

MOBILE

BMW guides fans to the drawing board for app design contest

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BMW app contest promotion

By JOE MCCARTHY

German automaker BMW is inviting consumers to create mobile applications through Aug. 18 that enhance the driving experience.

Sign up now

Luxury Daily

Interested consumers are asked to devise a plausible idea and pitch it to their social communities in a virtual crowdfunding effort. The ideas that receive the most virtual funding will have a chance to work with BMW's innovation team in the United States or Germany, and may even see their app hit the market.

"The BMW Mobility Experience Challenge to crowdsource app ideas is a fun one," said Simon Buckingham, CEO of [Appitalism](#), New York. "The competition encourages innovative app ideas to be submitted to BMW.

"Potentially both parties can win from this collaboration," he said. "App inventors could meet BMW staff and see their apps get developed and BMW could get some great ideas that they hadn't internally incubated.

"Crowdsourcing and crowd funding are certainly increasingly popular business models so people should not have an issue submitting their concepts to BMW."

Mr. Buckingham is not affiliated with BMW, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

BMW did not respond by press deadline. The automaker teamed up with the crowdfunding service **Startnext** for this campaign.

Crowdsourced breakthrough

For consumers who want to get involved in the "Mobility Experience Challenge," they are asked to first submit an idea on the campaign page after registering with Startnext. If entrants want to develop their app, they are more than welcome, but an idea is all that is needed.

The quest to raise support comes next. Fans are encouraged to pitch the idea on social media to get friends and followers to put forth virtual funding, meaning that BMW provides potential voters with \$100 in virtual money that they can pledge to ideas as they see fit.

Any Startnext user can contribute funds, so it is plausible that random browsers will also get involved.



BMW contest overview

The 10 ideas that receive the most funding will make it to a round where BMW selects its three favorite ideas.

BMW's jury is composed of Bastian Bansemir, Matthias Meyer and Phil Johnston from the BMW Innovation Team.



BMW contest overview

The top submission will win \$1,500 and the second and third place submissions will receive \$500. Winners will also get the chance to visit the BMW team in Mountain View, CA, or Munich for a collaboration.

BMW provided a few sample ideas, apps that the brand already built, to give interested consumers a sense of how contest pages will be set up and how to arrange pitches.

One sample idea is the Concierge Service app that provides drivers with curated information on-the-go.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/LgDS_m8g6EQ](https://www.youtube.com/embed/LgDS_m8g6EQ)

Concierge service sample idea

Another idea is the BMW Remote app that makes finding your car in a crowded parking lot easier.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/L4xIxQ6ETjA](https://www.youtube.com/embed/L4xIxQ6ETjA)

BMW Remote app

The brand has received a number of submissions so far. The submission with the most funding is called "Drive Wise," which had garnered \$770 as of press time.



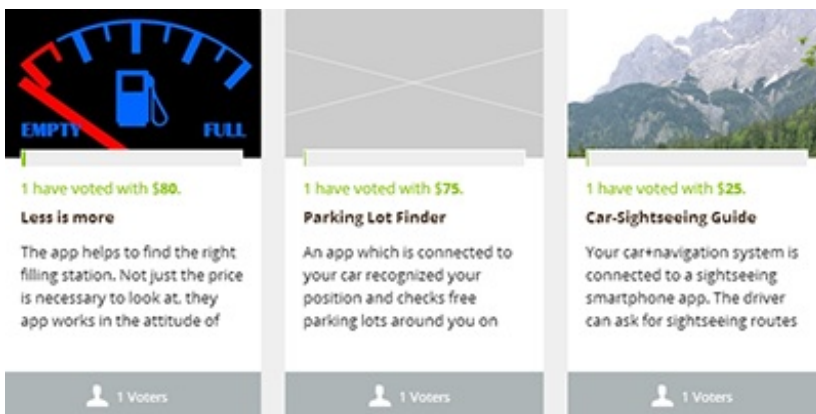
Drive Wise app

Drive Wise gathers information about driving behavior and then provides drivers with useful tips to improve. Diagrams and illustrations for CO2 emissions, speed, distance traveled, breaking energy and more are included in the app and users can share data with friends.



Drive Wise example functions

Other submissions include an intelligent calendar, an emergency app, a sightseeing guide and a parking lot finder.



BMW app submissions

Ultimately, BMW may work with one of the winners to develop their idea to a commercial stage. It is likely that the brand is currently working on ideas similar to submissions, in which case the twin endeavors may be fused or BMW may just continue on its own.

In any case, the contest is a good way for BMW to get ideas for future development, while also seeing what consumers want out of an app.

More information can be found on the [campaign page](#).

Finding inspiration

Luxury brands regularly crowdsource ideas in contests to engage consumers and locate promising talent.

For instance, visual merchandising students from New York's Fashion Institute of Technology and LIM College competed in the third annual Student Window Challenge hosted by Design:Retail and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Held at the retailer's Fifth Avenue flagship store, the student teams displayed their work in front of retailer and design firms. The students were divided into six, two-person teams with three teams representing each school ([see story](#)).

Luxury brands struggle to find and recruit the top talent for positions across their companies, according to a new study from Boston Consulting Group.

Having the right employees can have a measured impact on a brand's profits and economic growth, especially in executive and leading creative roles. Because of this luxury brands may need to rethink their existing recruiting strategy to locate the personnel necessary ([see story](#)).

Crowdsourcing, in particular, is a community-fueled enterprise that is gaining in popularity.

"Proctor and Gamble Connect+Develop created a strong model for innovation with universities and companies, but we haven't really seen too many examples of companies collaborating with individuals and fans to potentially develop products," Mr. Buckingham said. "Let's see how the competition progresses and what the results are."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/5l0CA-fLwyY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/5l0CA-fLwyY)

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