

Thilosh Moodally, BMW SA, talks strategy behind the launch of new X1 and 3 Series models

By Imran Salie

31 Mar 2023

At the beginning of March, BMW South Africa launched its new [X1](#) and [3 Series](#) models. While we tested these models at the national launch in Johannesburg, we decided to find out more about the strategy behind the launch by interviewing BMW Group South Africa's general manager of corporate communications and external affairs Thilosh Moodally.



Source: BMW Group

Moodally was appointed to her role as recently as 1 January, replacing Deena Govender. She has, however, held several key roles over 20 years in BMW Group South Africa.

Previously the head of MINI South Africa, Moodally joined BMW South Africa in 2003 as a chartered accountant CA(SA) in the finance department at BMW Group Plant Rosslyn. Her experience spans the finance, customer support, and dealer development areas within BMW Group South Africa.

■ ***What was the inspiration behind launching the new X1 and 3 Series models in South Africa, and how do they fit into BMW's overall strategy?***

The new BMW X1 and BMW 3 Series are incredibly important models for BMW in South Africa. The 3 Series has a long history as one of our strongest performers in this market. Similarly, with the all-new BMW X1, we believe we have the right product to make the entry point into the popular BMW X range of sports activity vehicles that much more desirable. They are the perfect additions to the strong product offensive that we have been driving over the recent years. The BMW iX1, whose market introduction is imminent, has the distinction of being the new entry into the BMW full-electric portfolio, alongside the recently-introduced BMW i7, the BMW iX, BMW i4 and iX3 models.

■ ***What investments did BMW make in the development and production of these models, and what ROI is the company expecting?***

The third generation of the BMW X1 is produced at BMW Group Plant Regensburg and the BMW 3 Series at BMW Group Plants Munich and San Luis Potosí (Mexico). It is at these plants where the investments in preparation for the production (or further production in the case of the BMW 3 Series) would have been made. Please understand we do not comment on profit margins nor sales targets.



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■ ***In what way do the new X1 and 3 Series compare to their competition in the local automotive market, and what unique benefits do they offer to consumers?***

The all-new BMW X1 continues BMW's success story in the compact SAV segment and will soon have a new entry to the brand's full-electric portfolio in the form of the BMW iX1. Powered by BMW's fifth-generation e-drive, it offers full-electric range up to 438km.

Robust proportions give the all-new BMW X1 a powerful exterior aura. The prominent upright front end makes a visual statement and contributes to the strong sense of purpose. The interior, featuring the BMW Curved Display has a spacious and open feel, with a modern character and a clear move to digitalisation.

The BMW 3 Series remains the epitome of driving pleasure. Globally successful for more than 45 years, it continues to represent the core of the BMW brand. Now, it is sportier, more modern, and more digital with a new look, an enhanced range of equipment and a more customer-centric offering with simpler and clearer configurations.

■ ***What plans does BMW have for expanding its presence in the local market and how do these new models fit into those plans?***

BMW Group South Africa, incorporating BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad, is driven to remain number one in the premium automotive segment in South Africa. The BMW X1 and the BMW 3 Series have their roles to play in conquering the compact SAV segment and continuing the success story in the premium mid-size segment, respectively.



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■ ***Can you discuss any challenges or obstacles BMW faced during the development and launch of these new models, and how the company overcame them and what kind of sales and revenue projections does BMW have for these new models in SA?***

Unfortunately, we are unable to comment on development and test cycles, or sales forecasts and targets.

■ ***What kind of marketing partnerships or campaigns are planned for these models? And how does BMW plan to market and promote these new models to South African consumers?***

Campaigns for these models would focus on digital always-on, retailer marketing, and traditional out-of-home. In addition, the BMW X1 is displayed on South Africa's largest mega-format, solar-powered LED roadside screen. The digital out-of-home billboard, which measures 400m2, is in a prime position on Johannesburg's N1 (North) between Allandale and New Road.

ABOUT IMRAN SALIE

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