

MOBILE

BMW stokes in-game Gran Turismo interaction

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BMW in Gran Turismo 6

By JOE MCCARTHY

German automaker BMW is teaming up with Sony PlayStation to encourage players of Gran Turismo 6 to capture images of the automaker's vehicles using the Photomode feature.

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Photomode allows players to freeze the action of a game and then edit the frame to be shared online. BMW and PlayStation will monitor photo submissions and the automaker will post the winners each week through Aug. 18.

"When we were approached by SONY and Kazunori Yamauchi, Founder and Director of Gran Turismo, with the idea to provide a BMW car specifically designed for the 15th anniversary of GT 6 we were more than excited to do so," said Claudia Mueller, head of global entertainment marketing at **BMW**, Germany.

"Very seldom do we have the opportunity to design a concept car which is fully operational," she said. "With the BMW Vision GT we designed and engineered a car which is made to win (virtual) races.

"By launching the car in GT 6, we offer millions of GT fans and players the chance to

interact with our car and to experience the pure driving pleasure BMW stands for."

Mode for photos

As gamers begin a race with a BMW vehicle in Gran Turismo 6, they are asked to watch for an optimal moment to be captured with Photomode.

For the first week of the initiative, fans are asked to capture the BMW Vision GT, followed by the BMW M4, the BMW 507 and the BMW Z4 GT3.



BMW 507 in Gran Turismo 6

When submitting images, fans must use the model's name as a hashtag. For instance, #BMW507 will be used for the third week.

Fans can post images to Gran Turismo's Facebook and Twitter pages and winners will be celebrated each week. Between BMW and Gran Turismo's Facebook pages, the photos will reach more than 20 million followers collectively.



BMW Z8'01 in Gran Turismo 6

BMW must compete for attention with multiple other brands in Gran Turismo, so the sustained spotlight will help it stand out. Plus, players may develop an interest in the featured vehicles, which may lead to aspiration for the car in real life.

Many brands work with the video game to highlight certain vehicles and offer players exclusive content. For instance, Aston Martin had a vehicle exclusively available on Gran Turismo for the month of May.

Other brands featured in the game include Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Tesla and Land Rover.

The initiative will also act as an introduction to Photomode for many players.

Photomode is an option built into PlayStation gaming systems that allows gamers to freeze a frame and edit it directly on the console using a host of tools. Options are then provided to share the image online.

"BMW perceives the gaming industry as a very exciting playground," Ms. Mueller said.

"Cooperation with the leading partners in this field allows us to invite the huge gaming population to interact with our models on a highly professional virtual test ground," she said.

"It also gives gamers the chance to drive some BMW models which they don't have the chance to experience in the real world."

Winning fans early

Automakers have benefited immensely from video games in the past. As graphics become more realistic, video games act essentially as showrooms for vehicles.

Mobile gaming has become the next frontier for many brands.

Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Lamborghini and Porsche, under the Volkswagen Group umbrella, attracted substantial attention in global markets through the branded mobile application, "Sports Car Challenge 2," reaching 1 million downloads back in January.

The app acts as a way for racing fans to explore VW brand models and discover vehicle capabilities with precision while on virtual racing tracks. Perhaps more so than other product category, automotive brands can cultivate new fans, solidify loyalists and spur real-life product interaction effectively with mobile games ([see story](#)).

"The gaming industry has some of the most dedicated fans in the world," said Kyle Wong, CEO of [Pixlee](#), San Francisco.

"The Playstation 4 and its new share button does a great job leveraging the social nature of gaming," he said. "This initiative leverages that same behavior to connect with a passionate customer base."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

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