



Media Information

1 May, 2025

BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025

- Sophie Rowe wins in the Events category for revitalising BMW's Golf programme
- 10 BMW Group UK women recognised across the Rising Stars and Apprentice categories
- BMW Group success spans categories including Events, Marketing, Sales, Operations, Talent and Apprenticeships

Ten women from across BMW Group UK businesses have been recognised in this year's Autocar Great Women: Rising Stars awards, including eight shortlisted among the 79 Rising Stars and two in the separate Apprentice category. Sophie Rowe, BMW UK's Golf Events Manager, was named the overall winner in the Events category.

Run in partnership with the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), the Autocar Great Women Rising Stars awards celebrate the best up-and-coming female talent across the automotive sector. Now in its ninth year, the programme highlights exceptional individuals working in a wide variety of roles and organisations, from manufacturers and suppliers to retailers and finance.

The 2025 winners were announced on 30 April at a special event held at HORIBA MIRA in Warwickshire, with speakers from across the industry and a panel of expert judges recognising excellence across nine categories, plus an additional group celebrating apprentice talent.

Sophie Rowe, overall winner of the Events category, joined BMW in 2016 after a career that included the London 2012 Olympic Games and the Rugby World Cup. Since taking over as Events Manager for Golf in 2023, she has transformed BMW's Golf Cup programme, achieving 96% participation across BMW's UK retailer network and securing high-value brand placements at the PGA Championship. Judges praised her strategic mindset, stakeholder management and ability to deliver measurable impact.

Sophie commented: "I'm delighted to be recognised in the Events category at this year's Autocar Rising Stars awards. 2024 was a milestone year for BMW's golf programme, celebrating 20 years of title sponsorship at the BMW PGA Championship and successfully

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Corporate Communications

Media Information

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Subject **BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025.**

Page 2

reviving our amateur Golf Cup series. While currently on maternity leave and enjoying time with my young family, I'm incredibly grateful to my managers and BMW UK for their continued support – and I look forward to returning to a business that continues to challenge and inspire me."

A further nine women from across BMW Group UK, including colleagues from the National Sales Company, BMW Financial Services and Alphabet, were recognised as Rising Stars across the Marketing, Operations, Sales, Talent and Apprentice categories. Each was selected by the judging panel for demonstrating exceptional performance, leadership and future potential.

Colette Healy, Marketing Director for BMW UK, said: "These achievements reflect the diverse talent and drive of the women shaping our business. From product strategy to customer engagement, sales performance, employee development and many more, this recognition demonstrates the strength and breadth of expertise we're proud to have at BMW Group UK. My congratulations to our winner and all our finalists."

CANDIDATE PROFILES

Sophie Rowe, BMW UK

Golf Events Manager

CATEGORY WINNER – Events

Sophie Rowe had already built an impressive events career spanning major sporting occasions such as the 2012 Olympic Games in London and the Rugby World Cup before she joined BMW in 2016. After a brief secondment to the America's Cup in Bermuda, she returned to BMW and was promoted to events manager for golf in January 2023. Her exceptional leadership revitalised the BMW Golf Cup after a four-year hiatus, achieving record-setting 96% retailer engagement across BMW's 130-strong network. Rowe's negotiation skills also secured an i7 placement on the 18th tee at the PGA Championship, which generated an additional £306,000 in media value at no extra cost to BMW. Her line manager described her methods as "the gold standard" and said they have become "a reference point for best practices" across other BMW events.

BMW

United Kingdom

Corporate Communications

Media Information

Date 1 May, 2025

Subject **BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025.**

Page 3

MARKETING

Nicola Verrall, BMW UK

Product Manager, Large Cars

Since earning her BSc in sports management, Nicola Verrall has built an impressive marketing career spanning agency, financial services and automotive sectors. Joining BMW in 2014, Verrall progressed rapidly through multiple roles, including a stint at the BMW Group in Munich, before assuming responsibility for the prestigious large and luxury vehicle portfolio in February 2023. Her exceptional product leadership has shaped the UK introduction of the new BMW M5, the first-ever M5 Touring and the groundbreaking BMW iX, while establishing competitive market positions for each model. Previously, as brand communications manager, she orchestrated numerous successful marketing campaigns, including the BMW 4 Series Coupé launch and the world debut of the BMW 2 Series Coupé at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. "Nikki is an exceptional professional," said her manager, highlighting Verrall's initiative in revamping the company's New Product Preview format, which achieved an impressive 75-plus net promoter score from attendees.

Emily Booth, BMW Group

BMW/MINI Product Manager for Ireland

Emily Booth has progressed from university intern to managing full product life cycle responsibilities for two premium brands by the age of 27. She began her BMW career in 2017 and quickly demonstrated her capabilities through pioneering digital brochure strategies and website redesigns before advancing to the sales department as retailer performance centre manager – a role in which she guided BMW Westerly Exeter to Retailer of the Year status. Since 2023, Booth has expertly managed 26 vehicle launches across both brands while steering the crucial transition to MINI's direct selling model for 2025. Her innovative approach extends to governmental relations, where she has successfully advocated for BMW/MINI with Irish authorities on PHEV and road taxation policies, resulting in streamlined technical data approval and registration processes. "Emily's energy, focus on the important topics and strategic clarity has been pivotal," said her manager.

