

#Beyond100

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What is the concept behind BMW Group's 100-year celebrations?

Bill McAndrews explains the strategy behind the anniversary

BMW Group's centenary celebrations have a rich history upon which to draw; a German company that once made aircraft engines has evolved into a global, multifaceted, multi-brand operation, steeped in landmark moments.

But from the outset, the man tasked with bringing the milestone to life understood that focusing on past achievements could only form part of the story.

"The company has a proven track record, driven by its ability to look forward, so strategic discussions for our centennial celebrations started from the perspective that we had to stay true to our pioneering DNA," says Bill McAndrews, Vice President of Communications Strategy, Corporate and Market Communications, BMW Group.

"We don't want to forget the past, but most people want to know what's coming next. What changes are we going to bring, and what impact will we have on the industry? That's where the concept of 'The Next 100 Years' began."

March 7, 2016 was a date etched in the minds of BMW Group leaders for some time; it would mark 100 years since the company was registered, and act as a springboard for the celebrations to come.

“ There is a transformation taking place, and we have solutions ”

Discussions about the anniversary had started three years earlier. McAndrews recalls the ambition was to help capture the passion for the brands and also to empower its employees—always referred to as “associates”—to not just be recipients, but actively involved in the project.

A working committee was established, cross-departmental meetings were held, and ideas explored with board and supervisory board members.

"We kept it at the corporate level at the beginning, the 30,000 feet level, talking about where our industry is going," McAndrews explains. "We soon got into the concept of a different kind of celebration that would help enforce our positioning as a corporate entity.

"Once we had a framework, based on 'The Next 100 Years', we opened it up to all the divisions throughout the company. We wanted to know about their future expectations, where did they see the momentum and the growth coming from? It was important to make sure everyone's voice was heard."

Common themes and specific challenges were identified for all BMW Group brands (BMW, Rolls-Royce, MINI and BMW Motorrad), but to ensure it was not just an intellectual exposition, it was agreed

that an experiential drama would play a crucial role: the BMW Group VISION NEXT 100 vehicles were born.

The aim of these vehicles is to address the megatrends impacting mobility, says McAndrews, from digitalization and urbanization to the shift towards more sustainable living and the growing demand for customized solutions.

"What I really love about the vision vehicles is that the quintessential brand values are still there, says McAndrews. "The BMW, Rolls-Royce and MINI are still recognizable and their values have been fully respected, while developed."

"We like to say, 'The best way to predict the future is to create it,'" he adds. "There is a transformation taking place, and we have solutions."

The vision vehicles themselves were kept closely under wraps, and form the centerpiece of BMW Group's well-received "Iconic Impulses" touring exhibition that expresses BMW Groups' vision of the future of mobility. It visited Beijing and London this spring, and will move to Los Angeles on October 13–16. The tour has sparked much interest, and helped fuel the narrative that BMW Group is, once again, ahead of the pack, having set about disrupting itself.

One element of Iconic Impulses has been the formation of satellite "rad°hubs," where BMW Group leaders meet with thought leaders from different, but related, disciplines to explore solutions. Thoughts spinning out of the rad°hubs are said to be "ongoing", and the hope is they will generate some more creative, tangible solutions.

Other live events have included the launch ceremony in the Olympic Hall in Munich, beamed to more than 100,000 associates around the world; an exhibition at the BMW Museum. The BMW Group centenary activities were encapsulated in a national and international advertising campaign that included print, online and TV executions.

The year's seminal celebrations have only been possible thanks to the time and commitment of the entire company, who took on responsibilities in addition to their day jobs, says McAndrews.

"It is one of the most exciting projects that you can have in your lifetime," he adds. "We have helped to map out a holistic vision of future mobility, and have highlighted how the role of BMW Group will become even greater than it has been in the past." ●

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What does the centenary signet represent?



The unifying symbol of BMW Group's centenary communications is the distinctive signet, consisting of four triangles combined to form an arrow pointing forward. Embodying the versatility of the company and its brands, the signet's four elements are said to

represent the cornerstones of BMW Group: trust, success, responsibility and pioneering spirit.

"We wanted something that could create a legacy and symbolize how we continue to move forward strategically," says Bill McAndrews, Vice President of Communications Strategy, Corporate and Market Communications, BMW Group. "We want everyone who sees the signet to know we are interconnected and forging ahead."

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What does the future hold for those who like to travel on two wheels?

BMW Motorrad believes inventive, intelligent technologies will allow riders unimagined freedom and is set to unveil its future-facing VISION VEHICLE in Los Angeles on Oct. 13–16. For more than 90 years, BMW Motorrad has been an undisputed motorcycle pioneer and its upcoming VISION VEHICLE promises to challenge expectations, yet again, around bike and helmet design and technology.

You can be among the first to see

BMW Motorrad's motorcycle of tomorrow at the Iconic Impulses exhibition in the U.S. The event is free and the only pre-requisite is a natural curiosity (leather jacket optional). Los Angeles will also be the final stop for the Iconic Impulses tour and will provide the first time all four BMW Group's VISION VEHICLES are showcased together; bringing cutting edge potential mobility solutions to life.



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