

INTERNET

BMW aims at college graduates via Facebook ads

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Get \$1000 off a BMW with our College Graduate Program. Click here to learn more.



Mercedes-Benz USA
Share a picture of your Best Summer moment and you could win a 13-month lease on an SLK.



By TRICIA CARR

German automaker BMW is reaching out to college graduates via two types of Facebook advertisements that highlight the brand's financial services and push dealer visits.

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Luxury Daily

The Facebook ads appear to the right of a user's News Feed and link to a section of the BMW USA Web site where college graduates can see if they are eligible for a \$1,000 incentive from the automaker. BMW seems to be using the social network's ad-targeting platform to aim at its core audience with the goal of gaining consumers who are entering the workforce and might soon be able to buy a high-end vehicle.

"BMW will directly target the online users that it is trying to engage," said Brittany Mills, director of strategy and experience at **B Culture Media**, Atlanta. "What college graduate will not notice a shiny BMW ad on the side of his or her profile?"

"The information that BMW will gather from this campaign is going to provide so much insight for the brand so that it will get a good look into what message is working amongst the affluent, young Facebook users and will be able to evolve its campaign to maximize return," she said.

"The perfect ad combination usually comes after a week or two of analytics and message

testing.”

Ms. Mills is not affiliated with BMW, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

BMW USA did not respond before press deadline.

Master's Degree

There are two different BMW ads in circulation on Facebook. The images and text in these ads is interchangeable.

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BMW Facebook ad

For example, one of the ads features the BMW circular insignia. It reads, “Graduate to a BMW with our College Graduate Program. Click here to learn more.”

Another ad shows a red BMW sedan with graduation caps in the air around it. The ad reads, “Now is the time! Click here for \$1,000 off the purchase of a BMW, only for recent grads!”

In another variation, the red sedan is accompanied with different text.

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BMW Facebook ad

The Facebook ad platform lets brands target specific consumers. Fans of the BMW Facebook page and other luxury automaker pages will likely see the ads.

The ads link to the **College Graduate Program** section of BMW USA’s financial services site that starts with, “You've studied hard, college is behind you, and now it's time to get behind the wheel of The Ultimate Driving Machine.”

College Graduate Program site

Here, BMW tells consumers that they can get a \$1,000 incentive and the best available rates when they lease or finance a new 2012 or 2013 vehicle. There is a \$750 incentive available for pre-owned vehicles.

Consumers can qualify if they earned an undergraduate, graduate or associate's degree from an accredited college or university within the previous 12 months, or are eligible to graduate within the next four months and have employment lined up. The automaker introduced this program last year ([see story](#)).

BMW is enticing dealer visits on this page, likely to immerse young consumers in the brand as soon as they enter the workforce. To get more information about financial services, consumers must visit a BMW location.

The bottom of the site contains a link to schedule a test drive. Consumers must register on the next page to continue so that BMW can gather their information.

"BMW is attempting to better target its advertising towards college graduates by using Facebook to fish where the fish are," said Scott Delea, managing partner at [Inflexion Interactive](#), Hoboken, NJ. "The average college graduate is spending almost two hours a day on Facebook according to a recent study.

"College graduates are a valuable customer for BMW because you get them while they are young and you keep them for life," he said.

Advertising science

Luxury marketers including Mercedes-Benz, Four Seasons, Fendi and L'Occitane use the Facebook ad-targeting platform to reach a broad, young audience interested in luxury products and services.

Indeed, the targeting options through this platform may be a large reason behind the increase in luxury marketers' interest in Facebook ads ([see story](#)).

Mercedes is currently advertising alongside BMW. Its ads show an image from its marketing for Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week, Miami, and reads, "Share a picture of your

best summer moment and you could win a 13-month lease on an SLK.”

The ads link to the Mercedes Facebook application where users can enter the contest.

Previously, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts used a Facebook ad to offer hotel credits to those who book two or more nights at its Las Vegas property to leverage the location to younger users.

The Facebook ad brings consumers to a property-specific Web site that lets them read about the property, view images and book rooms ([see story](#)).

The targeting capabilities of Facebook ads are detailed, so these brands can be sure they are spending their money on the right impressions and clicks, per Ms. Mills.

“This is a great program for which BMW is trying to create awareness,” Ms. Mills said. “With the advanced targeting categories that Facebook offers, it makes sense that BMW turned to this platform to target graduates.

“Facebook allows a marketer to target by interests, age range and education status,” she said. “BMW can drill down as far as testing what school has the most active alumni and where BMW resonates best across the country.”

Furthermore, BMW could have improved the ad in subtle ways such as personalizing it for each college.

“Facebook allows an advertiser to target ads to college students based upon graduation year and even allows it to target based upon the college they attended,” Inflexion Interactive's Mr. Delea said.

“Since this is a financing offer, BMW should consider targeting its Facebook ads towards colleges which have a high post-grad employment rate to increase the likelihood of the graduate qualifying for the loan,” he said. “It should also add the name of the college to the ad copy and landing page which will increase conversion rates.”

Final Take

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