Bentley Motors Ltd. (United Kingdom)

Facts & Figures (as of December 31, 2022)

- Founded: 1919
- Production (2022): 16,285 automobiles
- CEO: Adrian Hallmark
- Employees: 4,000
- Site footprint: 521,111 square meters

Portrait

Bentley Motors can look back on a rich history but also has a clear road map for the future: Bentley aims to become a completely climate-neutral brand for luxury vehicles by 2030. The British company, based in Crewe, United Kingdom, has been part of Volkswagen AG since 1998 and part of the Audi Group since January 2022.

Bentley stands for customized luxury, perfect craftsmanship, and powerful performance. Since 1919, the brand has been manufacturing unmistakable icons in England. In addition to Ducati and Lamborghini, Bentley Motors is part of AUDI AG’s premium brand group. Audi took over the steering function for Bentley on March 1, 2021.

“We have so much in common,” says Audi CEO Markus Duesmann, “including the aspiration to deliver premium quality, and also the tried-and-tested cooperation within the Volkswagen Group in the production of the first Bentley SUV, the Bentley Bentayga.” Bentley CEO Adrian Hallmark agrees: “Integration into the Audi family of brands opens up opportunities for Bentley that are unique in our company’s history.”

Traditional craftsmanship forms the basis of the finest Bentleys

In addition to the Bentayga, the current model series includes the Continental and the Flying Spur. The Bacalar, Batur and Blower models are also produced in exclusive small-scale series. There were also special models from coachbuilder Mulliner, which has been cooperating with Bentley since 1923. Mulliner still builds their vehicles for Bentley to this day – partially on a small-unit basis – and sometimes with interior cladding made of 5,000-year-old wood. And with exactly 148,199 stitches for a single leather seat of a Mulliner Bacalar. By hand, of course. These flagships shape the brand’s DNA – and attract prominent buyers.
Bentley breaks sales records
Customers can purchase a Bentley from a price of approximately €165,000. And demand is high: 15,174 new vehicles were handed over to their buyers in 2022 – a four percent growth on the previous year 2021 – also marking the first time the company retailed above 15,000 cars in a year. The Bentayga, which is responsible for 42 percent of Bentley Motors’ total sales, continues to be particularly popular.

Since Bentley Motors has operated under the umbrella of AUDI AG, joint teams of Audi and Bentley employees have identified and launched numerous synergy projects and, for example, collaborated on research and development. The team spirit is fantastic, says Markus Duesmann: “I look forward to a long-term partnership on an equal footing.” The next joint project: electrification. By 2030, Bentley aims to become a completely climate-neutral brand for luxury vehicles.

Sustainability

With a clear road map, Bentley aims to become the market leader in sustainable luxury mobility. An investment in the billions and five electric models in five years make the luxury car manufacturer fit for the future.

Beyond100 is the title of the strategy Bentley presented in 2020 – just one year after the company’s 100th birthday. The goal is to be carbon neutral by 2030. The program focuses on the five-in-five plan: five new electrically powered Bentley models in five years. The first electric model is due to be pre-launched in 2025. With this e-offensive, the company is positioning itself as a benchmark manufacturer for sustainable luxury mobility.

With its current range of models, the luxury brand is already a leader in the luxury hybrid vehicle segment. Bentley has further consolidated this position with the launch of the Flying Spur Hybrid in 2022 and to complement the current Bentayga Hybrid. The move seems to appeal to Bentley customers’ tastes: the company expects hybrid vehicles to account for more than 20 percent of its sales this year.

To implement Beyond100, Bentley will invest £2.5 billion (approximately €3 billion) in the transformation to become a provider of sustainable mobility. The announcement is an important boost for the workforce at the headquarters in Crewe, England, and for the location, as the investment fundamentally renews the local manufacturing infrastructure. Crewe is to develop into a “dream factory,” as Adrian Hallmark puts it – a digital, climate-neutral, flexible, and high-quality production facility.

40,000 solar cells on the factory roofs
The company has already made great progress with the redesign of its headquarters in Crewe, creating an industry-leading plant with certified carbon neutrality. In 2021, factory CO₂ emissions were already down by over 70 percent on 2020 figures, thanks to the introduction of
green gas and biofuels facilities for onsite logistics. Energy consumption per vehicle was reduced by more than 17 percent in the same period. The site has now firmly exceeded its original target of reducing its production-related environmental impact by 75 percent over the 15-year period from 2010 to 2025. Bentley aims to be completely climate neutral by 2030.

Recent initiatives also include the expansion of local energy production in Crewe. To this end, the number of solar cells on the company’s premises have been increased from 30,000 to 40,000 over the last two years. Bentley is also involved in the use of sustainable biofuel in fleet vehicles.

After being certified for its climate-neutral production for the period from 2018 to 2019, the company now also wants to reduce water consumption, landfill waste, and all other environmental pollution to an absolute minimum by 2030. And in 2022, Bentley became the first company to secure “Net Zero Plastic to Nature” certification following completion of a plastic stewardship assessment focusing on logistics and packaging. The status is awarded by plastics reduction and circular economy experts at emissions reduction organization “South Pole”.

