

INTERNET

BMW highlights 3 Series speed through YouTube contest

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By TRICIA CARR

German automaker BMW is using its social media outlets to encourage consumer participation in a contest that showcases the new 3 Series vehicle with a set of user-created YouTube videos that are 5.9 seconds in length, the same amount of time that it takes the car to go from 0-60 miles per hour.

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BMW is calling on United States-based consumers to vote for their favorite video to decide which user will win a new 3 Series sedan via the contest hosted on its YouTube, Facebook and Google+ accounts. The YouTube and Facebook contest pages link directly to the automaker's microsite for the 3 Series vehicle that gives users a seamless browsing experience.

"This shows that the brand cares about people," said Josh Harcus, director of business development and digital strategist at [SayItSocial](#), Wilmington, NC.

"The contest adds a lot of faith in the brand for people who may never be able to afford a BMW vehicle, but who are huge advocates of the brand," he said. "It shows that the brand is giving its loyal followers a voice even though they may not be able to buy into it.

"This will help raise sales inadvertently because those that do buy will have a more

positive view of the brand."

Mr. Marcus is not affiliated with BMW, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

BMW did not respond before press time.

Split second

The "0 to 60 in 5.9 Seconds" contest lets consumers vote for their favorite out of 30 short videos located on BMW's [YouTube page](#).

The automaker asked YouTube users to upload their 5.9-second videos by March 9. More than 1,000 submissions were received.

Judges narrowed down the entries to 30 finalists.

The judges included professional baseball player Mark Teixeira, director and producer Kurt Miller and Olympic medalist swimmer Natalie Coughlin.

The videos were presented for voting in a collage format March 27 on the brand's [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

Users can click to enlarge a video that plays over the existing page. The voting button is located at the bottom left of each video.

Once the video ends, users can immediately click on another video in the collage.

Users are able to cast one vote per day until April 9.

The contest seems to aim at a young audience through the quirky and comical themes of the finalist videos.

For example, one video features an image of the 3 Series slamming on its breaks at a stoplight. The video zooms in on a child driver who yells, “I love this car.”

In addition, one video depicts a young father changing a baby’s diaper. His wife rewards him with a quarter that he immediately puts in a savings jar for a 3 Series.

The brand also created a separate Facebook page devoted to the “0 to Desir3 in 5.9 Seconds” YouTube contest where users can watch each 5.9-second video and vote on the social network.



Contest Facebook page

The contest voting was also promoted via the automaker's [Google+](#) page.

"BMW is looking 10-20 years down the road and thinking of how it can create viral campaigns now that will develop viewers into loyal customers," Mr. Marcus said. "It will be the children and grandchildren of BMW owners who are reached with the viral [video] aspect.

"The contest is geared towards young people, but also a wide audience in general because YouTube is the second-most-used search engine," he said. "In reality, the brand is looking to reach everyone via YouTube."

Page by page

The contest nicely encompasses all of BMW's online entities such as YouTube, Facebook, Google+ and its Web site.

In addition to holding the voting, the YouTube page for the "0 to Desir3 in 5.9 Seconds" contest has prominently-placed links to the [3 Series-specific Web site](#).

Below the contest content, a feed from the automaker's Facebook page displays the brand's latest updates. Users can toggle to the Our Fans section and read the latest discussion of BMW happening on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

The contest page seems to be encouraging clicks to the BMW microsite that focuses on the 3 Series.



3 Series Web site

This is a good move for BMW due to the site's unique seamless scroll effect within an Internet browser that could impress tech-savvy luxury consumers.

The site shows different aspects of the interior and exterior of the vehicle in a user-controlled slideshow that transitions without leaving the image of the 3 Series.



A slide of the 3 Series Web site

Many luxury car brands are using digital components to showcase new models.

For example, Jaguar took YouTube's highly-visible banner ad space to push the Jaguar XF with a drop-down menu where users could view a commercial called "Machines," click through a photo gallery and explore a series of links ([see story](#)).

In addition, Ferrari used its Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and YouTube accounts to promote F12berlinetta.com, a microsite created by the brand to display the engineering, style, dynamics and specifications of its new model ([see story](#)).

"I think the YouTube contest idea is to increase word-of-mouth," Mr. Marcus said. "When you look at it, typically a brand says that it wants someone to share a video to that person's followers.

"In reality, people don't have many followers," he said. "It's more of a word-of-mouth campaign that advocates spreading the word and creating talk about it."

Final Take

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