

INTERNET

Lexus celebrates holidays with branded GIFs

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Lexus holiday GIF still

By NANCY BUCKLEY

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is creating a way to connect with consumers this holiday season through branded graphics interchange formats, or GIFs.

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Luxury Daily

With the application PopKey, consumers can send and share GIFs with one another, and Lexus created several GIFs to appear on the keyboard that showcase vehicles with bows or in the snow. By presenting consumers with shareable, fun items, Lexus is likely creating a connection with the younger generations of consumers and encouraging potential social media posts among these consumers.

"GIFs have become part of the younger generation's vernacular and are used naturally to describe a feeling or thought, so partnering with a company like PopKey was an easy decision," said Jeanice Lee, national manager, **Lexus** social, digital & relationship marketing, Torrance, CA.

"For this particular initiative, Lexus created a variety of GIFs that maintained a subtle level of branding," she said. "We were happy to offer GIFs that people would want to use and not just car shots that felt like commercials. With more than 100 GIFs available, there is

one for every consumer.

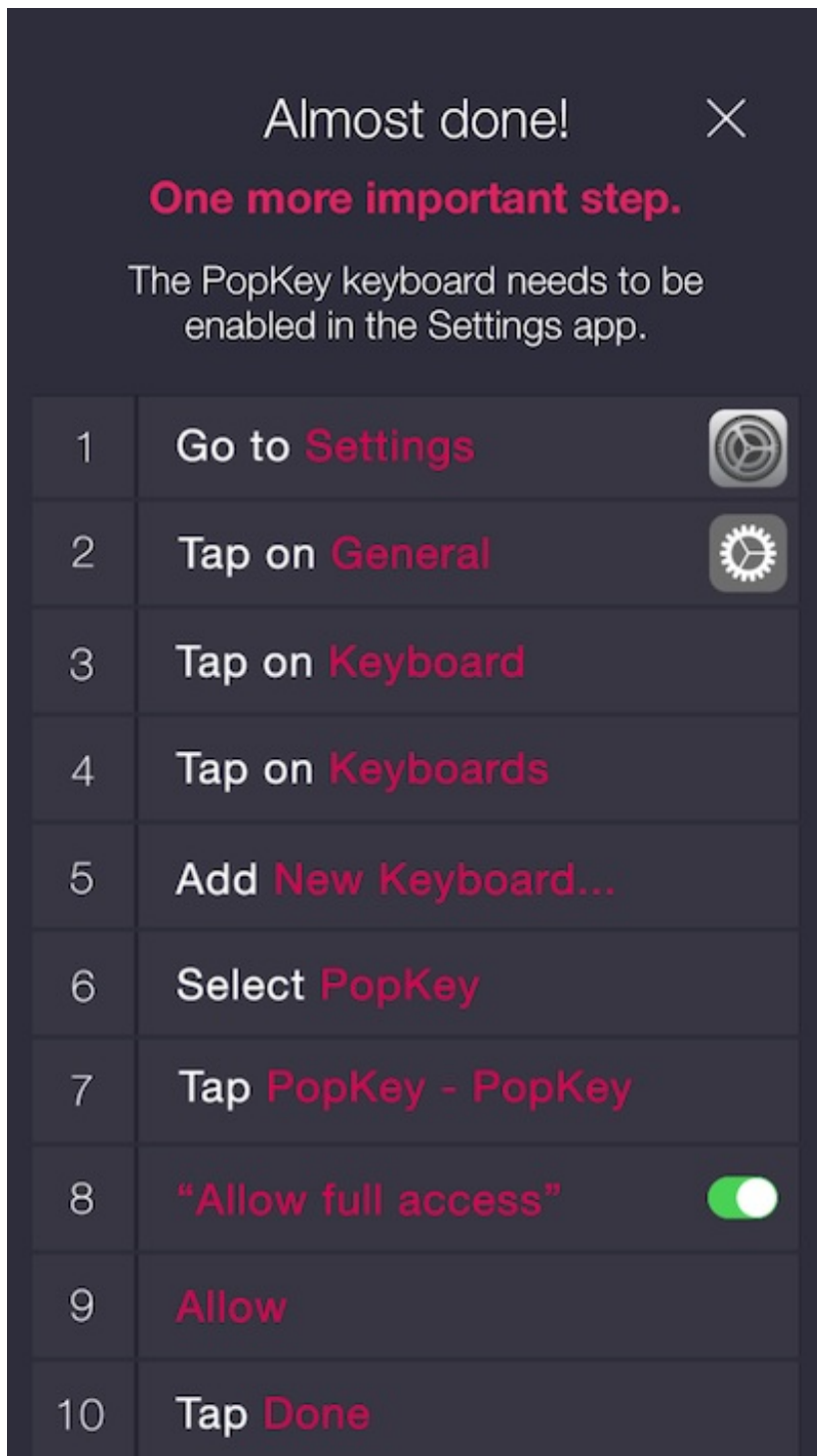
"GIFs are fun and surprisingly useful," Ms. Lee said. "Lexus consumers will enjoy the fact that their holiday GIFs can be used to describe many scenarios with a hint of a Lexus touch.

