

IN-STORE

Audi expands dealership presence to become No. 1 in US

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By ERIN SHEA

Audi of America is aiming to become the No. 1 luxury automaker in the United States and is investing \$5 billion in three years to expand and update its showrooms to help boost the brand's presence in North America.

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The automaker recently opened a new flagship showroom in New York with its sister brand Volkswagen, which is the largest real estate investment by the Volkswagen Group. Audi is aiming for the new showroom and dealership updates to increase its exposure in New York and the U.S.

“New York is a critical market for a premium brand and Audi is investing to ensure that our facility in Manhattan represents all of the progressive characteristics of our brand,” said Andrew Lipman, general manager of communications at [Audi of America](#), New York.

Welcome to the neighborhood

Audi's new flagship dealership is located on 11th Avenue between West 55th and 56th Streets in Manhattan.

The showroom comprises two fully-integrated buildings - one for Audi and one for Volkswagen. The Audi area has a main floor showroom and 35 Audi service bays.

The Volkswagen Group spent \$135 million to open this showroom, which spans 265,000 square feet.



Dealership

The dealership will be operated by Open Road Auto Group of Bridgewater, NJ, one of the largest dealer groups in the region.

Audi celebrated the new the showroom with a ribbon cutting May 10 and a party at the showroom that it promoted through its social media.



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In addition to opening up this location, Audi will continue to update its other showrooms to maintain its standards of quality and increase its presence in the U.S. market.

Staying competitive

Audi may have some competition in the U.S. market as many luxury automakers are investing more time and effort into reaching U.S. consumers.

For instance, Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is prioritizing U.S. consumers by investing \$360 million in its first manufacturing plant in the country that will make its best-selling vehicle.

Lexus plans to open the plant in 2015 in Georgetown, KY, to produce ES 350 vehicles, which marks the first time it has been manufactured outside of Japan. These plans come in a series of investments totaling \$2 billion in 17 months to expand Lexus' North American production ([see story](#)).

Also, Land Rover North America hyped the global debut of the all-new Range Rover Sport March 26 at the New York International Auto Show through efforts that spanned a microsite, video marketing and social media buzz.

The automaker shared a live broadcast of the model reveal through a dedicated microsite and is using teaser videos to trigger site registrations. Land Rover is dedicated to pushing the Range Rover Sport since it is the most popular Land Rover in America ([see story](#)).

However, Audi is focusing on its showroom efforts to help reach its U.S. goals.

"Building our dealer presence in the U.S. market is critical to Audi reaching its aggressive sales goals in the coming years," Mr. Lipman said.

"In addition to adding facilities, a focus is to upgrade existing facilities to ensure the Audi brand is consistent regardless of the market," he said.

Final take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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