

MOBILE

Lexus, Snipp give Middle Eastern consumers in-vehicle experience via mobile

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By ERIN SHEA

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is giving Middle Eastern buyers an in-vehicle experience through a partnership with an augmented reality mobile application that puts consumers in the driver's seat.

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The new augmented reality product "Snipp Khayal," which can deliver sound, video and images through mobile devices, partnered with Lexus Kuwait for its launch. At the launch event July 4, consumers were able to get a virtual tour of Lexus' IS 2014 vehicles through the app.

"In this particular case, when you use the app, it can show you various features inside the car such as where the navigation system is," said Atul Sabharwal, cofounder/CEO of [Snipp](#), Washington.

"This gives consumers a perspective of the inside of the car," he said. "It is more in-depth than going to a Web site."

Snipp partnered with Limitus to create the augmented reality experience for [Lexus Kuwait](#).

With the tap of an app

Lexus is the first automotive company to launch an augmented reality-driven mobile campaign in Kuwait.

The Snipp Khayal app allows consumers to explore Lexus IS vehicle's color options, lights and interior.

At the launch event, consumers were able to scan tags on vehicles to bring up color and headlight simulators.



Lexus IS color selector

Pressing the “Virtual Tour” button allows consumers to virtually sit in the vehicle.



Interior tour

For right now, this experience is only available through exclusive events in the Middle East. Snipp currently does not have plans to continue with the Lexus IS app in other parts of the world.

However, the app testings at the events may inspire consumers to come into Lexus dealerships to experience the vehicle in person when it is available.

“This will definitely drive people to the dealership,” Mr. Sabharwal said.

“When you are experiencing the car on the app and seeing what it can actually do, it makes you want to go and check out the car in reality when it is at the dealership,” he said.

Go for a ride

Other luxury automakers have created apps to virtually simulate vehicle offers.

For instance, Porsche is virtually putting consumers in the front seat of its Cayman vehicle via a mobile app that was designed to promote safe driving and build brand awareness, while also letting consumers compete in a variety of challenges.

The app fosters camaraderie among current and prospective Porsche drivers by structuring and mapping driving challenges that affluent consumers may face while on the road. The app adroitly captures the movements of the car so that drivers can catalog their skills and communicate with their friends, family or other drivers ([see story](#)).

In addition, Land Rover North America is promoting its next-generation Range Rover model features and driving capabilities through an interactive mobile app.

The “Range Rover: The Trail Less Traveled” app gives consumers the chance to virtually experience riding in the vehicle in a variety of different settings and viewpoints. Land Rover is likely aiming for aspirational owners rather than its customers with this app since it mainly shows off what the model can do ([see story](#)).

However, with Snipp’s technology, brands do not have to create their own augmented reality apps themselves. Snipp is able to work with brands to customize their own apps, just as the company did for Lexus Kuwait.

“Our app is more of a universal app,” Mr. Sabharwal said. “Any brand can invest in this for their own use.”

Final take

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