

MOBILE

## Luxury automakers distill brand identity through mobile apps

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*From Maserati Ghibli app*

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Although mobile magazines and libraries do not get nearly as much traffic as social media, the medium helps luxury automakers build rapport with loyalists in ways that can influence sales.

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Mobile magazines allow brands to cultivate content for discerning fans without the transience of social media, but motivating users to return after each update tends to confound. For this reason, updates become more tenuous as time goes on, giving fans even less reason to return.

"Large purchases such as luxury autos rarely close on a mobile device," said Shuli Lowy, marketing director of [Ping Mobile](#), New York. "Instead, mobile serves as the place where consumers perform product research and comparisons.

"It's where they get to explore and slowly fall in love with their dream car," she said.

"These applications serve as a key tool to build up the interest and desire of consumers who are wavering between auto brands. App creators don't expect an auto magazine app to hit the top charts - it's designed as a browsing tool to move a small but valuable target

audience farther along the purchase path."

## Marinating

The most holistic magazine app aims to encompass a brand's evolving identity. These apps combine brand history with an ongoing news feed outlining current events.

Vast image galleries, videos and interactive content such as customizable models fill out the wide spaces between articles to keep users engaged. Such apps also extrapolate on the technical details of vehicles and the people behind-the-scenes.

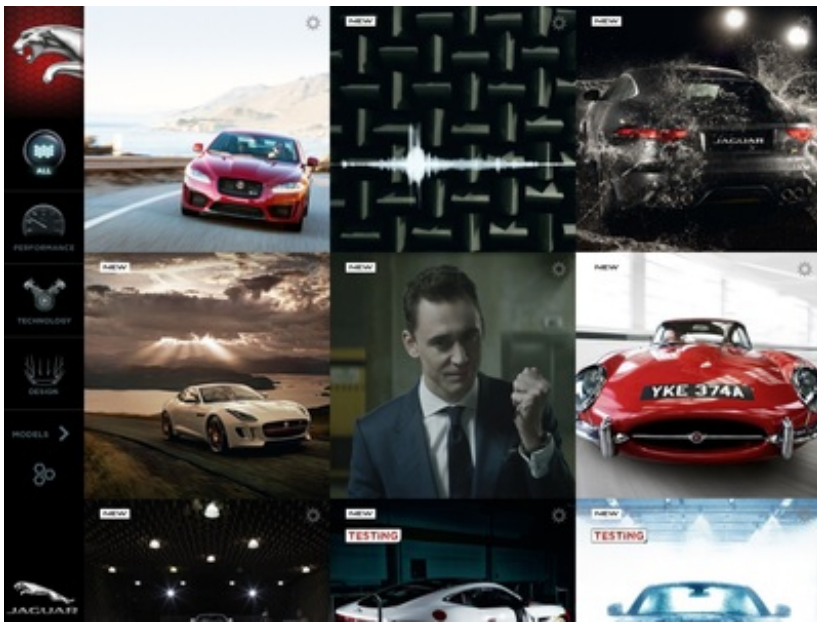
To keep these apps engaging brands should shuffle the type of content with each update, frequently deploying new pieces rather than releasing clusters at regular intervals. Having fans interact with an app for a few minutes a few times a week is more realistic and productive than half-hour deep dives that take place once.

Also, brands should regularly use social media hooks to draw in fans unaware of such an app. Finally, compiling content in a scroll- and swipe- friendly manner will increase the amount of content consumed.



*From opening video for Jaguar's magazine app*

Jaguar took a news-driven template for its magazine app. Arrayed in a template format, users can browse the latest brand endeavors and learn about the technology girding vehicles among other subjects ([see story](#)).



*From Jaguar app*

Ferrari houses individual magazines on its magazine app in addition to free content. While the free content is limited, fans can read through regularly refreshed pieces on cars, people, style, races and also opinion pieces.

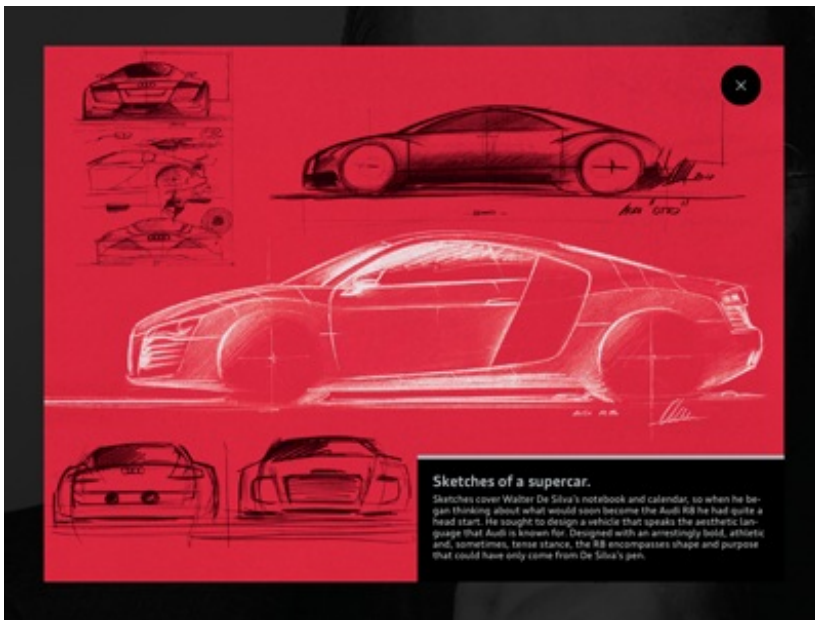


*From Ferrari magazine app*

Focusing the lens

The Audi Library app provides fans with an in-depth, image-heavy look at various models and has been adding content since its inaugural R8 model debut. Since iPads are typically used for more focused stretches of time than mobile phones, invoking the concept of a library will likely appeal to consumers who are looking to relax.

Audi's R8 section begins with pairs of words such as "Past and Present" and "Ultra Strong and Ultra Light" flashing across the screen. The content is presented in a flip-book fashion as users swipe horizontally through information dense with images ([see story](#)).



### *Audi library app*

Other mobile content hubs center on specific vehicles and generally have a more coherent direction that allows brand enthusiasts to cumulatively consume content.

Maserati has created an app for its Ghibli model filled with images and video that informs in an even-handed manner.

Arranged like a maze, users can swipe horizontally and vertically to uncover a wide assortment of content. As Maserati continues to build support for the new Ghibli, the new app will give fans and consumers the chance to see the car in a more intimate context.

The app covers sections such as design, Ghibli tour, performance, Ghibli anywhere, gallery, specifications, test drive/quote, 100 years and Maserati racing ([see story](#)).

Mercedes, on the other hand, provides a comprehensive app for a variety of its lines.



### *Mercedes' portfolio of apps*

"Many of the luxury auto apps lack a sense of renewal," Ms. Lowy said. "The apps serve as

wonderful engagement channels when consumers first open them—but they remain stagnant after that.

"Renewal is an important element in an app because it's what drives people back to it," she said. "This reengagement is particularly important for automakers because their sale cycle spans several weeks or months.

"Instead of facilitating a great brand interaction once during that period, automakers should strive to put new content in the app to encourage people to visit it continuously during the period in which they are deciding what car to buy.

"Putting in new content doesn't mean replacing the basic browsing features—it means updating extra material that will keep the app fresh."

Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/NhiIZ1BOIE0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/NhiIZ1BOIE0)

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