

## Nissan Charges at the Competition

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Increasing fuel prices, environmental concerns, and the demand for traveling in style and convenience have ushered in an era of electric vehicles. When consumers think about electric cars, Tesla Inc., with its exclusive focus on electric cars, is at the forefront of the era. However, more traditional automakers such as Acura and Volkswagen are ready to [challenge Tesla](#) and to take a piece of the market share for themselves. Amongst these automakers, Nissan's innovative vision for the electric car took the 2019 North American International Auto Show by storm—a vision that arguably redefines the boundaries and possibilities of the electric car.

Adding to its slate of electric vehicles, which currently consists of the highly successful [Nissan Leaf](#), Japanese automaker Nissan announced that eight new electric models are in the queue for release by 2022. In addition, the company presented its Nissan IMs. The Nissan IMs offered a glimpse of what the automaker is envisioning for its electric car series beyond the eight slated to appear in 2022. Nissan describes its IMs concept as an “[elevated sports sedan](#).” The IMs features a sedan car shape but contains SUV-like capabilities.

Of the IMs' many features, two stood out concerning the car's autonomous driving capabilities. One of these features includes the ability of the vehicle's steering wheel to retract and the front seats to turn toward one another to allow occupants to face each other to converse and interact more naturally while the car is in autonomous mode. The effect of this feature would be a mobile living room or office-like setting. Another feature that stood out in the IMs concept is the car's 3D augmented reality system called “Invisible-to-Visible.” This system would enable drivers to activate a human-like 3D avatar in the car that can provide directions, give advice, or just converse with you. Furthermore, the driver has the option to make the avatar look like a family member or a friend. The effect of this feature would be a more intimate and personal driving experience.

In order to win consumer mindshare in the electric vehicle market, automakers will have to differentiate themselves on three main aspects: cost, creativity, and safety. We're already seeing the cost benefit of electric vehicles with Tesla stating it could produce a more economic electric model at a \$25,000 price range in three years, compared to its current Model 3 with a \$35,000 to \$45,000 price range. Now, competitors such as Nissan are leveraging technology such as



augmented reality to increase the creative boundaries of electric cars. As to safety, automakers will have to cooperate with stakeholders such as their respective regulatory bodies to instill customer confidence in features like autonomous driving. Nevertheless, as competition intensifies in the electric vehicle market, consumers should expect to benefit from companies' efforts to differentiate their electric models and to be the quickest to market.