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ANALYSIS | CORPORATE ACCELERATORS

# Top automotive industry accelerators

There has been an explosion of automobile company accelerators — since around 2017 almost every major carmaker runs some kind of startup programme. But programmes vary hugely in terms of what is on offer.

By *Kimberly Eynon*

Tuesday 12 November 2019



There has been an explosion of automobile company accelerators over the past few years. BMW's Startup Garage and Daimler's Startup Autobahn were some of the earliest on the scene, but since around 2017 almost every major carmaker has had some kind of startup programme.

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with the parent company and the management team is compensated rather than given equity.

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BMW's Startup Garage is an interesting "venture client" model — where the company takes no equity but becomes the first client for the company. Startup Autobahn has funded some of the most recognisable startups, including process management company Celonis and What3words, the mapping company.

We'd love to know what model you think works best. If you are involved in one of these accelerator programmes please [get in touch](#) and tell us about your experience.



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InMotion Ventures' Sebastian Peck on the future of the car

Digitisation will turn vehicles into a new digital sales channel, says Sebastian Peck, managing director at InMotion Ventures, Jaguar Land Rover's investment arm.



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| <p><b>Honda Xcelerator</b></p> <p><b>Founded</b><br/>2015</p> <p><b>Location</b><br/>Silicon Valley, China, Europe, Japan &amp; Israel</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>3-6 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program offers funding for rapid prototyping, a collaborative workspace, and pair each startup with Honda mentors</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>Undisclosed</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Noveto Systems, Perceptive Automata</p> | <p><b>Future Mobility</b></p> <p><b>Founded</b><br/>2017</p> <p><b>Location</b><br/>Germany, Dresden</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>6 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program is part of the new mobility strategy of Volkswagen group, 6 startups are chosen per class focused on mobility topics such as connected car, e-mobility, industry 4.0 and sustainability</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>€15,000 (~£13,000)</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Embotech</p> | <p><b>Startup Garage</b></p> <p><b>Founded</b><br/>2015</p> <p><b>Location</b><br/>Germany, Munchen</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>12 weeks</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>BMW uses a format they call 'Venture Client' - instead of investing in startups, BMW becomes their first client. Startups are chosen at an early stage of its product, service or technology</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>Startups are paid (revenue)</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Aito</p> | <p><b>Startup Autobahn</b></p> <p><b>Founded</b><br/>2016</p> <p><b>Location</b><br/>Germany, Stuttgart</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>5 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program is run by Plug n Play and act as a first meeting facilitator. The startups negotiate with the corporates for MVP funding</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>Yes but undisclosed</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Dataiku, Celonis, What3Words</p> | <p><b>Studio 107</b></p> <p><b>Founded</b><br/>2018</p> <p><b>Location</b><br/>UK, London</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>6 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>Jaguar's VC arm, InMotion, invests in companies at the early stage, pre-seed to Series B but if a company is little more than an idea it could be a candidate for Jaguar Land Rover's incubator programme Studio 107</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>Undisclosed</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>Yes but % depends</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>The OUT, Lenny, Carpe</p> |



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| 2018  | 2017  | 2018   | 2017  | 2017  |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Location</b><br/>USA, Greensboro, North Carolina</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>10 weeks</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program is run out of Volvo Financial Services and offers startups to trial a product as well as mentoring from senior Volvo executives</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>Undisclosed</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>Undisclosed</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Launch Mobility, e-bot7, Encompass-CX, DOVU</p> | <p><b>Location</b><br/>Munich, Singapore, Johannesburg</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>8 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program takes participants on a global tour and pairs each cohort to over 100 mentors from corporates, impact organisations and startups like Amazon, Uber, VW.</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>USD 50,000 (~£40,000)</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Koiki, Addressya, XYT, Arone</p> | <p><b>Location</b><br/>Sweden, Stockholm</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>6 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>Scania's Innovation Factory is an in-house program and aims to channel ideas of employees and to give employees hands-on experience in releasing a new product or service to the market</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>SEK 500,000 (~£40,500)</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>Yes but undisclosed</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b></p> | <p><b>Location</b><br/>Israel, Tel Aviv</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>5 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>Eight startups in each cohort go through a curriculum of seminars on how to take their ideas to market in Israel and abroad</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>No funding</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>Yes but undisclosed. In their own words "percentage is discreet"</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Autofleet, Waycare, Lynx</p> | <p><b>Location</b><br/>Sweden, Goteborg</p> <p><b>Duration</b><br/>6 - 12 months</p> <p><b>Offering</b><br/>The program partner startups with venture firms, offers a collaborative space and let startup form part of a network of global startups and mentors</p> <p><b>Funding</b><br/>No funding</p> <p><b>Equity</b><br/>0%</p> <p><b>Notable Startups</b><br/>Aurora Labs</p> |

## Honda

### Honda Xcelerator

**Founded:** 2015

**Location:** Silicon Valley, China, Europe, Japan & Israel

**Duration:** 3-6 months

**Model:** The program offers funding for rapid prototyping and also gives startups a collaborative workspace, and pair each startup with Honda mentors. They do not accept startups in set batches which is also more convenient for some entrepreneurs participating.