Emily Barrow, BMW UK

Brand Communications Manager

Emily's comprehensive management of BMW UK's brand presence earned her praise from Autocar's judging panel. Since joining BMW in 2017 after earning a BSc in retail, marketing and management from Loughborough University, Barrow has progressed through several roles, such as events and brand partnerships assistant and aftersales marketing executive. In her current position, she oversees a diverse portfolio, including BMW's EV charging partnership with National Parks UK and the customer journey for

BMW

United Kingdom

Corporate Communications

Media Information

Date 1 May, 2025

Subject **BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025.**

Page 4

ConnectedDrive services. Her human-centred approach includes producing video content featuring current owners of BMW electric vehicles. Beyond her core responsibilities, Barrow demonstrates exceptional initiative by managing cross-functional activities such as agency portfolio cost-centre management and steering a critical monthly sales and marketing committee with senior leadership.

OPERATIONS

Vicki Bovington, BMW Financial Services

General Manager, Process Management and Quality

In a remarkable 21-year career at BMW Financial Services, Vicki Bovington has progressed from underwriting administrator to her current role of leading a 90-person team across seven specialised functions. Her extensive responsibilities include process management, quality assurance and the entire change project portfolio. She has established the UK as the second largest market for robotic process automation within the BMW Group, maintained BSI accreditation and created one of the largest continuous process improvement communities in the company. Following the 2023 operational merger of BMW's B2C and B2B financial services, she skilfully restructured her expanded department while establishing crucial collaborative frameworks. Jemma Gregory, director of customer strategy communications at BMW Financial Services, said: "Vicki's accelerating career is testament to her business understanding, her skillset and her people skills. No matter how big the challenge, Vicki remains calm, constructive and resourceful."

Imogen Dooley, BMW Group UK

Employee Engagement Strategy and Steering Manager

Imogen has rapidly advanced since joining the BMW Group in 2019 as an events management assistant during her placement year at the University of Exeter. After graduating with a first in management with marketing, she returned through the internal Momentum programme, progressing from events executive to her current role of managing employee engagement strategy across BMW, MINI and Motorrad. Dooley has successfully implemented Peakon engagement software, achieving over 80% participation rates, which is significantly above the industry average. She represented BMW UK at the Engage 2024 conference, delivering a speech to 800 attendees. Beyond her core responsibilities, she has stewarded cross-campus intern projects and managed retailer event content. Her line manager said: "Immie is a true asset and ambassador for the BMW Group. Her infectious enthusiasm and drive for improvement and making a difference engages with every employee she works with."

SALES

BMW

United Kingdom

Corporate Communications

Media Information

Date 1 May, 2025

Subject **BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025.**

Page 5

Stacey Bridge, BMW Financial Services Group Retention Development Manager

Building expertise through multiple roles at BMW over an 18-year automotive career has enabled Stacey Bridge to stand out in this category. After starting in retail sales, she progressed to BMW Financial Services area manager before taking up her current position in retention development. Her impressive track record includes maintaining more than 50% customer retention for BMW Financial Services for three consecutive years. She created a digital customer landscape that future-proofed the company's approach while establishing a global loyalty community to share best practices across markets. Her achievements earned her the Area Manager of the Year award for the UK.

TALENT

Grace Ford, BMW Group Academy UK UK National Training Manager, Management, Leadership, Aftersales and Motorrad

Grace Ford achieved notable success in 2024, including spearheading Motorrad deal management training, with 91% completion, and driving the Tableau project to enhance efficiency and data visualisation. She joined BMW in 2013, progressing from overheads cost controller to operational finance manager before moving to her current role in 2017. With a 2:1 in PR and marketing and a CIMA accounting qualification, she brings financial acumen to her training leadership role. "Grace had been incredible in supporting Motorrad and has been absolutely fantastic," noted Nick Cranmer, head of aftersales for BMW Motorrad UK and Ireland. He added that her leadership of the Inspiro team and collaboration with NSC subject matter experts have "revolutionised" training development across multiple business areas.

APPRENTICE

Miri Watson, Alphabet GB Service Management Apprentice

Now over halfway through her hands-on four-year chartered manager degree through Oxford Brookes University at BMW's finance and leasing arm, Miri Watson is gaining high praise from divisions within the company, including the marketing team.

Bethan Godfrey, BMW UK Product Management Assistant

Currently studying for a chartered business and management degree through Oxford Brookes University, Bethan Godfrey supported 21 model launches during her first full year at BMW.

BMW

United Kingdom

Corporate Communications

Media Information

Date 1 May, 2025

Subject **BMW Group UK celebrates success at Autocar's Great Women: Rising Stars 2025.**

Page 6

Ends

The BMW Group

With its four brands BMW, MINI, Rolls-Royce and BMW Motorrad, the BMW Group is the world's leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles and also provides premium financial services. The BMW Group production network comprises over 30 production sites worldwide; the company has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2024, the BMW Group sold over 2.45 million passenger vehicles and more than 210,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax in the financial year 2024 was € 11.0 billion on revenues amounting to € 142.4 billion. As of 31 December 2024, the BMW Group had a workforce of 159,104 employees.

The economic success of the BMW Group has always been based on long-term thinking and responsible action. Sustainability is a key element of the BMW Group's corporate strategy and covers all products from the supply chain and production to the end of their useful life.

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