



Syrian father picture  
viral photo reaches  
family

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# TRUTHMARK

POWERED BY **Canon**

Correction: An earlier version of this  
identified the home country of Laith Majid. He is  
t Syria.

photographed c  
on Kos reache

The story behind the  
from the migrant crisis

### **1. Kampagnens title:** Truthmark

**Kunde:** Canon

**Produkt:** Camera

### **2. År shortlistet/vundet ved CCA:**

2021: Advertising & Digital Advertising. Creative Loyalty, Shortlisted

2021: Advertising & Digital Advertising. Creative Use of Technology, Gold

2021: Advertising & Digital Advertising. Digital Campaign, Shortlisted

### **3. Executive Summary**

We live in a world where photos are often misused, and photojournalists can't do anything against it.

That's why we created a platform for Canon that works like an "image bank of truth", enabling photographers to attach the true story behind their photographs. With Truthmark, Canon reconnected with its professional audience by developing a tool that would truly matter to the audience and strengthen their brand perception.

The results speak for themselves: 50+ million reached, 100+ international media pick-ups, market share increase from 31.8% to 46.5% (Q1 2021) and a sales index increase of 167.

### **4. Har du tidligere indsendt denne kampagne i Creative Effectiveness/Creative Impact?**

No.

## 5. Hvad var målsætningen for kampagnen?

Over the last years, the camera industry had become saturated, fast-paced, and competitive. As the quality of smartphone photography increased, less and less consumers invested in cameras<sup>1</sup>, with two effects on the industry.

- 1) A large share of brands fight for a shrinking share of customers. They do so by frequently releasing new products, rushing from launch to launch.
- 2) With the amateur segment decreasing, many brands started to target professionals to make up for lost profits leading to a very competitive and dense high-end camera category.<sup>2</sup>

Canon - an established player in the professional camera market, known for its high-quality equipment - was pushed to the rim as new players entered the category, who launched products faster and more frequently.

Canon had become comfortable in its established position and now struggled to keep up with the frequency of product launches as well as creating a relevant and modern brand perception.<sup>3</sup>

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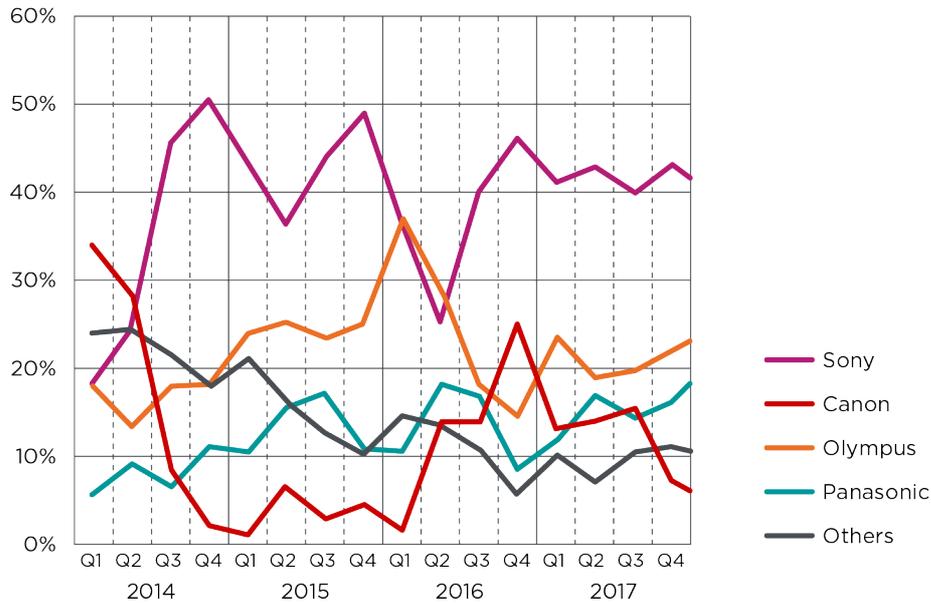
<sup>1</sup> Digital Photography Review: Nikkei reports the digital camera market was down 22% in 2018. Published: 08/07/2019. Retrieved: 2019/2020 (<https://www.dpreview.com/news/4339026299/nikkei-reports-the-digital-camera-market-was-down-22-in-2018>)

<sup>2</sup> Growth from Knowledge: Premium products propping up global photography market. Published: 24/09/2018. Retrieved: 2019/2020 (<https://www.gfk.com/press/premium-products-propping-up-global-photography-market>)

<sup>3</sup> DIY Photography: Canon Imaging Profits drop by nearly 60% in Q3/2019. Published: 01/11/2019. Retrieved: 2019/2020 (<https://www.diyphotography.net/canon-imaging-profits-drop-by-nearly-57-in-q3-2019/>)