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## Future Mobility

**Founded:** 2017

**Location:** Dresden, Germany

**Duration:** 6 months

**Model:** The program is part of the new mobility strategy of Volkswagen group, 6 startups are chosen per class focused on mobility topics such as connected car, e-mobility/charging solutions, logistics and industry 4.0. Another interesting perk is that the state capital of Dresden, which supports the Incubator Program, pays for accommodation in Dresden for the duration of the program.

**Funding:** €15,000 (~£13,000)

**Equity:** 0%

**Notable startup:** Embotech

## BMW

### Startup Garage

**Founded:** 2015

**Location:** Munich, Germany

**Duration:** 12 weeks

**Model:** BMW uses a format they call 'Venture Client' – instead of investing in startups, BMW becomes their first client. Startups are chosen at an early stage of



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## Mercedes-Benz

### Startup Autobahn

**Founded:** 2016

**Location:** Stuttgart, Germany

**Duration:** 5 months

**Model:** One of the earliest accelerators. The program is run by Plug n Play and act as a first meeting facilitator. The startups negotiate with the corporates for MVP funding.

**Funding:** Yes but undisclosed

**Equity:** 0%

**Notable startups:** [Dataiku](#), [Celonis](#), [What3Words](#)

## Jaguar Land Rover

### Studio 107

**Founded:** 2018

**Location:** London, UK

**Duration:** 6 months

**Model:** Jaguar's VC arm, InMotion, invests in companies at the early stage, pre-seed to Series B but if a company is little more than an idea it could be a candidate for Jaguar Land Rover's incubator programme Studio 107.



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## il.abX

**Founded:** 2018

**Location:** Greensboro, North Carolina

**Duration:** 10 weeks

**Model:** The program is run out of Volvo Financial Services and offers startups to trial a product as well as mentoring from senior Volvo executives.

**Funding:** Undisclosed

**Equity:** Undisclosed

**Notable startups:** **Launch Mobility, e-bot7, Encompass-CX, DOVU**

## Scania

### Innovation Factory

**Founded:** 2018

**Location:** Stockholm, Sweden

**Duration:** 6 months

**Model:** Scania's Innovation Factory is an in-house program and aims to channel ideas of employees and to give employees hands-on experience in releasing a new product or service to the market.

**Funding:** SEK500,000 (~£40,500)

**Equity:** Yes but undisclosed



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**Duration:** 5 months

**Model:** Eight startups in each cohort go through a curriculum of seminars on how to take their ideas to market in Israel and abroad.

**Funding:** No funding

**Equity:** Yes but undisclosed

**Notable startups:** **Autofleet**, **Waycare**

## CEVT, Ericsson, Veoneer, Volvo Cars, Volvo Group and Zenuity

### MobilityXLab

**Founded:** 2017

**Location:** Gotenburg, Sweden

**Duration:**with 6-12 months

**Model:** The program partner startups with venture firms, offers a collaborative space and let startup form part of a network of global startups and mentors.

**Funding:** No funding

**Equity:** 0%

**Notable startup:** **Aurora Labs**

### Wayra



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Stagecoach Group. The programme is also backed by the Connected Places Catapult, which is part of a UK-government-supported network of elite technology and innovation centres. The accelerator is the first British initiative to successfully bring together government, industry and startups to define the future of transport.

**Funding:** up to £150,000

**Equity:** 0%

**Notable startups:** Lifeshare, Cityswift, OpenCapacity, Tomorrow's Journey

Have we missed an accelerator programme? Please get in touch if there is an accelerator we need to add. This is a growing list.

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**D Melka**

Plug and Play runs mobility programs also

0

Reply

1 month ago



**Gregor Gimmy**

Nice overview- thanks! Note that the BMW Startup Garage is not an "accelerator". See its FAQ "Is the BMW Startup Garage an accelerator? Nope. We are the Venture Client unit for early stage startups for the BMW Group. As a Venture Client, we take startups that graduated from accelerators. ..." <https://www.bmwstartupgarage.com/faq>

0

Reply

2 months ago ^



**Maija Palmer**

Thanks for the note. We made a note that the Startup Garage is not really an accelerator but decided to include it anyway as it is an "equivalent" option for startups.

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Reply

2 months ago



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