

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes invites developers to come up with innovation for \$18K

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Mercedes challenges developers to come up with new ideas. Image credit: Mercedes

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is flexing its technological muscles and mining for unsourced talent in a special competition.

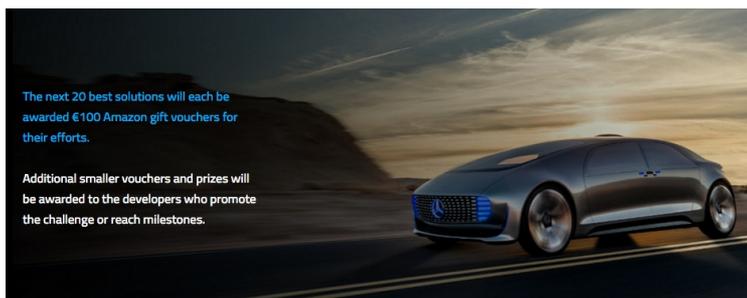
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An eight-week project phase will kick off Mercedes' "Digital Challenge" in which participants will receive more than 80 experimental test APIs from a virtual vehicle. Software developers will be able to compete and show off their ideas in front of a panel of judges.

Mercedes innovation

Participants will be competing for a chance to win 15,000 euros, or approximately \$18,000 at current exchange, and an opportunity to present their idea at the Web Summit in Lisbon, Portugal.

The competition allows entrants the opportunity to test and play with more than 80 APIs that could be open to third party developers in the future. Mercedes' car emulator, mock APIs and SDKs are available for participants to create new innovative ideas such as a new application.



In addition to the main prizes, Mercedes will be sharing giveaways and cash prizes that equate to more than 30,000 euro, or \$35,000.

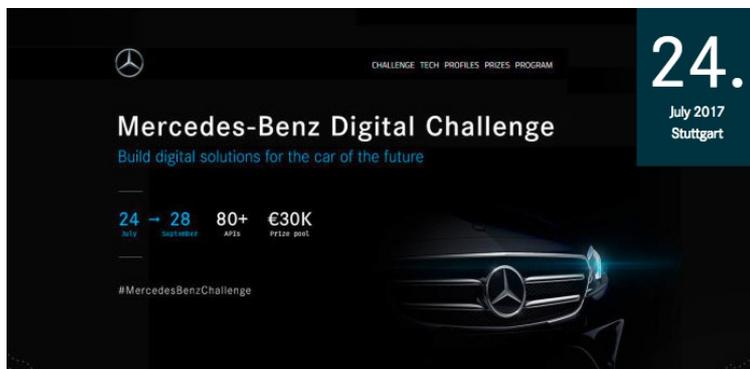
Interested participants register through Mercedes' Web site, which asks them a series of questions such as "what type

of developer are you" and "what are your favorite programming languages."

Those selected by Mercedes to join the competition will use the mock APIs, mobile SDKs and a car emulator to build something special.

Mercedes is hoping to attract developers and startups with diverse backgrounds from all over the world.

The second place winner will receive 6,000 euro, or \$7,000, and the chance to continue discussions with the Mercedes-Benz team and potentially continue further development.



Third place will receive 3,000 euros, or \$3,500, and the chance to continue working with Mercedes as well. The following 20 best solutions will be given 100 euro Amazon gift vouchers.

Hackers and brands

Brands are often tapping developers and tech savvy consumers for competitions such as this to find new innovative ideas while also checking security.

For instance, LVMH flagship brand Louis Vuitton celebrated the success of its second hackathon held earlier this year in France.

Louis Vuitton's "Unlock Supply Chain" hackathon was in partnership with smart business platform Anaplan and BeMyApp at Ecole 42. The 48-hour hackathon invited student teams to work on developing a future supply chain model for Louis Vuitton using the Anaplan platform ([see more](#)).

French apparel and accessories house Louis Vuitton also looked to alter luxury's relationship with the technology world through an industry-first hackathon.

Held on September 25, "Unlocking the Future of Luxury" brought together 58 developers, who were asked to work in teams for 48 hours to create an application that would enable the brand to better understand its consumers and where the luxury industry is headed. Seeking this outside input and expertise may help Louis Vuitton innovate within its company, as well as give data engineers an inside look at the company ([see more](#)).

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