

A profile of **Ms. Dorit Rupe**

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“I know what’s in the pipeline, and I can tell you that this job will be quite interesting for some years to come.”



Press introductions are like births; happy occasions with something new for moto journalists to admire, hold, play with, photograph and then write about. The baby is beautiful, of course. We read the reviews and imagine how wonderful the baby will be, once we get to know her. For the parents, however, the birth can be a stressful occasion. A lot had to happen to bring the kid into the world, beginning with the fun of conception through the increasingly difficult period of gestation until the product emerges. BMW had to be holding its breath this spring as the first reviews began to trickle in. With the rollout of the Xchallenge, Xmoto and Xcountry at INTERMOT and the U.S. intros in April, BMW jumped with both feet into the burgeoning middle-weight enduro-supermoto-dualsport market. The introduction of a new model, let alone a new series, is a gamble for any manufacturer, and in this case BMW decided to bet big.

Like the baby, the G650X series didn't just “happen.” It was three years in development by a team of individuals with quite different skills and backgrounds. You can bet that these people were paying close attention to the reviews and initial sales figures. Among them, the staff member with perhaps the greatest interest is Ms. Dorit Rupe, the product manager with responsibility for BMW's enduro/off-road line and particularly for the development of the G-series. I had an opportunity to talk with her at INTERMOT about these critical years and how the Xchallenge/moto/country came to life.

Impressed by her technical presentation on opening day, I sent up a request for an interview with Rupe and two days later

was ushered into a small meeting room tucked behind the staging area where we were insulated from the cacophony surrounding the exhibit. As all the presentations that day were in German, I started off likewise. With a warm smile and ever so politely, Ms. Rupe inquired whether I might prefer English. After a few sentences the matter was settled. For the next half hour and in superb English, Dorit Rupe talked in depth about her work at BMW-Motorrad and role in bringing the G-series to market.

The introduction of a new model at BMW begins years earlier with strategic planning; the process by which the company decides which new motorcycles it thinks customers will want.

“We have a very strong strategic component in which we first talk with sales and marketing in Europe and overseas and with our development people here,” she explained. After this initial information-gathering stage, the next step is to bring the marketing and technical people together to look at a number of factors: what model is needed; what are its qualities and characteristics; what is the competition; what is the price window. This produces a description of the bike BMW wants to sell for a targeted number of years. Once development starts, Rupe and her group are the link between sales and marketing departments and the technical development team “to ensure that we, from the sales and marketing perspective, get what we ordered.”

Product management is also the contact point if, for example, a problem surfaces in meeting the initial requirements for the new model.

Rupe: “If we can't realize this as planned, how will it affect marketing? Can we change this, how do we do that? We work with everybody to help solve