

Automotive & Aviation Team of the Year BMW

As one of the world's most prestigious car manufacturers, BMW has to make sure its IP team stays focused on protecting the brand's core ideals of quality and safety. While these attributes are frequently threatened by infringers, the BMW brand remains strong. In 2008, a German court handed BMW a major victory against copycat car designer Shuanghuan. The Munich Regional Court banned the Chinese manufacturer from importing its CEO car into Germany as it infringed BMW's design rights in its famous X5 vehicle. Jochen Volkmer, head of the trademarks, designs and legal IP issues team at BMW, picks this case as the most memorable from the past year, which has seen BMW bring hundreds of cases all around the world.

Volkmer's team is designed with a global focus. "One department has global responsibility," he explains. This factor sets his team apart from any other in the automotive industry. Centralizing a

worldwide strategy for applications, portfolio management and enforcement at the team's headquarters in Munich gives BMW an edge. "Every member of the team has a specific responsibility for a territory and for special topics/internal clients," says Volkmer. It is a tight-knit team with just five lawyers overseeing 20,000 trademarks. Despite its small size, the team is greatly respected within the company. "BMW has a strong focus on trademarks," states Volkmer. "Our cooperation with the marketing departments works well: we are generally involved at a very early stage and accepted as the key partner regarding non-technical IP matters, particularly trademarks. The board acknowledges our expertise and generally accepts our recommendations and risk assessment."

The economic crisis has hit the automotive industry particularly hard. Volkmer admits that the recession has already resulted in a rise in fake car parts,

design infringement and even oppositions. Add in falling sales and it is clear that BMW is facing testing times. "The future development of the brands has become a huge challenge," admits Volkmer. That said, the brand has survived world wars and several recessions since it was founded in 1916. Volkmer is confident that the long-term approach of his "excellent global legal network" will help secure BMW's future. After 10 years with the company, he is determined to enforce its rights, and knows that the centralized model works. "Our continuous approach regarding portfolio management and worldwide enforcement is recognized by IP experts around the world," he says.

Other nominees:

- [Caterpillar](#)
- [Daimler](#)
- [Harley-Davidson](#)
- [Honda](#)



Jochen Pagenberg of Bardehle Pagenberg Dost Altenburg Geissler presents the Automotive & Aviation Team of the Year award to Jochen Volkmer of BMW