

ADVERTISING

Lexus boasts superior engineering with musical TV spot

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By PETER FINOCCHIARO

Luxury automaker Lexus is promoting the handling capabilities of its 2011 IS sedan – by teaching it to play music.

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Lexus created a 30-second television ad that shows one of its IS vehicles playing a rhythmic beat by tripping drum sets' foot pedals as it drives precisely through a closed course. The spot is part of a national campaign that promotes the driving experience available in the high-end car brand's 2011 line of IS vehicles with the slogan "Wield Precision".

"For the launch of the new 2011 IS, we wanted to develop a campaign that demonstrates the vehicle's ability on the road while also letting the viewer feel its energy," said Dave Nordstrom, vice president of marketing at Lexus, Torrance, CA. "The IS showcases its agility as it takes on a precision course lined with drums to create a truly unique musical piece."



“Allowing the car to act as a musician demonstrates not just the speed of the vehicle, but its agility and precision,” he said.

[Toyota Motor Corporation](#) owns [Lexus](#). [Team one](#) is Lexus' agency.

The Wield Precision campaign includes ads across TV, print, online, mobile and outdoor marketing channels.

The Lexus IS line of automobiles starts at \$32,145. The premium IS F vehicle has a base price of \$59,010.

TV spot

The advertisement, called “Music Track,” will run during NFL Network’s pre-kickoff broadcast later this week.

The ad shows an Ultrasonic Blue 2011 Lexus IS sedan driving around a custom-built track that is bordered by drum sets rigged to play when the vehicle’s wheel rolls over attached foot pedals.

As the car veers through the course, setting off the drums, it creates a fast-paced percussive beat.

A voiceover lists the IS line’s specifications, such as 306 horse power and race-inspired paddle shifters – before the car skids to a halt.

The commercial ends with the voice-over commenting that, “It isn’t real performance unless it’s wielded with precision.”

Lexus said that the ad was meant to highlight the vehicle’s agility.

The automaker teamed with music composers, mathematicians, production designers and a stunt driver to choreograph the spot.

Here is a video of the TV spot:

“If a video is truly amazing, you can have success,” said Gretchen Scheiman, partner and associated director of digital dialogue at OgilvyOne, New York. “If it ties to brand values, then it makes sense.

“If it ties to your brand values, then it makes sense,” she said. “People then associate the wow factor with that, and with your brand.”

Mobile and online ads

The luxury automaker is targeting iPhone and iPad users with banner ads placed Pandora, Yahoo Sportacular and Urban Daddy mobile applications.

In the Pandora iPad application, a 250x250-pixel banner ad shows a front view of a blue IS vehicle next to the ad copy “The new 2011 Lexus is Wield Precision.” It sits in the bottom left corner of the application.

The mobile ads lead to a landing page where users can find more information about the IS and design their own virtual vehicles.

Here is a screen grab of the landing page on the iPad:

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The top of the page shows a blue Lexus IS, next to the same ad copy as the banner ad.

Directional arrows on the left and right sides of the image let consumers toggle between screens explaining the different features boasted by the vehicles, such as “predictive technology,” “superior grip,” “responsive shifting” and “precise steering.”

Three clickable images sit below the main IS artwork, and lead consumers to individual pages for the IS F Sport Package, IS C and IS F models.

Each individual page includes photo galleries of the Lexus models, detailed information about vehicle specifications, pricing and associated services, as well as the ability for potential customers to design their own IS cars.

Consumers can also find information about nearby dealers, vehicle accessories, financial services and special offers on IS vehicles.

“Mobile is an integral part of the campaign due to the IS consumer's on-the-go lifestyle,” Lexus' Mr. Nordstrom said. “A significant part of the IS consumer target owns a smartphone and regularly utilizes mobile apps.

“Mobile ads enhance Lexus' reach to the consumers who may be away from the traditional screens such as TVs and desktops,” he said. “Via mobile apps like Pandora, Yahoo! Sportacular, and Urban Daddy, Lexus leverages these trusted entertainment resources to speak to the consumer interests in music, football, and nightlife.”

In addition to its mobile efforts, Lexus placed three different banner ads - 300x250, 300x600 and 728x90 pixels - on Web sites Cnet.com, Style.com and Chow.com.

Here are screen grabs of two of the ads:

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Precision advertising

Premium car brands have been no strangers to the mobile space.

Mercedes-Benz has promoted its vehicles with both mobile advertising ([see story](#)) and applications ([see story](#)).

Likewise, luxury automaker Rolls-Royce is driving awareness of its Ghost vehicle with an iPhone application ([see story](#)).

Lexus has been actively promoting its automotive offerings in the mobile space this year.

The carmaker previously advertised on Pandora in June ([see story](#)).

“I would say that consumers, especially in the luxury market, want to be reached wherever they are, and they don't want to have to go to find information,” OgilvyOne's Ms. Schleiman said.

“Since consumers are going about their daily lives, and aren't necessarily looking for the next marketing message to hit them, it's important to use multiple channels so they can see you and hear you when they are ready to receive the message,” she said.

Final Take

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