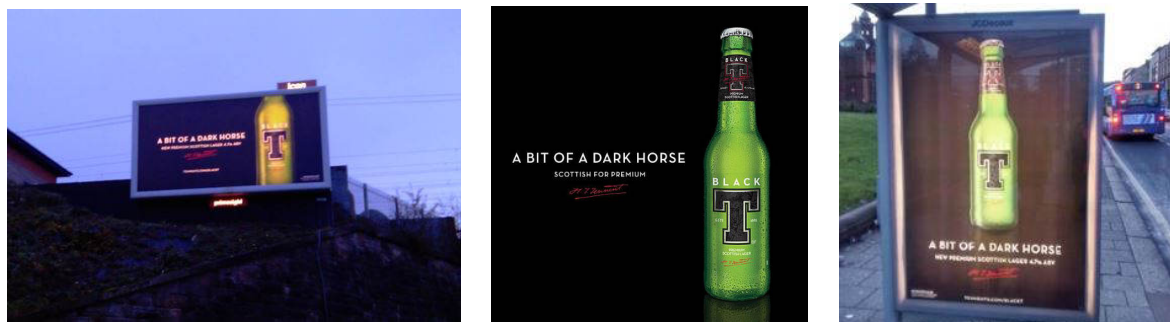
In addition to retail sampling, activity also took place in Tesco supermarkets throughout Scotland.

More than 8,500 people trialled Black T in store with a combined OTS of 148,500 consumers.

During this period, Headerboards, Aisle Fins, Shelf Strips, Floor Vinyls and Shelf Barkers were also installed to help with in-store visibility.

### ATL

Reflecting the simple, clean style of the product design, a series of 6-sheet and 48-sheet adverts were created, which centred on the visual of the bottle and explicitly introduced the 'A Bit of a Dark Horse' line. OOH appeared across four weeks in the lead up to Christmas, helping to support sales across the crucial festive period.



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## BLACK T: A BIT OF A DARK HORSE

### RESULTS

The launch of Black T was considered extremely successful by the business.

- More than 13m OTS achieved through PR – 8m more than the target KPI.
- 99% of coverage was positive
- Its status as a premium lager was included in 100% of coverage
- Less than 1% of coverage mentioned Tennent's Original Export
- Eight dedicated Facebook posts on Black T have reached 180k users & generated 9459 likes, comments and shares.
- More than 11,000 people were sampled – 9,000 more than the target KPI.
- As a result, Black T outstripped sales of key competitors, including Fosters Gold (it too being a premium brand extension), Kronenbourg and Carlsberg within its first seven weeks of sale. It was listed from launch in Tesco and Sainsbury's and has recently been added to ASDA listings.

The success of Black T and the new Tennent's family is also considered to have positively impacted on main brand Tennent's:

- By the end of 2014, Tennent's had succeeded in increasing volume by 2.7% and value by almost 0.5% in the off-trade. In the on-trade the key summer period saw an increase of 2%. Tennent's outsells the next standard lager by 3:1.

With an exciting plan of activity in place to continue its campaign in 2015, Black T is a dark horse that needs no reining in.