## Market Share Overview

(not showing Bundles before 2020)



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It was time to change that. Accordingly, the following objectives were set:

### Commercial objectives

We needed to turn around Canon's position in the market and regain market share by reconnecting with professional and enthusiastic photographers. Subsequently, these commercial objectives were defined:

- **Increase market share with +15%**
- **Outgrow the lens market with 25%**
- **Increase market share gap between Canon and Sony**
- **Reduce investment (media budget) with 15%**

### Marketing Objectives

Canon used to be known among professionals for its high-end quality equipment. However, as new brands entered the professional photography category, Canon started to seem outdated. The brand was lacking a true

connection with its core audience<sup>5</sup>. To reinvigorate Canon, we needed to reconnect with the target audience of professional photographers and leverage them to entice a broader audience (semi-professionals)<sup>6</sup>. The marketing objectives was to:

- **Increase penetration amongst professional photographers.**
- **Increase brand differentiation and knowledge.**

### **Communication Objective**

An essential part of the Truthmark initiative was to leverage a cultural activation for a very specific audience (professional photographers) to drive a larger brand narrative. The strategy was to use cultural issue to amplify our presence in the media landscape.

The communication objectives were defined as the following:

- **Increasing the reach of the campaign.**
- **Spark a cultural conversation.**
- **Engagement with influential professionals.**

Having lost touch with its core audience, was further reflected in the brand's vibrancy. Canon's own brand perception positioned Canon as the dependable brand, while Nikon is perceived as the premium and innovative, and Sony is the stylish and bold one (confidential). Simply put, Canon was perceived as reliable and stable, but not very exciting or bold<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> fstoppers: Canon's Dramatic Drop in Sales is a Sign of Something Much More Ominous for Photographers. Published: 29/04/19. Retrieved: 2019/2020 (<https://fstoppers.com/business/canons-dramatic-drop-sales-sign-something-much-more-ominous-photographers-360415>)

medium: Canon Makes Great Cameras But Need More Innovation. Published: 21/08/18. Retrieved: 2019/2020 (<https://medium.com/hd-pro/canon-makes-great-cameras-but-need-more-innovation-99e75c50f5e4>)

<sup>6</sup> Client Brief

<sup>7</sup> BrandZ data, 2018

## 6. Beskriv ideen og arbejdet som sådan – og forklar hvilke kanaler, der blev brugt i eksekveringen

### The starting point

Pictures are here to tell the truth. In times of TikTok and Instagram, where we snap photos within mere seconds, it's easy to forget about that. Our world is full of photoshop, filters and deep-fakes<sup>8</sup>. Our research led us to e.g. photos of Trump's inauguration that were twisted to show a non-existent crowd. We found a misinterpretation of an image of Hillary Clinton being taken out of context to tell an untruth<sup>9</sup>. The list goes on.

We asked ourselves: How can images be used so easily to twist the truth? And how can we trust what we see?

For photographers, this reality goes even deeper. It not only restricts their job but their mere purpose of profession. Photographers don't just snap images, they document reality. They tell the truth.<sup>10</sup>

When images are mis-used and misinterpreted, it's their integrity that's on the line. It was time to give back and empower photographers.

**The insight:** Some call them photographers. We call them truth-tellers.

**The big idea:** Create a platform like an "image bank of truth", enabling photographers to digitally attach the true story behind their photographs.

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<sup>8</sup> Multiple Sources; see appendix

<sup>9</sup> Multiple Sources; see appendix

<sup>10</sup> Multiple Sources; see appendix

## **Execution**

We created Truthmark. A platform, where professional photographers can upload their images and attach the story behind the image – all in an effort to reduce the misuse of photos worldwide.

### **HOW TRUTHMARK WORKS:**

1. Apply to a verified account (only for professional photographers)
2. Select and upload images or photo-series
3. Write the story behind the image, which is attached to the photo with an invisible watermark

From here on, the image cannot be used without permission, or shared with third-party accounts. It is stored with one purpose only: to protect the truth behind the image. And for truth-hunters we created a separate universe, where anyone can drag-and-drop an image into our database to verify and learn about the truth behind the photograph.

## **Launch & Channel Selection**

Truthmark was launched July 23rd, 2020 across the Nordics with the website at the centre of the campaign.

For the launch, and as our primary asset, we created a hero film, which was aired through Canon's social channels. With a limited budget and a brand building objective towards professional photographers, we focused our efforts on PR, SoMe and influencers.