Careers

In January 2023, Bentley was named one of the best employers by the Top Employers Institute for the twelfth consecutive year – the only representative from the automotive industry in England. Among other things, the award honors the company’s commitment to young employees, the personal development of its employees, and diversity.

Bentley employs around 4,000 people in Crewe. With a population of almost 70,000, the town in the county of Cheshire in the northwest of England has been the company’s headquarters since 1938. To further strengthen this close relationship and promote talented young employees, Bentley has long collaborated with schools and colleges in the region, such as Crewe Engineering & Design UTC, which Bentley co-founded.

Despite the difficult situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the company hired 112 new recruits in Crewe in 2022, more than ever before in a year. They are a welcome addition to many departments, from mechanical engineering, production, marketing, and communication to project management, human resources, and security.

A key strategy is adherence to the overarching values that apply to the entire company. Bentley pursues a zero-tolerance policy toward racism and any other form of discrimination. The company, which employs people from 52 different countries, welcomes and promotes diversity, regardless of age, origin, gender, faith, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. This aspiration also extends to the management level: by 2025, 30 percent of Bentley’s management is to be diversified.

Various initiatives at Bentley promote diversity, including the Be-Proud program for topics related to LGBTQ+, Be-United that brings together all races of BAME (Black, Asian, and minority
ethnic) colleagues as well as other nationally diverse colleagues, and Be-Inspired, which focuses on women in the automotive industry. Bentley has also launched the Be-Inclusive – Diversity Wins training program for HR managers. The aim is to deepen the understanding of each individual’s responsibility to question their own views and to actively participate in a working environment in which all employees feel accepted.

History

The history of Bentley Motors is shaped by innovation, perfect technology, and a passion for motorsports – and this can still be felt in each of the brand’s models today.

Bentley Motors was founded on July 10, 1919, by engineer Walter Owen Bentley, who began his career in the railway at the age of 16. From an early age, he was fascinated by the emergence of motorsports. In 1912, he founded an import company for French race cars from Courbevoie near Paris. During a visit to the site in 1913, a paperweight made of aluminum caught Bentley’s attention. This light metal, according to Bentley’s idea, could be used in the production of pistons instead of heavy cast iron, which was usual at the time. The idea became reality – the Bentley piston was born. It was initially installed in World War I aircraft, and immediately after the end of the war, in Bentley’s first vehicle, the Experimental Bentley No. 1. At the presentation in 1919, its creator said: “I wanted to build a fast car, a good car, the best in its class.”

In the 1920s, Bentley’s 85-horsepower three-liter engines from the brand’s first factory in Cricklewood reached speeds of up to 80 miles per hour, which is around 129 km/h. They broke various speed and endurance records and became a permanent protagonist in the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans. In 1924, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930, the Bentley Boys won the trophy – and in 1929, they even took all four first places.

Rescue by the competition and a new start

But then the global economic crisis and the harbingers of the next war soon almost drove the company into ruin. Rival Rolls-Royce took over Bentley in 1931 and moved production from Cricklewood to Derby. The factory in Crewe, Bentley’s main site to this day, was built in 1938. Before the war, it manufactured aircraft engines, but in 1946, the first car left the assembly hangar: the Mark V1. The R-Type Continental debuted in 1952, making it the world’s fastest four-seater at the time with a top speed of 120 miles per hour (approx. 193 km/h). The year 1957 saw the arrival of the four-door Continental Flying Spur, and 1959 saw the launch of the S2 with its groundbreaking 6.2-liter V8 aluminum engine.

100 years young and focused on the future

The partnership with Rolls-Royce lasted almost seven decades before the Volkswagen Group took over Bentley in 1998 and invested more than £1 billion in the Crewe production facilities. In 2020, shortly after Bentley’s 100th birthday, the Beyond100 strategy was unveiled. CEO Adrian Hallmark set out the goal of becoming the world’s leading sustainable luxury car brand. Something that fits with the sustainability strategy of another major brand and marks the start.
of the latest chapter in the company’s history: from March 1, 2021, Audi assumed management responsibility for Bentley, and since January 2022, Bentley has been a part of the Premium Brand Group.

The Audi Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the premium and luxury segment. The brands Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, and Ducati produce at 22 locations in 13 countries. Audi and its partners are present in more than 100 markets worldwide.

In 2022, the Audi Group delivered 1.61 million Audi vehicles, 15,174 Bentley vehicles, 9,233 Lamborghini vehicles, and 61,562 Ducati motorcycles to customers. In the 2022 fiscal year, AUDI Group achieved a total revenue of €61.8 billion and an operating profit of €7.6 billion. Worldwide, more than 87,000 people worked for the Audi Group in 2022, over 54,000 of them at AUDI AG in Germany. With its attractive brands, new models, innovative mobility offerings and groundbreaking services, the group is systematically pursuing its path toward becoming a provider of sustainable, individual, premium mobility.