

AUTOMOTIVE

Toyota invests in the future via ride-sharing app

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Ride-sharing app Grab sees investment from Toyota. Image credit: Grab

By STAFF REPORTS

Lexus owner Toyota Corp. is looking to up its mobility services, competing with contemporaries such as Audi, through its investment into Southeast ride-hailing service Grab.

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The automaker has invested \$1 billion in the Uber-like platform and plans on bringing a few of its executives into the company's management. According to Reuters, this will be the largest single investment into a ride-sharing platform yet.

"Going forward, together with Grab, we will develop services that are more attractive, safe and secure for our customers in Southeast Asia," said Shigeki Tomoyama, executive vice president at Toyota, in a statement.

Race for mobility

Toyota is hoping to compete with automakers who have invested in similar mobility platforms that innovate in the industry.

Its \$1 billion stake in Grab makes the company the lead investor.

An executive officer position at Grab will be filled by a current Toyota exec, while another will join the mobility platform's board.

Grab drivers are said to have access to financing, insurance and maintenance services from Toyota, based on data tracking devices installed in their vehicles. However, this access to data could be significant for Toyota beyond just helping Grab drivers, since it could assist in developing its own mobility solutions.

"We will work with partners like Toyota to continue to transform transportation in Southeast Asia," said Grab in a statement. "We want to be the one-stop mobility platform for users."



Lexus is one of the brands that will benefit from the Grab investment. Image credit: Lexus

German automaker Audi similarly upped its investment in car rental service Silvercar as it also looks to further innovate mobility for changing consumer needs.

Building on an existing relationship that dates back to 2012, Audi acquired the Austin, TX-based tech company that focuses on vehicle sharing. With renting and sharing replacing car ownership for many consumers, automakers are turning to alternative mobility developments to remain a part of consumers' daily lives ([see story](#)).

While Silvercar offers car rentals rather than ride sharing, the Audi initiative shows just how aggressive automakers are being with mobility services.

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