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## "Pimp My Lift" couture goes online

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Masterlift's provocative advertising campaign for its Chinese-made forklifts has resulted in worldwide interest, a jump in website hits and just last week, the launch of an online merchandising store ([Forkliftaction.com News #306](#)).

Company president Gary Wilson tells *Forkliftaction.com News* the "Pimp My Lift" store was launched after overwhelming interest in the brand by non-forklift operators.

Wilson says Masterlift gave its staff T-shirts bearing Masterlift forklifts' controversial "Pimp My Lift" tagline to celebrate the launch.

"No sooner had we done that, many came back to ask for another because their teenage son or daughter had taken the shirt and was not giving it back."



The "pimped out" forklift for GLA



Pimp My Lift women's hat

Requests for the T-shirts also came from customers, suppliers, friends and models involved in the campaign.

So, Wilson and his marketing team - including marketing manager Brian Brett, new business development manager Maria Ciric and Dave Kutschenreiter of Effective Media Solutions - designed a range of clothing to promote the forklift brand.



Pimp My Lift women's T-shirt

The ad campaign has been so successful that the Masterlift website and "Pimp My Lift" branding have attracted female interest in a male-dominated industry. Wilson says over 30% who log onto the website are women.

"It is interesting to note that our online store has more merchandise for women," Wilson says, adding that the "forklift couture" sweatpants were designed by Masterlift's female sales representatives.

Each day, the Masterlift website receives more than 500 first-time hits compared with five to 10 before the campaign. Wilson has been interviewed by trade magazines in Dubai and the Netherlands and received franchise requests from US and Australia.

"It has cemented our culture at Masterlift. Our employees are enthusiastic and supportive of a marketing plan they can be proud of and (shows them off) as special and unique."

While doors have been opening for Masterlift's sales representatives, the use of the word "pimp" in marketing forklifts has not been without criticism.

"We anticipated as much as 10% to 15% criticism but felt the message was important enough to accept that as a cost - even bad press was press. I can tell you though that as I have had many interviews on TV, radio, newspaper and countless magazines and been given feedback from young, old, male and female, all over the world, I have heard from a total of two persons (third-hand) who thought it was inappropriate on some level. This to me speaks volumes to the chord that we've struck."

Pimp as a verb in its contemporary form means "to accessorise or to make cool or fancy". And that is what Masterlift did with the 20th forklift it sold since the campaign's inception. Canadian classic car parts manufacturer Golden Leaf Automotive's forklift was "pimped out" with chrome wheels and painted yellow and black to match the colour scheme on the company's showcase '70 Chevelle.

Wilson is discreet about the Asian manufacturer that produces its forklifts but reveals it is one of the largest in China and in the top 20 ranking of world forklift manufacturers.