

MOBILE

BMW looks to mobile ads and sponsored content to push 6 series

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BMW 6 Series

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker BMW is advertising and sponsoring content on men's magazine Esquire's mobile site to promote its brand and 6 Class Series.

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Luxury Daily

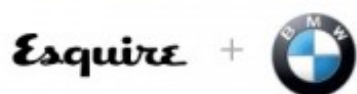
While some advertisements appear to promote offers on the new BMW 6 Class series and land on BMW's homepage, others allow users to scroll through several images of BMW cars and redirect to another page on Esquire featuring BMW's sponsored content. The strategy promotes a partnership between Esquire and BMW and also allows readers to discover BMW's 6 Class Series on their own.

"BMW had done a nice job of utilizing various advertising channels to build a multipronged approach in educating their target audience about the brand through editorial content and the 6 Series through the mobile ads," said Gay Gabrilska, chief operating officer, [Gravit8 Marketing](#). "By linking back to the homepage from the editorial content, BMW is essentially giving consumers the ability to "Choose their own adventure" or BMW in this case. By giving users a broader view of the entire line, they are more likely to see themselves in one of BMW's models – maybe not today, but perhaps in the future."

BMW was unable to comment.

Mobilizing readership

When users click on an ad, they expect to be taken to the advertiser's Web site, so clicking on BMW and being directed to another page on Esquire suggests unity of the two companies, aligning their brand values. The branded content page contains the headline "Meet the luxury car that's sleek enough for Noah Mostkoff" near the top and features a photo gallery just below, which contains pictures of the BMW 6 Series.



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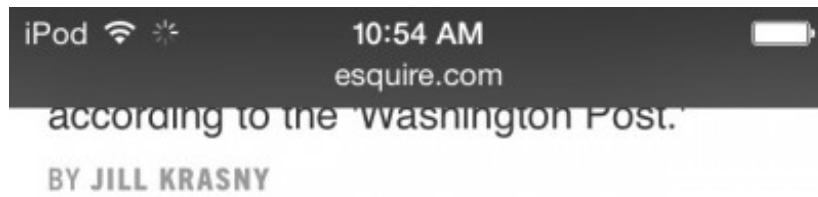
The stunningly complex URWerk Geneve UR-1001 Titan is a technical

Esquire and BMW align their brands for sponsored content

The photo gallery bears both Esquire and BMW's names on it, making it feel less like an ad than another article. Further down the branded content page are links to articles sponsored by BMW but about other yachts, surfboards and wallpaper written in the form

and style of Esquire articles.

However, these articles contain a large number of advertisements for the BMW 6 Series. Nonetheless, by sponsoring content, BMW may persuade readers to think that the photo gallery advertising the 6 Series is also an independent part of Esquire.



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BMW sponsored content

Sponsoring content rather than filling ad space also allows Esquire readers to feel like they are discovering the BMW brand on their own and causes them to link it to a brand they already value in Esquire. Data has previously shown that readers sometimes spend as much time on pages featuring sponsored content as they do on news stories.

Clicking on ads that directly advertise the 6 Series will similarly redirect readers to BMW's homepage rather than the 6 Series page, allowing readers to "discover" the 6 Series on

their own.



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BMW's ad is positioned directly underneath a photo in the article

In at least one case, the 6 Series ad is displayed immediately following two photos in the article. The placement may give the feeling of BMW being more fluidly integrated into Esquire's content.

Fostering sponsors

It is not uncommon for luxury brands to produce sponsored content for magazines.

For example, last September, Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana elaborated on the ingredients that compose its fragrances through sponsored content on New York magazine's blog The Cut.

Dolce & Gabbana was the sponsor of The Cut's "Italy in 30 Days" section that published articles about the country's food, designers, news and other cultural topics. The brand's presence in this dedicated section likely reaffirmed Dolce & Gabbana's heritage and

interest in modern day Italy ([see story](#)).

In another instance from this April, jeweler Tiffany & Co. reached out to readers of New York magazine's The Cut with a promoted post about wedding planning.

The sponsored article featured celebrity party planner Bronson van Wyck's suggestions for nuptial celebrations, for which he used Tiffany engagement rings for inspiration. Native advertising enables a brand to speak to consumers through engaging content that can be both entertaining and educational ([see story](#)).

Sponsored content and native advertising have a much higher engagement rate than traditional ads.

"Mobile ad placement is a defining factor in determining the influence and effectiveness of a brand's strategy," Ms. Gabrielska said. "As consumers, we have grown accustomed to ads encroaching on our web surfing experience. The goal as a brand is to stand out and be noticed – placing the ad in the middle of the content a user is reading cannot be overlooked, but it is unlikely to garner a tap or click unless it is relevant to the reader.

"Incorporating rich media into the display strategy can enhance many of the benefits provided by a static banner campaign. In-banner video ads significantly increase brand recognition within traditional display network increasing the click thru rate by 9% according to research from Sizmek. That is a fairly significant jump in the number of eyes on your content – definitely worth the investment.

"Brands tend to numb consumers to their mobile ads by recycling the same image and content over and over with no real attempt to make them relevant to the consumer. BMW has created an impactful content strategy that revolves around educating the consumer about the new 6 Series."

Final Take

Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/pCKchdsxZ90>

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