

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus captures unbridled childhood joy for December to Remember spots

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Still from Lexus' *Stunned* commercial for December to Remember Sales Event 2017. Image credit: Lexus

By JEN KING

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is showcasing the inner child found within every adult for its 18th annual "December to Remember Sales Event" campaign.

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For the 2017 holiday season, Lexus has scripted three vignettes designed for specific target markets, but the theme of unbridled, childlike joy during the holidays is a consistent message that extends across all demographics. Playing off the nostalgia of the holidays is a common thread for marketers looking to engage with consumers on a personal, emotional basis.

"Nostalgia, if done well, can quickly transport us back and evoke feelings from our most meaningful memories," said Chris Graves, chief creative officer at **Team One**, Los Angeles. "And during the holiday season, when we tend to be more drawn to emotional messages, it can be even more powerful.

"It's one of the few times of the year when we give ourselves permission to stop and reflect," he said. "We try to use nostalgia as a way to participate in the season, and not just be an interruption.

"Considering the extreme chaos and marketing clutter that exists this time of year, it can be a great way to cut through and put the viewer in a more emotional frame of mind."

Team One is Lexus' agency of record

The joy of the holidays

Lexus' 18th December to Remember Sales Event campaign was created to remind adult consumers that the holiday brings out one's inner child. Being gifted a new Lexus topped with a big, red bow does so even more.

The three vignettes each star a children dressed in winter apparel as they admire their new Lexus vehicles. Each embody happiness and express their emotions in a different way.

With the sound of the key fob, the childlike wonder gives way to reveal an adult beaming with excitement.

Lexus' first spot, "Whispers," star a young girl in a red winter coat and matching beret, snowball in hand. When she

spots her new Lexus GX in the driveway, she drops the snowball and runs to the LUV.

When next to the vehicle's side she whispers how much she loves the car and looks forward to the adventures she'll take with her new best friend. At the sound of the fob, the young girl is shown as an adult, as her husband asks if she realizes the car is theirs to share.

The woman pauses, smiles and whispers to the car not to listen to her husband's claims.

Lexus December to Remember Commercial: Whispers

Lexus' "Dancer" begins with a young boy shoveling snow until he sees a Lexus IS. After putting down his shovel, the boy admires the details of the Lexus IS in his garage with animated facial expressions and dance moves.

As his preppy dance moves bring him down to his knees in a dramatic slide, the sound of the key fob clicks. Now an adult, the man exclaims the Lexus IS is exactly what he asked for as his wife and daughter watch.

Lexus December to Remember Commercial: Dancer

In the third December to Remember effort, Lexus' "Stunned" features a young boy who cannot believe that a Lexus RX could possibly be a gift for him. The boy excitedly asks, "Is this for me? For real?"

Realizing that it is true, the boy breaks into dance moves and stands on tippy toes to look in at the Lexus RX's interior. When the key fob sounds, the boy is shown as an adult, who responds with a cheer when asked by his wife if he's happy with his new car.

Lexus began airing the trio of December to Remember commercials Nov. 1 on network and cable television, as well as sport networks.

To speak to specific target demographics, Lexus created Dancer for its Hispanic base and will run a translated version of Whispers to speak to the Asian-American market.

December to Remember 2017 will also be accompanied by a print campaign. Lexus' print effort will include product-focused imagery that encourages consumers to rediscover the holiday feeling via its annual sales event.

Similarly, Lexus' digital effort will incorporate the same style in banner advertisement form. The digital effort will appear on popular automotive and high-traffic lifestyle and sports Web sites.



Options shown. ©2017 Lexus

Lexus December to Remember Sales Event 2017 print campaign. Image credit: Lexus

An out-of-home component is also included in Lexus strategy, including placements in Capital One Arena in Washington, DC and New York's Times Square.

For the extent of the December to Remember sales event, which runs until Jan. 2, 2018, Lexus will feature seven weeks of multicultural media presence across 16 key markets. Lexus' multicultural push will include broadcast, radio, print and digital efforts.

"Every year, Lexus strives to bring something timely and noteworthy to the December to Remember campaign," said Cooper Ericksen, vice president of marketing at [Lexus](#), Plano, TX.

"While the core iconography remains the same the bow, the jingle and the campaign name we come up with a new idea every year to refresh the campaign," he said. "This year's campaign reminds everyone that "nothing brings out your inner child like the holidays," with all three spots showing children's unbridled excitement as they see a new Lexus with a bright red bow."

Childhood comics

Lexus' embrace of childhood nostalgia has also been explored through its involvement with Marvel comic book film franchises.

The automaker, for example is building on its relationship with Marvel by taking its collaboration to the next level with an inspired concept model.

Lexus is celebrating its partnership with the superhero film "Black Panther" by creating two new vehicles that represent the film. A fictional material named Vibranium is the inspiration for the look of the reimagined LC Coupe, which sees the car glowing in a vibrant blue ([see story](#)).

Similarly, German automaker Mercedes-Benz integrated a few of its newer models into an expansive native marketing campaign centered on Warner Bros.' upcoming blockbuster, "Justice League."

In addition to television and digital video ads surrounding the movie, three of Mercedes-Benz's new models will

play an integral role in the movie's plot itself.

This level of native marketing in a blockbuster film shows a level of confidence from Mercedes-Benz that suggest further high-profile partnerships may be profitable for luxury brands ([see story](#)).

Forging an emotional connection based on passion points is found often in luxury brand marketing.

"The big red bow, the jingle and the name have become an essential part of the holiday season," Lexus' Mr. Ericksen said. "They've been referenced and spoofed in late night TV, pop culture and more.

"People know that when there's a big red bow, it's associated with Lexus," he said. "Each year, we keep those iconic elements but bring something timely and noteworthy to the campaign. We know consumers look forward to this every year and it is always a successful campaign for the brand."

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