

TELEVISION

## Lexus produces TV show to reach consumers in their homes

May 7, 2014



*Jill Scott performing on "Verses and Flow"*

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By SARAH JONES

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is gearing up for the fourth season of its TV One show, "Verses and Flow."

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**Luxury Daily**

The new season of the show designed to reach African-American consumers, which will premiere in August, will feature performances by artists including K. Michelle, Candice Glover and Ruben Studdard. Acting as a producer of content allows a brand to reach consumers in an organic way.

"All brands should possess a consumer relationship beyond the transactional value of their products and/or services," said Stacy Henderson, advertising planner at [Lexus](#), Torrance, CA.

"Spoken word - by way of Verses and Flow - as a staple of the Black community, has allowed us to cultivate a relationship based on a unique passion point, taking the brand far beyond where a typical car-to-consumer relationship goes."

Content producer

Lexus is the executive producer for the program airing on TV One, a network that serves

57 million households, and whose mission is to “entertain, inform and inspire a diverse audience of adult Black viewers.”



*Verses and Flow performers, clockwise from top left: Theresa tha S.O.N.G.B.I.R.D, Vision, Jon Goode and Raheem DeV Vaughn*

The automaker said in a branded statement that the show was launched to “reach African-American consumers on a broader level while bringing great music and poetry to the masses.”

Poets share spoken word pieces and a musical guest performs on each episode.

Surrounding commercial breaks during season three, a message appeared telling consumers that the show was “engineered by Lexus.”



*Screenshot of Verses and Flow commercial break*

For this season, a new host has been selected. Actor Laz Alonso, most well-known for playing Fenix in the “Fast and Furious” franchise, will be the emcee for the show.

Mr. Alonso also stars in Lexus' CT 200h TV spot.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/Fx4AQleNYQc](http://www.youtube.com/embed/Fx4AQleNYQc)

### *2014 Lexus CT - Hybrid Life commercial*

The show is taping from May 6-9. Artists featured in this season also include Alice Smith, Joe and Gary Clark, Jr.

Before the new season begins, Lexus is allowing consumers the opportunity to view episodes from previous seasons of the NAACP-nominated show online on its African-American content site Luxury Awaits, as well as on TV One's Web site.

Consumers can watch full episodes of the third season, as well as see content exclusive to the Web site.

A social feed on Luxury Awaits shows Twitter mentions of @VersesAndFlow. Lexus is hosting contests to allow consumers to win tickets to a taping by tweeting the name of a poet.

Eight episodes will air this season.

### Television audience

Lexus has previously made strides into television programming.

The automaker teamed up with Comcast Media 360 for a branded television channel to consolidate content and build relationships with Xfinity customers.

Lexus' channel allows the automaker to extend the duration of campaigns and raises the likelihood that an impactful impression will be made. Despite the sirens surrounding television, the advertising platform has proven resilient ([see story](#)).

Also, Italian automaker Maserati targeted affluent female consumers with an appearance on the American modeling competition television series The Face that placed the Quattroporte vehicle at the heart of the episode.

Contestants on the show were asked to develop an online commercial of the Quattroporte that embodies core brand values. Unlike the fleeting nature of product placements that can stay invisible to consumers, structuring an entire episode around a product likely creates a greater impact ([see story](#)).

Brands should work to create relevant content that goes beyond product to entertain and engage consumers, said an executive from Dentsu Aegis Network Thursday at the iProspect Client Summit.

Often when brands look to product placement, their branding gets lost in the director's creative vision. However, by becoming the content producers themselves, brands can get their message across by being the content rather than the distraction from the content they are trying to view ([see story](#)).

Lexus has seen a very positive response to Verses and Flow.

"Based on our social media online, our sentiment levels have been around 95 percent in terms of positive feelings about the show," Ms. Henderson said. "The negative sentiment stems from viewership disappointment that there aren't more episodes.

"Verses and Flow as a TV show has evolved into a multi-dimensional platform from which we have leveraged a large part of our Black focus," she said. "This platform transcends multiple forms of media, thus extending our presence through paid and numerous earned opportunities.

"From TV to live streaming to event activation, to mobile, to social, to digital OOH and online display media, Verses and Flow has raised the share of voice, brand equity, and sales volume within the Black segment."

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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