

MOBILE

Bentley pushes Bentayga with emotional recognition and innovative app

September 18, 2015



Bentley Bentayga

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

British automaker Bentley Motors is promoting its new Bentayga SUV with a new mobile application responsive to consumer emotion.

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Luxury Daily

The "Inspirator" app shows a series of images ranging from beaches, surfing and yachting to music and dancing to chinaware and furniture to parties and discos in four separate chapters, using facial and emotional recognition technology to capitalize on the viewer's preferences as it goes on, generating a custom Bentayga for the viewer at the end. The app represents a technologically innovative and creative way for the brand to promote its new model.

"Bentley has done an amazing job of applying recognition technology to target an affluent, tech savvy audience through tailored interactions," said Britt Buchan, VP of Business Operations at [Gravit8 Marketing](#), Seattle. "This has the potential to be a boon for marketers and consumers alike.

"This innovation has led to a whole new level of possibilities when it comes to reaching

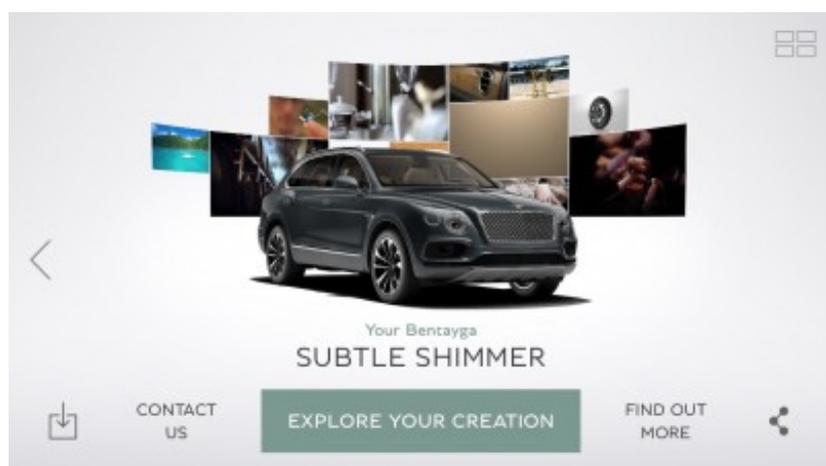
consumers and allows brands to set themselves apart by the unique nature of the approach."

Bentley could not be reached for comment.

Bespoke Bentayga

The app analyses "subtle, muscular micro-shifts and correlates them with complex emotional and cognitive states," measuring the viewer's engagement with, sentiment for, surprise at and aversion to each image.

Based on responses, the app then generates a car with an appropriate interior, veneer, paint job, wheel and even name. The user can then contact Bentley to order their personalized vehicle, make changes on the brand's Web site, and share their vehicle via social media.



Bentley Inspirator results page

If the app finds that the user responds favorably to images of artistic vision, such as ballet or music, the app will generate a "bold and contemporary car."

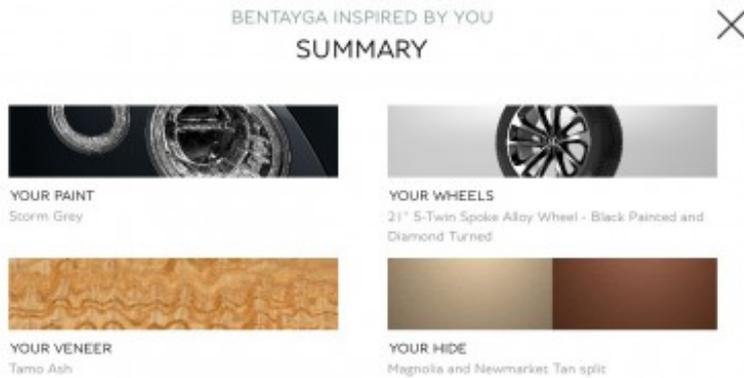
At times, the app gets even more specific; a particularly strong response to the domed ceiling of a cathedral may offer a direct influence on the vehicle's wheel. While looking at results, the app shows on the slide for each component of the car what images contributed to its design.

"This Bentley app is certainly more appealing because it hits on the number one goal of a mobile user - personalization," said Jeff Hasen, founder of [Gotta Mobilize](#), Seattle. "It seems both unique and a bit of a gimmick, but if the result is a consumer who is more engaged because the brand really does understand him or her, we have a winner here."

The decision to limit the app to the Bentayga SUV and the visibility of the contact button shows its sales-driven purpose, but the ability to share results also means that the brand may experience a boost in visibility and, because of the app's innovation, be seen as a forward-thinking and creative brand.

Although the app is geared at consumers who are already Bentley enthusiasts and may already be contemplating or planning a purchase of a Bentayga, the innovative technology Bentley has deployed will likely reach a much larger audience, some of

whom, in addition to looking favorably upon the app itself, may be thrilled at the idea of a personalized car.



Personalized vehicle summary

The Bentayga is Bentley's first SUV and is being billed as the fastest and most powerful vehicle in its class on the market, topping out at 187 mph and able to accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in 4 seconds, a speed comparable to many of Porsche's recent Carrera models. The blend of power and performance with Bentley's trademark style and craftsmanship will likely be a hit with affluent consumers who need a larger vehicle ([see story](#)).

However, with more and more luxury automakers attempting to establish a share of the SUV market, consumers increasingly find themselves with choices. A personalized model may also help a consumer in the midst of deciding which brand's SUV would be best for them to side with Bentley.

Custom cars

Other automakers have presented consumers with bespoke models fitting their tastes and preferences.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars is finding bespoke inspiration in unexpected places through a new marketing push promoting its customization practices.

Through a social video and image gallery, Rolls-Royce is showing its consumers that inspiration can be drawn from the colors of nature to the drama of architecture to express that no concept is beyond the automaker's bespoke capabilities and dedication. Across sectors, bespoke customization allows the consumer to play the role of the designer to create a product that truly speaks to them ([see story](#)).

The practice may particularly appeal to younger consumers, for whom personalized products offer a great deal of appeal.

Recent studies by Unity Marketing shows that such consumers have a preference for customizable and bespoke goods, and luxury with a clear purpose and function.

Such goods are also popular beyond the automotive industry, with French footwear and accessories maker Berluti, for example, measuring the foot, putting it in file and custom-making shoes for the wearer's foot ([see story](#)).

"The Bentley app delivers a unique, personalized experience by understanding facial and emotional responses to create your dream Bentley Bentayga," Gravit8's Ms. Buchan said. This campaign has enough of the 'wow-factor' that even if the technology were so-so, consumers would still walk away with a brand impression.

"It is hard to say if the Bentayga campaign will separate them from other luxury SUV brands," she added. "I will say the use of recognition technology in this campaign is very memorable and will inspire marketers to push the limits of inventiveness moving forward."

Final Take

Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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