

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus is all in' with its newest sports sedan

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Sneakerhead' in Lexus' new "Vanity Plates" campaign spot. Image courtesy of Lexus

By NORA HOWE

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is exploring how fully committing to pursuing a passion yields the greatest reward in its new 2021 IS sports sedan campaign.

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The Japanese automaker released a new campaign celebrating its own obsession with the 2021 IS sports sedan by spotlighting different individuals showcasing their passions. The "All In" series aims to engage an audience that is equally as passionate about pursuing their unique interests as Lexus.

"We saw a parallel between our obsession for creating an authentic sports sedan and our customers' obsessions with their interests, such as sneakers, gaming and music," said Lisa Materazzo, vice president of marketing at Lexus, Plano, TX. "For this campaign, we wanted to celebrate those who fully embrace their passions, the same way we fully embrace ours."

Going all in

Instead of casting actors or high-profile celebrities, the "All In" campaign features eight micro-influencers. The first video "Names" flutters through a multitude of individuals who introduce themselves by the names they have earned through their craft and passion sneakerhead, gamer, audiophile, etc.

"Working with influencers lends an authentic voice to the Lexus brand and helps us reach a younger, more diverse audience," Ms. Materazzo said. "We've worked with influencers for many years, but it's different for us to cast them in our marketing campaign."

"It made perfect sense for this campaign, which needed to be just as authentic as our customer our youngest, most diverse yet," she said. "The micro-influencers in our ads are the epitome of authentically going all in' on their passions they didn't need to act; they just needed to be themselves."

The 30-second colorful, high-energy spot begins with the introductions and ends with one young man gleefully driving through an urban environment in the new 2021 Lexus IS 2021.

2021 Lexus IS: Names / Lexus

A second video "Vanity Plates" takes it one step further by showing how far these enthusiasts will go to broadcast

their passions that define them. The video moves at a similar pace as the first, but this time closes in on personalized license plates for each individual.

Lexus created unique ads to further explore the meaning of "all in" for Asian, Black, Latinx and LGBTQ groups aiming to connect with a vast majority of consumers.

The spots are set to air during primetime, special events and sports including NFL playoffs and NBA games. Consumers will be able to ask their Google Assistant-ready devices about the new Lexus IS model to learn about the vehicle's latest technology, audio, performance and safety features.

2021 Lexus IS: Vanity Plates / Lexus

Supplemental elements of the campaign include a partnership with [MotorTrend](#) for a race between Rhys Millen and downhill skater Josh Neuman on Malibu's Deer Creek Road. A partnership with [Courageous Studios](#) resulted in a documentary-style campaign that follows Ugandan-American photographer and travel expert Jessica Nabongo, the first black woman to visit every country in the world, as she attempts to see every state in the U.S.

Passion and creativity

Lexus often spotlights unexpected creatives and artisans in its marketing.

In a recent effort celebrating craftsmanship and creativity, Lexus explored how driveways have become an extension of people's homes and communities during a year of lockdowns and stay-at-home orders.

For its annual "December to Remember" campaign, the automaker enlisted emerging artists to brighten up dealerships in a colorful and charitable extension of this year's campaign. At six select Lexus dealerships, artists created large-scale murals that reflected the local community ([see story](#)).

One month prior, Lexus honored the mastery of artisans in a craftsmanship campaign series targeting drivers in the United Kingdom. The series "In Search of Takumi" drew parallels between Lexus' renowned Takumi team and skilled artisans in the U.K., tasking craftspeople to create bespoke pieces inspired by Lexus vehicles ([see story](#)).

"As a human-centric brand, Lexus puts people at the heart of everything it does," Ms. Materazzo said. "We're endlessly inspired by people and we've always been curious about what makes people tick, whether behind the wheel or doing what they love."