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BMW speaks to affluent African-Americans via Uptown Magazine partnership

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By PETER FINOCCHIARO

BMW is reaching out to affluent African Americans via a year-long partnership titled "The Joy of Success" with luxury lifestyle publication Uptown Magazine that includes events and advertisements across print and digital channels.

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The automaker and magazine have already coordinated one event on Sept. 16 in Washington honoring African American leaders. The partnership includes two more events this year, plus BMW print placements in Uptown Magazine and digital promotions.

"The strategy behind the partnership was to provide BMW North America with an opportunity to speak to the affluent African American audience through an integrated media program leveraging the print, digital and event assets of Uptown Magazine," said Leonard Burnett, Jr., Publisher/co-CEO at Uptown Magazine, New York. "BMW desired a year-long partnership that would engage the consumer, build relationships and drive transactions, but also reinforce BMW's commitment to diversity."

BMW produces mid-range and upscale automobiles. Its 1 Series of vehicles start below \$30,000, while its high-end 7 Series sedans have base prices ranging from \$70,000 to

\$137,000.

Uptown Magazine claims to be the only luxury lifestyle publication targeting affluent African Americans.

The partnership was facilitated by **Matlock**, BMW African American agency of record for North America.

Commitment to diversity

The Joy of Success event in Washington honored Joe Watson, chairman of the Marathon Club, a private equity firm focused on serving minority communities; Donna Byrd, publisher of The Root, an online magazine for African Americans; and Lamell McMorris, founder of Perennial Strategy Group, a consulting and government relations firm.



Honorees Joe Watson, Donna Byrd and Lamell McMorris at the Joy of Success event

BMW made a donation to one charity chosen by each of the honorees at the event.

BMW and Uptown are teaming for two more events this year – one in Atlanta in October and another in November or December in New York.

Additionally, the October/November and December/January issues of Uptown will include BMW Joy of Success print advertisements.

The partnership also includes customized test-driving opportunities such as BMW and Uptown's Ultimate Driving Experience.

"For 2011, we hope to and are exploring ways to continue the dialogue and extend the relationship with consumers in the most organic way," Mr. Burrell said.

Cultural outreach

BMW frequently uses event marketing efforts to bolster its brand equity.

The automaker announced a worldwide educational initiative in partnership with the Guggenheim Foundation earlier this month ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, Uptown Magazine has been increasing its media profile as of late. The company released an iPhone application that debuted among the top 10 travel

applications in Apple's App Store ([see story](#)).

The partnership made sense for both brands, according to Mr. Burnett.

"This partnership allowed BMW to speak directly to a hard to reach market where they live, work, and play in a voice that is relevant and resonates within the target," Mr. Burnett said.

"For Uptown, we always seek out opportunities that allowed us to provide our readers, the AAA, an emotional connection and refined experience to a brand while developing strong social and professional relationships with others of like statuses and interests," he said.

"The BMW partnership was a perfect example of this."

Final Take

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