"The holidays are a special time of year where people are communicating often with friends and family. Lexus wanted to give consumers something to make the holidays a little more entertaining and memorable. These particular GIFs are a fun extension of this year's playful 'December to Remember' sales event campaign."

Texting cars

Lexus' GIFs can be found within the PopKey keyboard. This application is available with iOS 8 in Apple's appstore.

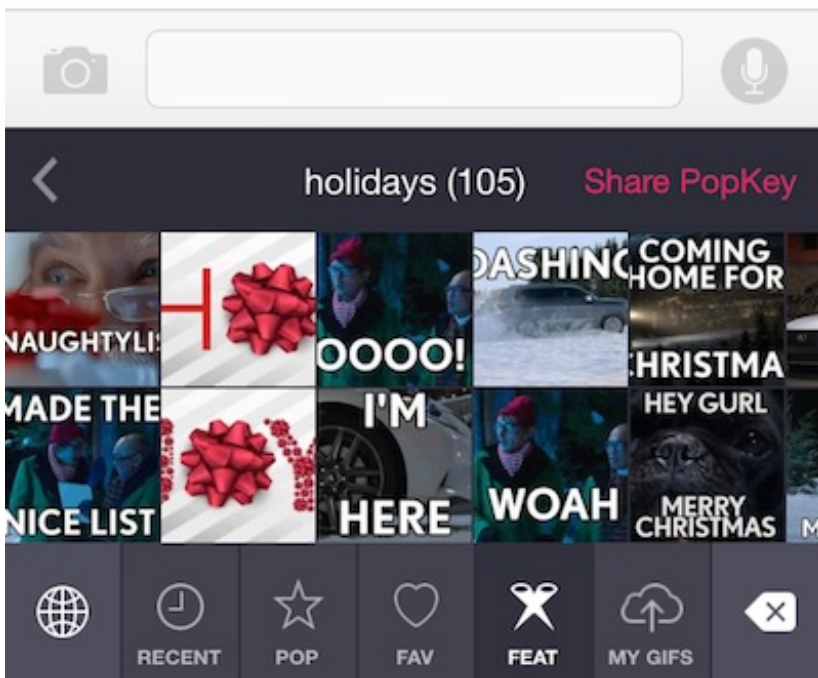
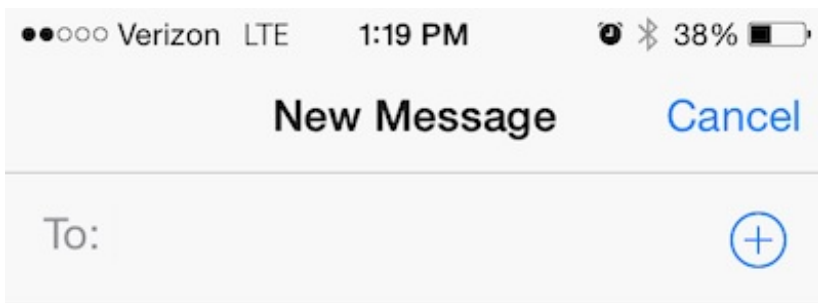
Consumers who download the app are asked to add the PopKey keyboard to their keyboards in settings. Once this is complete, the consumer is able to access the keyboard in both iMessaging and text messages.



