

Content Guide for **Automotive brands**

This short guide shares how we think automotive brands are best overcoming today's challenges to achieve best-in-class content and what's next.

Read time:
15 minutes





Introduction

The content challenge for automotive brands is relatively unique when compared to other sectors. Consumers don't impulse buy, they typically complete long and complex buying journeys with numerous brand touch points. This journey is changing rapidly as buyer profiles evolve, their views on car ownership shift and the role of digital channels in audiences lives becomes an increasingly important part of their brand experience.

These factors mean that online content has to provide deep value for brands, to create opportunities to “sit down with consumers” and build relationships much more significant than most products are able to. This puts an increasing pressure on marketing teams to produce content that delivers a strong ROI and performs a role at multiple points in different consumers buying journeys.

Content Themes

We've identified five content themes, specific to the automotive sector, that are driving best practice and innovation in content. This report explores the following themes and provides examples of best practice:

- 1. Multi-part Advertising**
- 2. Deeper Stories**
- 3. Facing the Future, Embracing the Past**
- 4. Selling the Process**
- 5. Mastering the Digital Layer**





Key takeaways:

- 1. Think like a content creator not an advertiser:** take every opportunity to glean content from whatever you're doing and don't get too hung up on the highest production value in every instance.
- 2. The value of content is cumulative,** so plan to keep what you make, so that you have an array of distributable content across all platforms.
- 3. Be innovative** and use the platform tools available to make the experience richer. Don't only do the bare minimum on a platform.
- 4. Squeezing out that extra five to ten percent** from the creative process is where the opportunity lies. Automotive brands have long realised the value of a great piece of content. However, realising that you can tap into the manufacturing process and use content that competitors don't have the time, imagination or know-how to find can be a useful way to make yourself stand out from the rest.
- 5. Understand that digital overlay can open new opportunities.** The advancement of technologies such as virtual reality has made it possible for brands to become more imaginative and ignore physical limitations. It is a growing platform to showcase great marketing content.





Achieving Success:

With the domination of the digital platform, it is key for brands to achieve success with content creation and delivery. Therefore, it has become increasingly important to use automation and access to the best procreator talent to create, curate and deliver content with true agility at scale, is the best way to create effective content. Successfully implementing an effective automotive content engine requires:

- 1. Better Access to Talent** - Having consistent creative oversight while allowing brands to work with a large network procreators is key. On-demand access to a wide range of talent enables brands to achieve better creative innovation, as well as expertise to ensure you get the most from each channel.
- 2. Production Efficiency** - Ultimately, brands need to produce more for less. Utilising a streamlined approach to production, combined with better asset management & automated re-versioning means brands get more content from their budget. This helps to maintain a campaign's freshness and relevance for longer.
- 3. Process Agility** - Reducing content creation lead times enables brands to benefit from being more responsive, flexible and relevant. Having an agile workflow removes bottle necks and accelerates collaboration. Plus, when combined with tailored process automation, it can also give marketing teams a real competitive advantage when it comes to content speed to market.

To find out how Trigger can power your content engine (no pun intended!) get in touch.





CONTENT THEME 1:

Multi-part Advertising

What used to be a 30 second TV spot has now become a suite of films and imagery released across multiple platforms, selling every aspect of a new model. Highly visual social platforms now offer the opportunity to continually place advertising imagery and messages in the public space.

How do brands handle the need to create this range of content: introducing the brand / car to new audience groups, while still managing to keeping it interesting and fresh for brand lovers?

What this means for brands:

Watching digital video is a 'sticky' experience: viewing one video can very easily lead to viewing another, and another after that. Planning range and depth of output to draw people down that path is key, as Bentley show in the examples below. However, videos watched in this way need a strong narrative. It can't simply be a TV spot posted online.

Likewise, visual platforms are not mere galleries – story is also key here and pushing each platform to its functional limits to tell those stories, like Jaguar, may be the key extra 5% that makes a brand more noticeable and more competitive.



