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## AUTO COS SEE BRANDING ADVANTAGE IN EXCLUSIVE SHOWCASING

# Auto Cos See Branding Advantage in Exclusive Showcasing

**Bajaj Auto opens Probiking stores, Force Motors, Fiat, Garware Motors follow suit**

**GOURI AGTEY ATHALE  
PUNE**

Bajaj Auto has started a branding exercise for its high-end products by opening exclusive company-owned showrooms and others are following suit. The country's second-largest two-wheeler maker has even branded these showrooms separately, as Probiking, where only the bigger bikes in its portfolio are sold. Now, several auto makers are seeing the value of the branding exercise.

Force Motors, the commercial vehicle and tractor maker which is about to debut its personalised vehicle division with the launch of a sports utility vehicle, is setting up company-owned showrooms. The first of these will come up in its home city Pune, while it plans to open such showrooms in Mumbai and Delhi.

"These company owned showrooms will not be sales points, they will only display our range of products. This is an investment in long-term brand building. Yes, we will start with the SUV but we will add more products. The new van, a six-seater that we plan to launch next year, could go into such a showroom. We could also showcase the 4x4 Gurkha, whose production we discontinued last year but which we plan to re-introduce with a

new driveline, higher torque, more attractive and refined interiors," Prasan Firodia, managing director, Force Motors, said.

While he maintained this was an investment for the long term, he declined to comment on the actual investment, beyond saying it ran into several crores. For Force Motors, sale of the SUV will happen from new showrooms which some of their existing dealers will set up, but traffic to these showrooms will be driven from such display rooms which are being located in premium residential areas.

The Pune showroom is situated on Senapati Bapat road, an area These outlets, which are internally

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being called brand image points, will be company-owned and operated, meeting international standards that is fast developing into another high street shopping zone. In Mumbai, it will be in the up-market south Mumbai area, while a location in Delhi is yet to be finalised.

Then there's Fiat India Automobiles, which will open two brand boutiques in Delhi and Pune next month to display only Fiat products. These outlets, which are internally being called brand image points, will be company-owned and operated, meeting international standards of the Italian group.

"This is a brand-building exercise, modelled on Fiat's international practice where sales could also happen. These brand boutiques will ex-



clusively showcase Fiat products, there will be no Tata products. These are additional and separate from the dealerships that Fiat and Tata have," the official added.

Fiat India Automobiles is a four-year old JV between the Fiat group and Tata Motors where its 175 dealers across the country sell the products of both companies.

Garware Motors, the Indian assembler of Hyosung, a Korean bike brand which is currently rolling out dealerships in select cities across the country, has chosen to own and operate the showroom in its home town, Pune. Diya Garware Ibanez, MD, Garware Motors, explained, "The Garware Superbiking showroom in Pune is a model showroom. We will bring our dealers from all over the country to show the service, display, etc. here. Sales will also happen here."

### Value Proposition

**Force Motors to set up showrooms in Pune, while it plans to open more showrooms in Mumbai & Delhi**

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