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BMW presents sustainable, connected Vision for next 100 years

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BMW centennial celebration

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German automaker BMW is marking its centennial not only by looking back, but also by looking forward.

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On the morning of March 7, the BMW Group Classic building opened its doors to journalists for the first time and gave a press conference detailing its centenary, with a celebration and multimedia of the brand's history and accomplishments following later that afternoon. Rather than contenting itself with prior achievements, however, the brand's milestone motto is "The Next 100 Years," and a series of events, publications and technological advancements will help the brand maintain its status over that time period.

"BMW has a rich history," said [Lauren Fix](#), automotive expert, Lancaster, NY. "They started building planes, which is why there Roundel is their logo - look at it and you will see a propeller.

"The BMW brand is iconic, know for its racing successes and its reliable performance driving machines," she said. "And fans and followers are all around the world. This is a smart marketing move; it celebrates the brand and entices new customers and reinforce the love with existing customers."

Ms. Fix is not associated with BMW, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

BMW did not respond by press deadline.

The next 100

BMW is a worldly presence, with 122,000 employees in more than 140 locations. Recognizing the importance its workers have played in building the brand to its current status, BMW provided streaming access to the celebratory events at the Munich Olympic Hall and Allianz Arena.



BMW Vision Next 100 presentation

Further acknowledging the role of its employees, the event kicked off with a series of photographs of employees from around the world. Fostering a positive workplace and sharing in accomplishments is key to any successful workplace.

The event climaxed with the unveiling of the BMW Vision Next 100, which will travel to Beijing, London and Los Angeles. Vision Vehicles from the subsidiary MINI and Rolls-Royce brands will join the BMW vehicle on its London stop, with BMW Motorrad's to complete the quartet in Los Angeles.

The Vision vehicles were made with a highly personalized vision in mind and an eye on rapid technological advancement. Autonomous driving as well as manual driving for the pleasure of the activity are both key focuses, and more extensive connections between driver and vehicle with the improvement of artificial intelligence are also key focuses.

The Vision vehicle's domed interior will be agreeable for both autonomous and manual driving, and the BMW "Companion" will learn the habits of the driver through repeated use and create an atmosphere conducive to her preferences.



BMW Vision Next 100

"The Next 100 Years" will also include an exhibition at the BMW Museum, helping consumers and employees alike see the impact the brand's heritage continues to have on its current output. A BMW Festival will follow in September, with international music stars and DJs providing a festival atmosphere.

Moreover, a 13-volume publication that will be made widely available from October 2016 will feature essays, reports, studies and interviews about energy, demographic changes, globalization, digitalization and mobility, along with other pertinent topics. The topics overlap closely with recent and ongoing BMW Group initiatives.

For example, to address overcrowded roads and pollution problems resulting from the population's gradual migration to urban areas, BMW has created a ride-sharing program, which was recently extended via a partnership with Moovit ([see story](#)). Similarly, the electric i3 and a pledge to continue focus on sustainability show an ongoing dedication to the cause, for which the group has repeatedly been recognized ([see story](#)).



BMW design

Celebrating major anniversaries is important for luxury brands, as it allows them to create an historical through-line bringing past, present and future together.

For BMW, it also provides a chance to address current trends and consumer desires directly in the form of a long-term strategy. By appealing to expectations and desires with an eye to the future, BMW is inviting consumers to come along for the ride and promoting loyalty.

Happy anniversary

Global celebrations and branding-intensive initiatives are typical of centenaries, particularly in the automotive sector.

For example, in 2012 sports car manufacturer Aston Martin marked its centenary by unveiling a new logo and holding global celebrations, including a week of open house activities, at its headquarters and a birthday event in London.

The automaker celebrated its 100th birthday throughout 2013 with consumers, who were alerted via Aston Martin's Web site and through an email. The small company likely benefitted from a unifying brand message that resulted from tying the majority of its marketing into a single idea ([see story](#)).

Although anniversary celebrations have become commonplace in several sectors, they are particularly common in the automotive world.

Automakers regularly tout anniversaries of many kinds as a way to unite loyalists and generate interest in certain models.

Anniversary celebrations give brands a huge capacity for potential campaigns. They can also act as a vehicle for presenting fans with extensive historical information that would otherwise be scrolled right past ([see story](#)).

For BMW, 100 years marks a moment both of past success and in paving the way for future developments in a number of areas.

"BMW has always been known for their cutting edge efforts in many areas," Ms. Fix said. "From carbon fiber, to light weighting to electric sports cars with their i8 and i3 vehicles, BMW is meeting their goals."

"They are building cars in the US and in Munich amongst other countries in order to meet market needs," she said. "Their success bleeds over to the Mini and Rolls-Royce brands too."