Unifying Multiple Platforms

SEAT

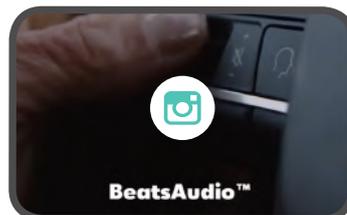
SEAT are particularly good at tying together their platforms around a single brand message. They use multiple versions and formats of video and imagery: from longer form brand films to ten second stings, to unify their output across multiple platforms.



SEAT Tarraco. Why not now
- 3 min film



1 min intro film



Insta cut-downs



Lifestyle





CONTENT THEME 2: Deeper Stories

People fall in love with cars because of the lifestyle they promise and the associations they build with particular models and brands. Developing marketing out from pure product to tap into this desire involves smart storytelling techniques.

In this respect, content is different from advertising in perhaps two key ways: one is in the creative mindset – you are looking to spin out variety and depth of output rather than reducing your idea to one key 30 second message; the other is in the consideration of its value – a piece of content continues to be valuable long after a year or season’s advertising cycle is over. The value accumulates.

What this means for brands:

When executing an idea are you planning to squeeze as much value as possible from it? Are you stopping at the film, or also making the film about the film? Are you generating photographic assets? How might written content be gleaned from the event? Will your film work in five or ten second shorts? Variety is key in a medium where placement is mostly cost-free.

Secondly, are you considering how this year’s content might continue to provide value next year and the year after? Are you integrating your social output with an owned platform? Is the work you are doing clearly linked to the core of your brand, making it timeless? Or is it too specific to a campaign that will make little sense next year? Content from five and ten years ago is still paying dividends for some brands!

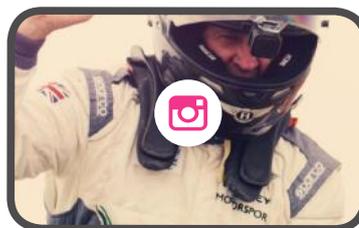


Authentic Content Experience

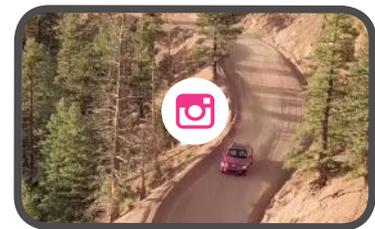
BENTLEY

As part of the promotion of their Bentayga, Bentley took the new car to rally track Pike’s Peake to see if they could break the production SUV record. The main video is a glossy “docu-ad” that demonstrates the car’s capabilities in an exciting story format, but what really makes it is the driver’s eye view: a 12 minute video showing the entire ride from one perspective.

This is smart content generation, understanding that not everything needs to be a TV advert-quality production – sometimes the pure content is what people want. Thinking like this, like a real content producer, is rare to see in a luxury brand. There’s authenticity there that’s very appealing to an audience.



Microadventures



Scoring the Drive w/ Hans Zimmer



Taking on Pike’s Peake:



Driver’s eye view:





CONTENT THEME 3: Facing the Future, Embracing the Past

As arguably the most familiar and mature engineering industry, automotive manufacturers face a new century of innovation from a platform with 100 years of history.

Whether a particular manufacturer's focus is on future innovation or past achievement, talking about what is to come and what has gone before proves these are companies that are here to stay and will help shape lives for years to come.

Few sectors have such a depth of potential storytelling built into the fundamentals of what they do, what they have done and what they will need to do to continue trading into the rest of the century.

What this means for brands:

Many automotive brands realise the impact and potential of storytelling, at least when it comes to talking up their heritage, but still too many 'wall' that potential away in heritage micro-sites. Brands could externalise this content and start streams that tell those stories on the social web.

Likewise with the necessary innovations in the future of the business. Interest is high in how car companies will react to changes in the environment and developments in technology. Few sectors have as many potential stories to tell, let alone stories of such importance, as the automotive industry.

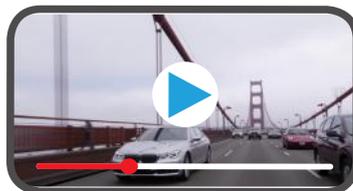
These stories have real longevity and the key is leveraging them to compliment and add credibility to the more campaign based and transient content.



