

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus parodies entertainment junket in comedic branding initiative

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Lexus GS F

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is peeking into the world of celebrity correspondents to make an impression on young consumers.

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Lexus's digital content channel L/Studio's new series, "Junketeers" is now available to watch on Comedy Central. Comedy Central's large audience, as well as the abundance of celebrities in the series, will attract a millennial audience that will help sustain Lexus' future growth plans.

"Lexus is always looking for different ways to connect with consumers, and Junketeers is the type of entertaining, unique and surprising content that reflects the innovation and creativity of the Lexus brand," said Andrea Lim, digital communications manager at [Lexus](#).

Junketeering

The workplace comedy is available on L/Studio's [Web site](#) and Comedy Central's social media and YouTube accounts in eight five-minute installments. The series stars Brian Unger, Austin Lyon and Phil Augusta Jackson, with guest appearances by Josh Duhamel, Kristen Bell and Chloe Grace Moretz, among others.



Junketeers stars

Josh Horowitz and Ben Lyons are credited as creators, with Mr. Horowitz and Amanda Lund writing and Kimmy Gatewood directing. Jason Berger Amy Laslett of Kids at Play and Lisa Eisenpresser of FullCourtPress are credited as executive producers.

The show takes a satiric look at the world of celebrity news correspondents, with the show's stars attending and conducting interviews with celebrities, who give exaggerated self-portrayals.

"This is a love letter to our profession, if a love letter was filled with backstabbing, profanity, violence and generally poor decision making and value systems," Mr. Horowitz said in a statement. "In all seriousness, Ben and I couldn't ask for more supportive creative partners than Kids at Play, Comedy Central and L/Studio. They've (perhaps foolishly) given us exceptional creative freedom and we're truly thankful."

"Josh and I have collectively spent more than 20 years working as on-air hosts in the world of Entertainment News,' and a combined 1 million hours waiting in fancy hotels around the world for celebrities to show up to be interviewed," Mr. Lyons, a veteran former correspondent at E! and Extra, added. "We are beyond thrilled for the opportunity to shine a light on the underbelly of Hollywood, better known as the press junket."



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Partnering with Comedy Central gives Lexus a platform to reach a large platform of young-skewing consumers and instills credibility into its marketing effort. While the series will not spur purchases in and of itself, it will give consumers favorable impressions of the brand, which could play a role in the car shopping process in upcoming years.

Additionally, Lexus' role in bringing the creators' passion project to fruition speaks to the brand's ethos and its belief in determination and hard work. With consumers demanding as much of a brand's values and CSR as they do of its products, such associations further enhance Lexus' positioning to the youth market.

Getting better

L/Studio regularly creates Web series to help Lexus raises its profile in more refined ways or through messages that will strike a chord with consumers.

Earlier this year, Lexus shared inspiring messages of struggle and hope through an online series in collaboration with the It Gets Better Project.

Returning for its third season, "It Got Better" tells the stories of LGBT celebrities, as they discuss both their challenges and successes, showing LGBT youth that their lives may seem bleak right now, but they will improve. Airing on Lexus' L/Studio digital content channel, this series enables the automaker to engage consumers with programming that extends beyond automotive topics ([see story](#)).

Noting the appeal that videos and Web series' have to younger consumers, other automakers have leveraged it as a more overt branding tool.

For example, last year German automaker Mercedes-Benz released a Web series to educate viewers on the history and accomplishments of its classic automobiles.

The series, titled "Museum Monday," is set in the Mercedes-Benz museum in Stuttgart, Germany, where more than 160 vehicles are on view. It stars Uke, the night guard at the museum, who gives a tour of different exhibitions and explains historic facts ([see story](#)).

"L/Studio was created to engage consumers outside of the traditional automotive encounter," Ms. Lim said. "While

the platform is in an ever evolving state, the goal is to offer intriguing and entertaining content that appeals to a broad demographic.

"We hope that when consumers visit the channel they will get a sense of the brand and visit [Lexus.com](https://www.lexus.com), where they can find out more about the vehicles," she said.

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