

AUTOMOTIVE

## Automotive sector's top 10 headlines of 2019

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Daimler and BMW Group launch a new mobility company. Image credit: BMW Group

By STAFF REPORTS

During 2019, automakers grappled with demands for alternative mobility, more sustainable driving and digital purchase paths.

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One of the key trends of the year in the sector was collaboration, as competitors came together to solve issues ranging from electric innovation to autonomous driving. In hints towards the future of the automotive industry, companies also entered adjacent categories including yachts and flying car development, expanding beyond the road.

Here are the top 10 automotive headlines of 2019, in no particular order:



Cadillac Live is one part personal shopper, one part live interactive digital showroom. Image courtesy of Cadillac

### Ecommerce opportunities abound in auto, but adoption lags

As ecommerce continues to see exponential growth, luxury automakers need to adapt and leverage digital tools to improve the customer experience.

Affluents are growing more accustomed to online research and ecommerce, and automakers continue to experiment with ways to add more digital communications into the shopping journey. While offline, onsite car purchases will not be disappearing anytime soon, consumer preferences are changing fast enough that luxury marques risk falling behind by not introducing more ecommerce options ([see story](#)).



*Porsche and Boeing are exploring the future of flying cars. Image credit: Porsche*

### [Porsche partners with Boeing on flying EV development](#)

German automaker Porsche is teaming with aircraft manufacturer Boeing to study the future possibilities of premium urban air mobility vehicles.

Through the partnership, Porsche and Boeing will establish an international team to address various aspects of urban air mobility, including an analysis of the market potential for premium vehicles and possible use cases. Engineers will also develop and test a concept for a fully electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicle ([see story](#)).



*Silvercar by Audi is more accessible to existing Audi drivers. Image credit: Audi of America*

### [Audi finds most drivers curious, but uninformed about AVs](#)

Most drivers are open to using autonomous vehicles as long as they can take control at any time, according to research from German automaker Audi.

The "& Audi" initiative sought to define user personas that linked attitudes about self-driving cars to lifestyle. Audi is one of several luxury automakers that has increasingly invested in automated technology ([see story](#)).



Automotive is one of the top categories where consumers want guided selling. Image credit: BMW

### More than 50pc of vehicle research done via mobile: report

Mobile is becoming a more important channel for automakers to engage with audiences, according to research from IgnitionOne.

In the second quarter of 2019, mobile sessions accounted for 55 percent of all automotive site visits in Europe and North America. Desktops saw the highest growth in engagement, highlighting the importance of automakers having a consistent experience across channels ([see story](#)).



The e-tron is an all-electric SUV. Image credit: Audi

### Sustainability, SUVs shake up luxury automakers, force creativity

As regulations across the world strengthen and consumer demand changes, luxury automakers have the difficult task of building SUVs with little emissions while maintaining exclusivity.

Outside of the United States, emissions regulations are becoming increasingly stricter as the world looks for an answer to the global climate crisis. These new parameters are forcing luxury automakers to get creative with their designs to keep the power and exclusivity that they are known for, at the same time as the SUV becomes ubiquitous, according to panelists on Luxury Daily's automotive webinar on June 12 ([see story](#)).



Luxury automakers spend the most on demographic spending. Image credit: Lexus

### Most luxury auto ad spend focused on demographics: report

Luxury carmakers were responsible for 30 percent of all global digital advertising spend within the automotive sector, as marques look to consumer data to better target affluent audiences.

According to a new report from global data company Eyeota, auto advertisers spent more than half of their 2018 budgets on segmenting consumers by demographics. Luxury automotive data spending peaked in the first and fourth quarters of the year ([see story](#)).

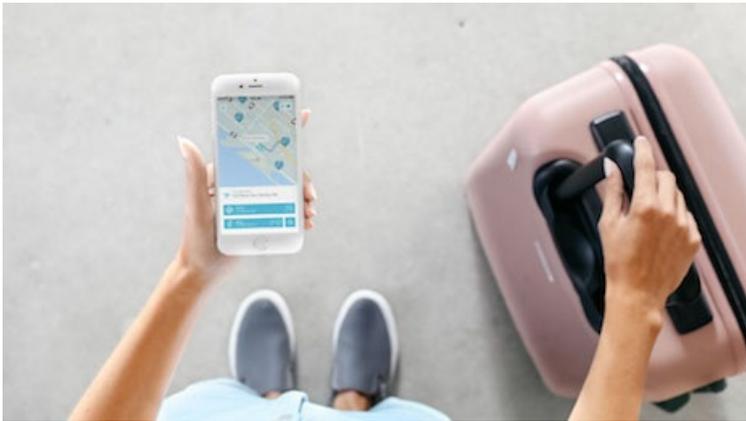


*A Tesla showroom in Denver. Image credit: Associated Press*

### Tesla detours ecommerce-centric plans back to physical retail

As suddenly as U.S. automaker Tesla announced it was closing the majority of its stores to cut costs and focus on ecommerce sales, the electric vehicle manufacturer is now rerouting its plans back to bricks-and-mortar retail and raising prices instead.

While Tesla's latest reversal may be indicative of continued upheaval within the company, it also hints at the continued and possibly under-appreciated value of physical retail. In recent weeks, Amazon and Sephora have also made headlines for changing their bricks-and-mortar retail strategies ([see story](#)).



*ReachNow is BMW's ride sharing app. Image credit: ReachNow*

### BMW, Daimler hint at transportation's future with joint mobility company

German automakers BMW Group and Daimler AG are launching a new joint venture emphasizing mobility in an era during which younger, more urban affluents have evolving feelings about car ownership.

Announced in Berlin on Feb. 22, "Your Now" is the new umbrella cooperation that encompasses several urban mobility companies. Through new vehicle offerings and subscriptions services, luxury automakers have been working to reach city-dwelling affluents who have moved away from car ownership in favor of ridesharing services and other alternatives ([see story](#)).



*Aston Martin's new AMR experience will provide training on driving its vehicles on a racetrack. Image credit: Aston Martin*

## Automakers balance accessibility, exclusivity with interactive experiences

Britain's Aston Martin is the most recent luxury automaker to update its experiential offerings in an effort to draw a new class of affluent drivers.

From pop-ups to exclusive test drives, more automakers are taking luxury experiences to a new level. While some are geared towards current owners, other experiences are meant to make high-end vehicles more accessible ([see story](#)).



*Karma's flagship store in Newport Beach, CA. Image courtesy of Karma*

## Karma begins accepting cryptocurrency for luxury cars

California-based electric automaker Karma is testing Bitcoin as a form of payment at its Newport Beach, CA dealership.

The cryptocurrency will be accepted for both new car purchases and services at the flagship. While Bitcoin is being used in an increasing number of applications throughout the luxury business, its adoption at retail remains less common ([see story](#)).

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