Looking Beyond the Obvious

Technology video content on their YouTube channel is extensive and well watched, with a feel closer to that of a media channel's technology output than what you would usually expect to see from a brand promoting itself.

Going beyond this, their position as 'automotive futurists' is strengthened by a series of lectures uploaded under a 'BMW culture' banner. Externalising these internal culture initiatives is a clever way of finding new ways to generate marketing material that's different and unexpected.



BMW Technology spotlights



BMW Culture (futurism) lectures



The on-demand economy:



History, BMW Stories





CONTENT THEME 4:

Selling the Process

The car a customer buys is only the end product. Years of work across multiple disciplines goes into producing that car, and yet in most cases we only see the output.

The swoop of a well photographed wheel arch can provide one piece of content that will engage a viewer in one instance. But the years of work that made that wheel arch might provide hours of content, across media and platforms. A consumer also buys in to the engineering, design and craftsmanship that goes into a car. These are deep stories of value that can be easily tapped for marketing potential.

What this means for brands:

Every person involved is a character and every process, material and location is a story. Uncovering these possibilities takes planning and organisation, integrating content production with parts of the company far outside the marketing department. Turning them into coherent stories takes creative skill and imagination. However, if that process can be mastered, the end product is a vast store of content possibility and value.



Doing Things Differently

MINI do things differently. They take the design and craftsmanship concept and run in a new and more fundamental direction with it - going far beyond the car and into the worlds of city design, fashion, and start-ups. This succeeds in positioning MINI as a design company who make cars rather than 'just' a company who design great cars.



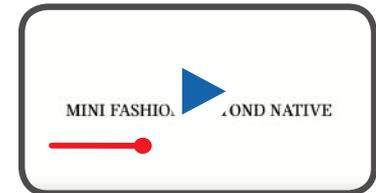
Automotive



Mini Living



Mini Living, a vision for shared living



Mini Fashion





CONTENT THEME 5: Mastering the Digital Layer

Immersive video experiences, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) are technologies that brands have toyed with since they started to be developed. However the question that could be asked is, what can they promise?

Well, the use of VR and AR has enabled many brands across a variety of sectors to ignore physical limitations and understand that the digital overlay can open new possibilities in user experience.

This might not mean much for industries that specialise in selling small, easily distributable products, but for the automotive sector, it has the potential to offer much more than just a flashy marketing gimmick.

What this means for brands:

When you weigh your product in tonnes and measure its size in cubic metres, you're dealing with a lot of physical limitations as to how you can present it to a consumer.

Virtual and Augmented Reality applications offer clear opportunities in helping sell multi-option products remotely and reassure customers of the more emotive aspects of a sale: How does the car feel? Will I be safe in it? Etc.

However, these projects also offer another opportunity: Each of them is platform for generating great marketing content. Using the technology to create novel experiences and promoting your brand as fit to embrace the future of motoring.

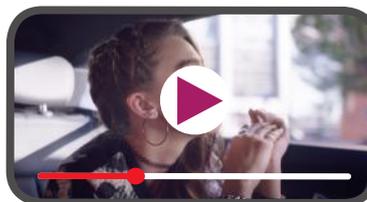
As a new technology and as a communications hook, VR & AR are well worth taking seriously for car manufacturers.



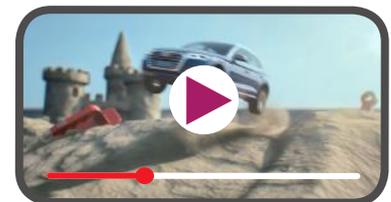
AR Pioneers

Audi have approached VR technology seriously. Going beyond the immediate application in the showroom to really develop the tech natively and imagine how it can be applied to the future of their vehicle experience.

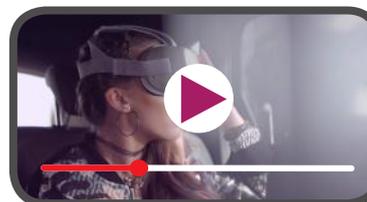
Along the way they've used that development time and money to spin off eye-catching marketing materials – smart thinking.



Showroom Experience



Sandbox Marketing Concept



In-car Technology Concept

