

EVENTS/CAUSES

Lexus embraces virtual reality for model leads

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Lexus RC Rift

By JOE MCCARTHY

Toyota Corp. automaker Lexus is generating interest in the 2015 Lexus RC F with a motion-controlled driving simulator.

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Interested consumers can receive an authentic sense of the model, while also engaging with Oculus Rift technology for perhaps the first time. As virtual reality technology becomes more widespread, automakers will likely implement the technology in showrooms and dealers everywhere.

"The feedback from consumers who have recently tried the simulator has been positive and has definitely increased interest in the 2015 Lexus RC F," said Will Nicklas, corporate manager of marketing, planning and communications at [Lexus](#), Los Angeles.

"Most consumers are trying Oculus Rift for the first time so that alone is a cool experience on top of the thrill of driving the car in our simulator," he said.

Going for a cruise

The "RC F Rift" aims to add physically immersive elements to the virtual reality technology.



RC Rift F

In addition to the Oculus Rift headset, consumers will be able to sit in a car's front seat while gripping a steering wheel and pressing on pedals.

The brand released a social video to demonstrate what consumers can anticipate when putting on the device, which resembles the experience of an arcade game.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/tBNWbp6rzKs](https://www.youtube.com/embed/tBNWbp6rzKs)

Lexus RC F Rift – VR Driving Simulator with Oculus Dk2

Participants are able to peer around the interior of a digital RC F and maneuver around a race course.



RC F Rift

The RC F Rift will be traveling to auto shows in Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Detroit, and consumers will also be able to test drive the RC F models in other cities such as Chicago and Atlanta.

Lexus' RC F model will be available on the market in early November.

Generating buzz

Lexus has boosted the RC F model in other interesting ways lately.

For instance, Lexus sought to stand out at this year's New York Fashion Week Sept. 4-11 with a multi-faceted installation by British fashion designer Gareth Pugh.

The automaker made the Lexus RC F performance coupe a centerpiece of the event. Design Disrupted and similar campaigns have helped Lexus associate its brand image

with innovation ([see story](#)).

Also, Lexus partnered with music service Pandora for a number of pop-up concerts in Southern California to promote the F Sport series.

The concerts featured a range of emerging musicians and will target relevant demographics. For many consumers, an engaging in-person event is sometimes enough of a boost to tip them toward making a purchase ([see story](#)).

Ultimately, events such as the RC F Rift will be extended based on consumer enthusiasm.

"Currently, we are exploring how a VR experience might help us engage with consumers on many levels and how best to implement them," Mr. Nicklas said.

"We created RC F Rift as a springboard for future ideas that go beyond virtual test drives and are looking at interesting ways to utilize technology, like Oculus Rift, to tell our story of innovation, design and performance," he said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/Oj6HkVfscP8](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Oj6HkVfscP8)

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