## **Activating ambassadors and influencers**

Wanting to make the initiative as authentic, credible and appealing to our target audience as possible, the idea was implemented with very little use of traditional media planning and buying. Instead, we focused on leveraging

a series of collaborations with our Canon ambassadors and select influencers with strong affinity for photography and the Canon brand. This was done, among others, by giving our Nordic Canon ambassadors monthly challenges, all revolving around photography and finding the truth.

### **Own channels build authenticity and ownership**

As for channel selection, the Truthmark project leveraged most of Canon's owned media channels to, again, increase authenticity as well as provide a stronger feeling of ownership from the brand. This was not a traditional advertising campaign but built on a strong consumer insight. Thus, the channel selection needed to reflect more a genuine belief from the brand than a lot of media buy. The channels used were: Instagram, Facebook, Youtube, LinkedIn and Canon.dk/no/se/fi, as well as our ambassador's channels. We made the conscious decision not to activate retail partners for this project as we did not want to give Truthmark a sales-orientated spin.

All work was done in-house - from asset creation, media buying, SoMe down to PR.

### **7. Hvad var strategien bag det kreative arbejde?**

Even though Canon has a long-standing tradition in high quality photography equipment with professional photographers as a core audience, competitors like Sony and Nikon caught up to the game - and even gotten ahead. The result: Canon was lacking a point of differentiation in products along with an old, dusty brand image and had therefore lost connection to the professional and semi-professional audience.

We were tasked with reconnecting with professional and enthusiastic photographers developing a braver and bolder brand perception while creating a buzz around the new high spec equipment. We needed to execute within Canon's overarching brand strategy "Live for the story" with the goal

of making people trust the stories they see but leveraging this to a Nordic context<sup>11</sup>.

**The challenge we set ourselves:** How can we appeal to professionals with a different approach positioning Canon as a bold brand in the Nordics?

**The solution:** It was clear that we needed to go beyond a traditional campaign. We needed to go out on a limb and dare something different – and we needed to find an entry point that would truly matter to our discerning target audience. A strong audience insight was our entry point to take us to the heart of professional photographers and eventually the heart of culture.

#### 8. Hvad var kampagnens umiddelbare kreative impact?

Truthmark was first targeted towards Canon photographers in the Nordics, but the initiative grew beyond and received an immediate response from the wider, international photographic community.

The database featured images from photographers in countries all over the world including Israel, Russia, and The United States. Enthusiasm in the community, went as far as photographers starting to advocate and act as ambassadors for the platform.

For example, World Press Photo-winning photographers Ivor Prickett and Pulitzer Prize winner Daniel Etter all became advocates for the Truthmark initiative:

- *"Using images for the wrong purposes is too easy these days"* – Ivor Pickett
- Daniel Etter took the original photograph of an Iraqi refugee holding his son while crying with tear of joy. The image was published in the New York Times and went

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<sup>11</sup> Client Brief

viral along with a false story. He says: *“It was shared millions of times. It actually kept me up at night for many weeks because all these false stories were out there.”*

## **Delivering Marketing Objectives**

In order to reconnect with the professional photographer audience, we firstly needed to get back on their radar. Thus, brand awareness was set as a primary objective – reflected through reach, views and media pick-ups.

### **Increase penetration amongst professional photographers**

As Truthmark were directed at the professional community one of our objectives was to grow sales of our high-end camera equipment.

As of a result of the campaign we increased our **sales of “prime” equipment with more than 17%** compared to the same period the year before.<sup>12</sup>

### **Increase brand differentiation and knowledge**

Looking at data from Brand Asset Valuator we see an increase in both brand differentiation and knowledge significantly improving both attributes for Canon.

- **Brand Differentiation improved from 21.3 to 32.4.**<sup>13</sup>
- **Brand Knowledge improved from 67.3 to 81.9.**<sup>14</sup>

The improvement in both attributes far outperformed what we have seen in previous campaigns even though the media investment was less.

## **Delivering Communication Objectives**

The project was designed to strike a cultural nerve and get professional and news media interested. But Truthmark became part of a larger societal narrative and was shared across the globe.

