# Jaguar Land Rover faces backlash and sales plunge after controversial electric rebranding campaign



Amidst a changing automotive landscape, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) is currently navigating through the turbulent waters of rebranding after a contentious campaign that has alienated many loyal customers. The British carmaker’s recent advertisement, unveiled as part of an ambitious overhaul dubbed “Project Roar,” aimed to reposition the brand for a new era – primarily focusing on luxury electric vehicles. However, the execution has drawn widespread criticism for seemingly abandoning its core heritage.

In December, Jaguar's rebrand video went viral, but largely for the wrong reasons. The visually striking ad featured models in eccentric attire against abstract, otherworldly backdrops, prominently excluding any actual Jaguar vehicles or even its iconic leaping-cat logo. The shift to a more avant-garde visual style has been labeled by some as a departure from the brand’s established luxury image and has contributed to a significant backlash. Indeed, JLR has now instigated a review of its global creative account, currently held by Accenture Song, in light of these criticisms. This decision follows an alarming decline in sales, which reportedly plummeted over 25% in 2024, with only 33,320 units sold compared to previous years.

The decision to veer away from traditional marketing approaches has been a double-edged sword. While JLR's Managing Director, Rawdon Glover, maintains that such a drastic change is necessary to stand out in a crowded market, critics have argued that the campaign fails to resonate with its intended audience. Notably, Elon Musk expressed his disbelief over Jaguar's advertising strategy, quipping, “Do you sell cars?” in response to the promotional materials. This sentiment echoed the dismay among other consumers and brand loyalists, some of whom took to social media to voice their frustrations, with British MP Nigel Farage characterising the company as deserving to “go bust.”

Historically, Jaguar's attempts to modernise its brand have often resulted in mixed success. This latest initiative recalls the company's previous “Gorgeous” campaign from 2005, aimed at attracting a more affluent demographic, which ultimately did not yield the desired uptick in sales. Now, the company faces the daunting task of not only redefining its identity in a saturated market but also doing so amidst a rapid shift toward electrification. Competitors, particularly Volkswagen, have made substantial investments in electric vehicles, leaving Jaguar to play catch-up.

The plan to reposition Jaguar as an exclusive electric brand, targeting ultra-wealthy consumers with models priced over £100,000, may be a strategic move to restore the brand’s prestige. However, the risks are palpable. By distancing itself from its traditional enthusiast base, Jaguar may inadvertently alienate the very customers who have championed its legacy. As Dr Martina Olbert, founder and CEO of the strategic branding firm Meaning, put it, “Jaguar is trying to be super cool… in an empty and therefore extravagantly visual way.” The success of such a pivot remains uncertain as consumer preferences continue to evolve.

This controversial approach signifies a broader trend within the automotive industry, where brands are striving to redefine themselves in light of societal expectations and market pressures. With aspirations to launch its first electric models by 2025, Jaguar's ambitious goals could either rejuvenate the brand or lead to further fragmentation among its customer base. As the automotive world witnesses this paradigm shift, only time will tell if Jaguar's gamble pays off or if it prompts a deeper crisis of identity within a storied marque.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 5
3. Paragraph 1, 4
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 5

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2052853/jaguar-land-rover-new-ad-agency-woke-disaster-nigel-farrage> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/87b75a03-4fa3-4072-bfd2-0d23733dee8a> - Jaguar's recent rebranding efforts have sparked controversy and debate over its new direction with 'Project Roar'. Back in 2005, Jaguar attempted a rebrand targeted at a younger, wealthier audience with the 'Gorgeous' campaign, which failed to resonate and did not improve sales. Now, the company has released a conceptual 30-second advert without featuring cars, focusing instead on fashion models and abstract slogans, leading to mixed reactions. Critics argue that it diverges from Jaguar's traditional luxury image and may not suit current market trends, particularly in China and the Middle East. Jaguar plans to relaunch in 2026 as an all-electric brand with high-end models priced over £100,000 and will reduce its production to cater to a niche market of ultra-wealthy consumers. The success of this significant transformation remains uncertain amidst industry challenges and evolving consumer preferences.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/nov/23/jaguar-boss-defends-new-ad-and-rebrand-amid-vile-hatred-online> - Jaguar's managing director, Rawdon Glover, defended the company's move away from traditional automotive stereotypes after a clip of its new advert was met with a barrage of 'vile hatred and intolerance' online. The 30-second clip featured models in brightly coloured clothing set against vibrant backdrops, without a car or the company's traditional cat logo. Glover stated that if Jaguar played in the same way as other brands, it would get drowned out, emphasizing the need for a reimagined approach. The campaign received over 160 million views on social media, with mixed reactions, including criticism from Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who questioned if Jaguar sold cars.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2024/dec/01/claws-are-out-as-jaguar-heads-down-ev-rebrand-road> - Jaguar's unveiling of its first electric concept car in Miami was overshadowed by controversy surrounding a 30-second teaser trailer featuring a diverse group of models walking around a vaguely alien landscape. The backlash was significant, with Tesla CEO Elon Musk responding to the video on social media, asking, 'Do you sell cars?' The campaign's tagline, 'Copy nothing,' signaled a decisive break with the past. Critics argued that the rebrand abandoned the spirit of classic models like the 1960s E-Type sports car, while others applauded the bold statement. The rebranding effort aims to position Jaguar as an electric-only, high-end brand by 2025, focusing on luxury and exclusivity.
* <https://www.finance-monthly.com/2024/12/jaguars-shocking-rebrand-why-the-change-is-controversial/> - Jaguar's radical rebrand has sparked backlash and confusion, alienating loyal customers who cherished the brand’s classic charm. The removal of its iconic logo, quirky new design, and focus on high-fashion marketing feels disconnected from the luxury carmaker’s heritage. While the shift to electric vehicles and targeting a wealthier, younger audience might seem like a strategic move, it risks distancing Jaguar from its traditional fan base, leaving many feeling abandoned. This rebranding effort could potentially tarnish the brand’s identity, turning away long-time enthusiasts and failing to resonate with a market already saturated with luxury electric vehicles.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/mar/13/how-jaguar-land-rover-fell-behind-in-the-race-to-an-electric-future-and-what-it-means-for-the-uk> - Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) has faced challenges in its transition to electric vehicles (EVs), with sales of Jaguars declining from over 180,000 in 2018 to 65,000 in 2022. The company had initially planned to build an electric version of the Jaguar XJ but canceled it, aiming to make Jaguar an electric-only brand by 2025. However, JLR has been slower than competitors in embracing electrification, with rivals like Volkswagen investing heavily in EVs. The company is now focusing on a new electric grand tourer, but the success of this strategy remains uncertain amidst industry challenges and evolving consumer preferences.