

CROWDSOURCED DREAM CARS INSPIRED BY DESTINATIONS



MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

Open source is by now a proven model for software design—could car design go the same way? Massachusetts enterprise [Local Motors](#) has set the wheels in motion. By crowdsourcing designs from a unique global community of designers, and manufacturing to order in regional micro-factories, Local Motors represents a paradigm shift from industry-standard mass production. The Local Motors online community was launched in March 2008 and now has a membership of 4,000 car designers, engineers and enthusiasts. When Local Motors announces a design competition (for either a car body, or a particular feature), designers submit their work to the community, which then discusses and votes on the designs. Each competition specifies where the winning design will potentially be built, and submissions should be inspired by the target location—e.g. “an electric vehicle with a San Francisco soul”. Local Motors picks a winner for the competition, whose design is then further developed by the community before being finalised for production by the Local Motors team. The first crowd-designed car—the Rally Fighter—is already available, with production limited to 2,000 units (41 already sold). A price of around USD 50,000 adds to the exclusivity, but customers are not just buying a car: realising the high value today’s consumers place on unique experience and [status stories](#), Local Motors invites every buyer to help build their own vehicle over two weekends. Owners can even host their own competition on the website for a custom “skin” design for their vehicle. Local Motors shows why crowdsourcing is such a powerful model: it’s effectively free outsourcing that creates products the market wants, and fosters an intimate relationship between consumers and brands. Which other industries are lacking a crowd-driven business? (Related: [Open source eco-car — Converting standard Corollas into electric cars.](#)) Spotted by: Kare Anderson
5th February 2010
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