### **Increasing the reach of the campaign**

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<sup>12</sup> Canon sales data (market survey)

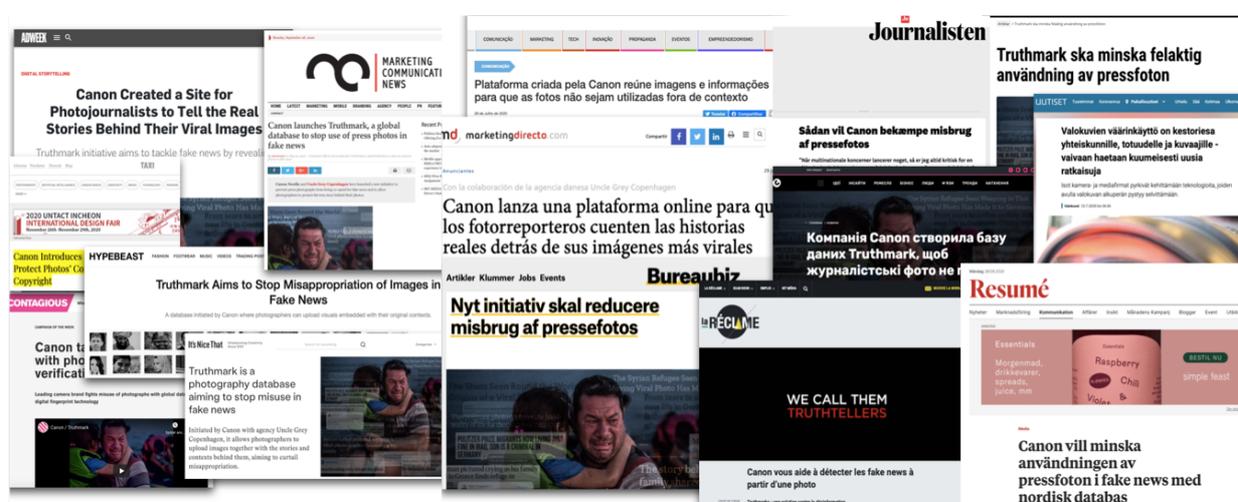
<sup>13</sup> Brand Asset Valuator

<sup>14</sup> Brand Asset Valuator

As for the communication objectives, we aimed to infuse Canon with a new sense of purpose and make it highly shareable for influencers and media. The campaign **reached more than 50 million** people across the globe.

## Spark a cultural conversation

As Truthmark was picked up by the international press and quickly spread getting featured on Hypebeast, FastCompany, Nowness, Designtaxi, Contagious, Creativity etc.



## Engagement with influential professionals

Truthmark not only generated an incredible reach and international media pick-ups. The initiative also caught the eye of photographers and international media and is endorsed and recommended by the Press Photographers Association, A multiple world press photo winner and man others in the industry.

- *“It is an eternal struggle to maintain the credibility of our profession. I would recommend the members of the Press Photographers Association to consider the platform.” – Lars Lindskov, Chairman of the Press Photographers’ Association.*
- *“It’s an online tool that recognizes a unique digital fingerprint of the image and then pairs it with the photographer’s own story. No matter where the photo ends up, the true story will always follow.” – Johnny Haglund, World Press Photography Winner*

That's how Truthmark shows that going out and daring to push the boundaries beyond product, pays off. We were able to invigorate Canon with new energy. We created a sense of purpose for the brand that not only appealed to professional photographers but spoke to a cultural truth of today's society. Namely how easily images are mis-used, mis-interpreted and mis-understood to twist the reality of what they were meant to represent.

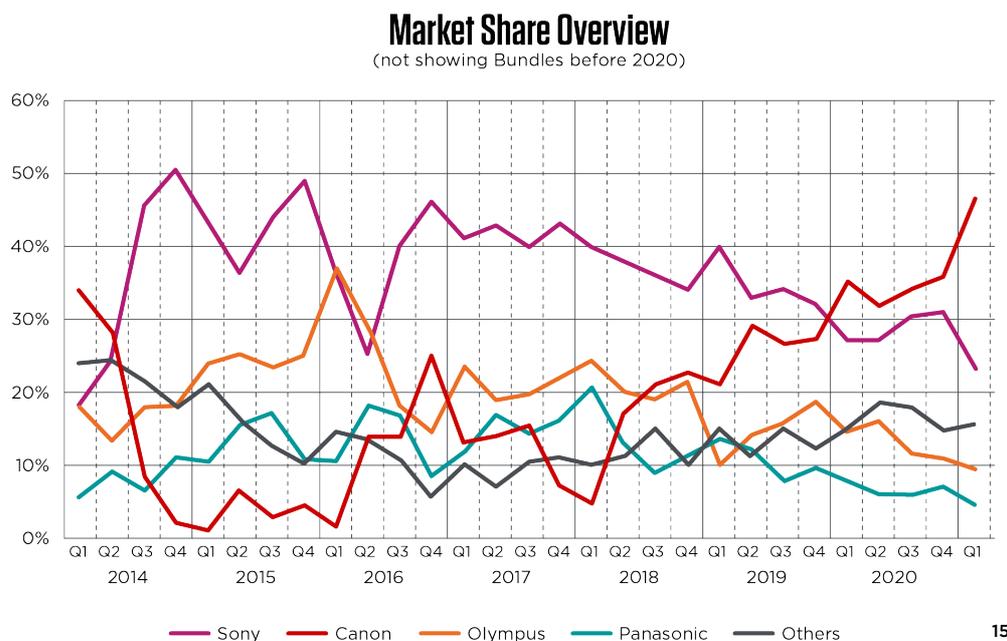
### 9. Hvilken kommerciel værdi løftede kampagnens kreative impact?