PopKey app

When the consumer wants to use a GIF, they must bring up the PopKey keyboard in the message and can choose which GIF to use.

The Lexus GIFs are all available in the holiday section of the featured GIFs. Options include the image from Lexus' television commercials of a vehicle in the snow with a giant red ribbon on top.



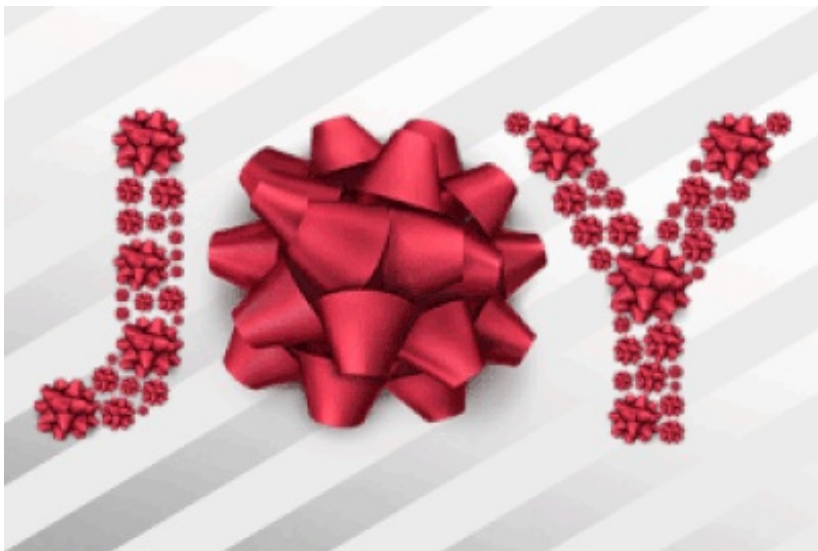
PopKey keyboard

Other branded ones include a Lexus LX driving through snow with “dashing” written above it. Another model is seen driving through snow with “snow plow” written above it. A third one has the words “big things come in small packages” flashing above the car that starts as a normal sized Lexus and mechanically folds into a gift box.



Lexus GIF

There are a few more GIFs that do not have Lexus in it, but rather are simple holiday ones, such as “ho ho” or “Joy” written with red ribbon. Other non-branded ones include Santa, dogs, snowmen and reindeer.



Lexus holiday GIF

Some of the other GIFs are short clips from Lexus’ “December to Remember” television commercials.

This campaign was created by Lexus and Team One.

Something more

GIFs allow consumers to share fun and humorous items. Although the main reason may not be for sharing a brand, when a brand is included in the GIF, consumers are reminded of the products.

For instance, British accessories brand Anya Hindmarch revealed in the vibrancy of its mini-mart campaign with a series of graphics interchange formats that animate many of the featured characters.

The idea driving the campaign is that excitement can be found in the banal, especially if that banal is wrapped in bright colors. This emphasis on the mundane and pop culture sets Anya Hindmarch apart from many other fashion labels that look exclusively for the glamorous ([see story](#)).

Also, U.S. department store chain Barneys New York took its gift guide into Tumblr territory with a series of Graphics Interchange Format, or GIF, animations featuring holiday products.

The “GIF Guide” showed items moving in whimsical ways, and was published on both the store’s blog “The Window” and its Tumblr. Using GIFs instead of still photographs is a colorful way for the retailer to capture its audience’s attention, and prove it is a modern, tech-savvy retailer ([see story](#)).

Lexus' GIFs stand out from others because of the keyboard feature, it is at the consumers discretion as to when they want to use it, who they are sending it to and what the GIF means to them in their texting conversation.

"The iconic Lexus holiday campaign provided us with a rich palette to generate a wide selection of gifs to allow aspirational consumers to have some light hearted communications this holiday season," said Alastair Green, executive creative director, [Team One](#), Los Angeles

"Ever since Apple allowed the use of third party keyboards to be installed and used on iOS 8 devices we realized that animated GIFs could be used as an excellent communication vehicle—pun intended—and a way for Lexus to connect with a new audience," he said.

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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