

INTERNET

## BMW pushes social history via 10M Facebook fan effort

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By TRICIA CARR

BMW is pushing a new Facebook application that offers an automaker-themed infographic about users' habits and encourages follows on the German automaker's family of pages as a gift to its more than 10 million fans.



The app visually tells consumers about their Facebook friends, how the user has interacted with BMW on the social network and an inside look at the BMW fan base. The automaker seems to be catching the eyes of tech-savvy consumers who might value this information and be a part of its target audience by turning the quick brand interaction into a contest of, "Who is the automaker's superfan?"

"We are welcoming more than 10 million fans on the BMW Facebook site now and we wanted to express our appreciation towards our fans and their amazing commitment," said Björn Ollhäuser, social media manager at BMW, Munich. "Our Facebook site is a very effective dialogue tool and the app will be a good way to increase our fan base and to even strengthen the dialogue.

"Facebook is a unique way to communicate with our fans because of its superior range," he said. "This allows us to generate awareness for BMW topics.

“Infographics are an interesting way to visualize the fans' commitment towards BMW and how much he or she interacts with BMW.”

## BMW fandom

BMW is rounding up its fans and asking them to participate in a contest of who has the most brand affinity on Facebook.

The prize is a trip to Munich, Germany, where the winner will visit BMW Headquarters, BMW Welt, BMW Plant and BMW Museum, meet experts from several of the automaker's departments and take a tour with stops at the automaker's hot spots and photo shoots.

To enter, each fan must produce an infographic in BMW's new Facebook app by pressing the generate button.

The top of the infographic shows the users' picture and says, “Are you the BMW superfan?”

Users must scroll through approximately seven pages to view the entire infographic. The first section tells Facebook users how many friends they have, how many BMW 3 Series it would take to fit all of them, their average age and the gender distribution.

The top section also shows a Polaroid-style image of a BMW vehicle from the user's birth year.

Next, BMW is showing which one of its posts and videos were the most viral since it established its Facebook account. Underneath this, a tag cloud shows the most-used terms by fans that include love, awesome, nice and wow.



## Most-viral Facebook posts

Then begins the infographic that shows how each user has interacted with the brand and tallies a score based on this. Information presented includes when a user began to “like” BMW, how many of the user's friends liked BMW since then and the number of likes, comments and posts on BMW's page.



### *You and BMW section*

BMW is also awarding points for fans who are following their country-specific Facebook page or another BMW page including its BMW i, BMW M and BMW Golfsport pages. The app links directly to these pages so users can begin to follow them.

The bottom of the app shows users' final score and the option to share it on their own Facebook pages.

"This app is great in that it truly reaches all BMW fans and potential fans," said Brittany Mills, director of strategy and experience at **B Culture Media**, Atlanta. "To be honest, I was not a fan of its official page, but I am now so I could get my own infographic.

"Loyal BMW fans will want to publicize their scores to show that BMW is acknowledging their relationship," she said. "BMW's strategy is to give credit and attention to its brand advocates by highlighting their affinity for the brand through this infographic.

"It is also to gain new fans by having the app spread organically through its network since fans are more likely to share something from a brand page that connects them directly or promotes their connection with the brand."

### *One day only*

BMW's campaign gives information that fans will likely spend some time with, but does not offer an incentive to return to the page. Once an infographic is created, the same one will show up when the user returns to the page.

Many luxury brands use apps to encourage repeat interactions with consumers.

For instance, German fashion label Hugo Boss pushed its Boss Orange watch collections via a Facebook app that lets users set the time on a virtual timepiece and enter to win a watch each day for 50 days, while adding consumers to its social media and email lists ([see story](#)).

In addition, fashion label Michael Kors tapped its Facebook fans for a contest that let consumers enter to win one item per day until Mother's Day. The brand began its Mother's Day digital campaign called What She Wants in the two weeks leading up to the holiday

that could be most crucial for appealing to last-minute shoppers ([see story](#)).

Overall, BMW's app will pique curiosity among fans and help them gain more insight to the brand via a quick, instantaneous campaign.

“This app is providing a perfect combination of brand knowledge and fan engagement,” Ms. Mills said. “The risk that brands run when trying to create engaging apps is that they only target a specific type of fan or customer.

“Brands can also run the risk of providing too much content so that it gets boring and uninteresting,” she said. “This is providing brand information that is not already public knowledge and known by the current BMW Facebook fan, while also making it personal by tying it to you.

“For example, one thing that is included in an infographic is what model car was released the year that you were born and that result is custom to everyone, which makes it all about you and not so much about the brand.”

Final Take

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