The commercial objectives were surpassed for all aspects of the Truthmark initiative - delivering not only fame but also effectiveness for Canon.

#### Delivering on Commercial Objectives:

##### Increase market share with +10%

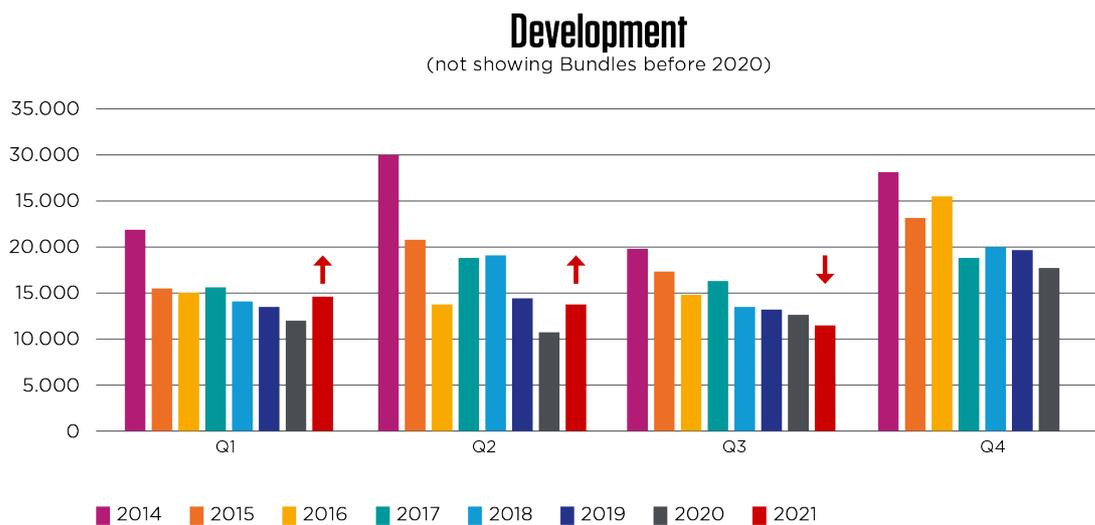
Canon sales data shows that we significantly outperformed the expectations in terms of increasing the market share for Canon. Moving the brand from 31.8 to 46.6% within the mirrorless category. **Increasing our markets with 45%.**



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## Outgrow the lens market with 25%

As part of our focus on increasing market share it was paramount to increase our share of sold lenses which constitutes a very significant growth opportunity for Canon. Total lens market growth was 10% and Canon grew 17% **outgrowing the total lens market with 70%**.



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## Increase market share gap between Canon and Sony

Canon and Sony have gone neck to neck in the Nordics for years and the battle for market share in the mirrorless category has only become more fierce. The Truthmark campaign helped **Canon increase its market share with 14.8% while Sony had a negative development of -4%** (see market share overview above).

## Reduce media investment media with 15%

Out total media investment (compared to benchmark) was **17% lower than a normal Nordic campaign** activity for Canon.

**10. Er der andre faktorer, som kan have indflydelse på den kommercielle effekt/værdi eller den forretningsmæssige udvikling?**

**A trending topic**

We can see a general trend for brands to take a stand to be more purposeful. Consumers demand brands to act and call those out who don't, or don't do it right. With Truthmark we talk exactly into that trend - creating value for our target audience in a purposeful and authentic way. But also picky-bagging on an already existing cultural narrative.

**11. Skubbede arbejdet til grænserne for, hvordan kreativitet kan give impact på forretningen?**

Truthmark demonstrated how a strong cultural insight can enable a brand to reconnect with a difficult to reach and discerning audience.

Playing on a deep category insight, Truthmark was able to solve a real need for professional photographers giving them the chance to protect their photos from being misused, misinterpreted and mis- understood.

The campaign went beyond a gimmick and to the heart of the profession's purpose. In doing so, the case showed how creativity can elevate a brand and infuse it with a new purpose - driving cultural fame, market share and financial growth.

But perhaps most importantly we reconnected with our main audience and showed them that we understand what matters most to them.

## Appendix

### 1. Sources

Referring to 7)

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Referring to 8)

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