

AUTOMOTIVE

## Lexus presents retrospective on its own brand journey

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*The original Lexus LS 400. Image credit: Lexus*

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Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is sharing a look back at its first three decades in its latest move focusing on its tradition of craftsmanship.

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The film "The Lexus Life Story" presents the origins of the Japanese automaker in a manner reminiscent of a coming-of-age tale. The campaign is geared to the United Kingdom market, where Lexus debuted in 1990 and competes with luxury automakers with histories dating back to the early 20th century.

### Luxury beginnings

Lexus was launched as the luxury division of Toyota in 1989, as other Japanese automakers began introducing their own premium lineups.

Thirty years after launching in Europe, Lexus has sold more than one million vehicles in the market. In 2019, Lexus achieved 10 million global sales and the automaker sold its 5 millionth sport utility vehicle in 2020 ([see story](#)).

In the film, archival footage of the early days of Lexus is contrasted with more contemporary imagery.

"Lexus arrived at a different time and luxury values were also different," a male narrator says. "Early on, Lexus rose as a challenger brand that capitalized on underserved opportunities in the luxury market."

Since the brand needed to establish itself without the benefit of a long history, Lexus focused on elevating the customer experience and refining the "durable" vehicles for which Japanese automakers were known for.

### *Lexus reflects on its roots*

The film also explains how Lexus incorporated its heritage, particularly by embracing the traditions of omotenashi hospitality and takumi craftsmanship.

Omotenashi emphasizes anticipating a guests' needs, which the narrator says led Lexus to become a "profoundly human-focused luxury brand." Takumi craftsmanship, with a laser-focused attention to detail, is another core concept for Lexus seen with its launch vehicle, the LS 400 sedan.

Jumping ahead to the late 1990s, the film gives an overview of the RX, one of the earliest luxury crossovers. It served as the foundation for the RX 400h, its hybrid electric luxury vehicle which debuted in 2005.

Other models featured in the short include the hybrid GS 450h and the LFA supercar.

The film concludes with an admission that the automaker has needed to self-reflect after rapidly expanding into 90 markets in three decades, perhaps diluting its philosophy. Looking ahead, Lexus plans to focus on building deeper connections with drivers through its next generation of vehicles.

#### Design details

The campaign reinforces Lexus' reputation for craftsmanship while establishing that it is an experienced, but evolving, automotive brand.

Other marketing efforts from the brand have touched on similar themes, but with a more contemporary focus.

In 2019, Lexus celebrated curiosity in a wide-ranging multichannel campaign that shows the different ways people search for new experiences and inspiration.

Lexus' "Our Greatest Curiosity" campaign posed a series of questions through different spots, which will appear on broadcast television, social media and streaming platforms. The automaker illustrated how human wonder has inspired some of the more thoughtful and innovative aspects of its vehicles ([see story](#)).

A recent effort, "In Search of Takumi," draws parallels between the automaker's renowned Takumi team and skilled artisans in the U.K., tasking craftspeople to create bespoke pieces inspired by Lexus vehicles.

Each episode of the series focuses on a different Lexus vehicle and a unique material or craft. Artisans narrate each short, explaining the processes used to create their Lexus-inspired works ([see story](#)).

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