

ADVERTISING

## BMW aims to beat competitors with electric vehicle focus

May 21, 2013



By ERIN SHEA

German automaker BMW is aiming to beat out the competition by pushing its i concept electric vehicles with the i3 set to be in-stock this year.



Since electric vehicles are a new product to many consumers, automakers that introduce them to consumers should develop strong marketing campaigns to convince consumers to buy the new technology. It seems that electric vehicles can help automakers get ahead of its competitors because there are more environmentally-conscious affluent consumers.

“BMW research indicates that there is a pent-up demand in the premium segment for an eco-friendly electric vehicle with inspiring design and dynamic driving features,” said Joan Bowen, electric vehicle and i brand marketing manager at [BMW of North America](#), Woodcliff Lake, NJ.

“Developing a marketing strategy for BMW i brand has many of the same components as other BMW marketing campaigns,” she said.

“But it is important for us to convey through marketing efforts that BMW i is about our vision for sustainable future mobility and also takes into consideration the issues

surrounding the electric vehicle lifestyle.”

### Conducting electricity

Recently, BMW CEO Norbert Reithofer told his company to embrace the electric vehicle technology, according to [Bloomberg](#).

The automaker plans to start selling the i3 vehicle sometime this year.



### *i3 vehicle*

To build up the anticipation, BMW has already started to market these vehicles through various campaigns, which include an interactive mobile ad ([see story](#)) and an investment in family communications mobile application Life 360 ([see story](#)).

Now, the automaker is focusing its marketing efforts for the vehicles on consumer's concerns with electric cars. BMW stresses the point that its i concept vehicles are different from other electric vehicles.

“Our research has shown that there are a certain aspects about electric vehicles that require demystifying, most notably access to home and public charging,” Ms. Bowen said.

To combat these concerns, BMW created the Electronaut Effect, a online resource that gives consumers access to data and information about the environmental impact, cost savings and range of the i vehicles. The site can be accessed at [www.bmwusa.com/ElectronautEffect](http://www.bmwusa.com/ElectronautEffect).

The data is updated weekly to show information and video clips from BMW's electric car drivers in ActiveE Field Trial, which began January 2012. For example, the drivers in this trial have not used a total of 267,475 gallons of gasoline and yet have driven more than 5 million miles.



### *Electronaut Effect statistics*

The Electronaut Effect also has its own Facebook and Twitter page to connect electric car drivers with fans and spread the word about the vehicles.



### *Tweet*

“We encourage our current electric car drivers and followers on social media to participate in the conversation and share the information,” Ms. Bowen said.

“For example, on Mother’s Day we shared a fun fact that the Electronauts have saved \$669,000 by driving the all-electric BMW ActiveE, which we informed our fans could buy about 26,760 bouquets of flowers for moms,” she said.

In addition, BMW is showing consumers that the i series is not just an average electric car through its Born Electric campaign.

“Whereas most electric vehicles are traditional cars with a battery swapped out for a traditional combustion engine, the BMW i is truly something different,” Ms. Bowen said. “We are bringing to market cars that were built specifically to be electric vehicles or as we call it, ‘Born Electric.’

“BMW i embodies our commitment to sustainability in every step of the process including conception, production and recycling and using innovative construction materials such as lightweight carbon fiber reinforced plastic, all while offering a dynamic driving experience,” she said.

“Our marketing messages highlight what sets BMW apart in the electric vehicle category.”

Going green

Many affluent consumers are environmentally-conscious.

More than three-quarters of U.S. consumers who say they are eco-friendly have an annual household income of more than \$150,000, according to a 2011 report from Scarborough Research.([see story](#)).

In addition, affluent consumers seem to be interested in purchasing these vehicles since Tesla Motors’ Model S brought in more sales than other top-level luxury vehicles during the first quarter of 2013, per [CNN Money](#).

“Affluent consumers want the newest and best innovations,” said Ed Brojerdi, president and co-chief creative officer at [Kirshenbaum Bond Senecal + Partners](#), New York.

“Luxury electric vehicles are at the forefront of innovation and technology, and they represent the new premium,” he said.

“Also, affluent consumers usually have more than one vehicle in their garage, making it easier to integrate an electric vehicle into their lives.”

However, marketing an electric vehicle can be difficult since driving one is different than operating a traditional luxury vehicle.

“The ownership experience is different and potential electric vehicle owners need to understand all that is involved,” Mr. Brojerdi said.

“A regular luxury vehicle is ultimately designed to bring you a premium convenience with every interaction and experience with the vehicle,” he said.

“A luxury electric vehicle might sacrifice some convenience and practicality but with the huge upside that comes from reducing the dependency on fossil fuels.”

Final take

*Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/GTI4HmVXXL0>

---

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.