

Toyota Creates 'Connected Technologies' to Advance In-Car User Experience

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PLANO, Texas (August 28, 2017) Toyota Motor North America today announced the decision to form a new group focused on delivering industry-leading user experiences and new technologies for its Toyota and Lexus vehicles. Leveraging the company's new "One Toyota" structure, the newly formed "Connected Technologies" group will have approximately 100 positions and will include members from Toyota's existing teams working on connected vehicles, information systems, and research and development. Combining Toyota's various strategy, planning, development, engineering and operations for connected service and hardware systems, will help advance and personalize the in-car technology experience for customers. The transition to the new group will start immediately.

"In-car, connected vehicle technology is a high priority for us because its impact on the customer experience is becoming an increasingly important factor in their purchase decisions," said Jim Lentz, CEO of Toyota Motor North America. "Thanks to the new One Toyota structure, we are removing barriers among our North American teams that work on connected vehicles to create a more cohesive and empowered team to listen to and create an ever-better connected car experience for customers."

Connected Technologies will be based in Plano and report to Zack Hicks. Hicks will continue in his two current roles, as both CIO of Toyota Motor North America and as the CEO of Toyota Connected North America, while adding this new responsibility.

"Our new team will double-down our efforts on connected vehicles so we can provide our Toyota and Lexus customers a more human experience," commented Hicks. "Connected vehicles are the next step in a personalized driving experience, emphasizing your preferences as a driver thanks to better technology, improving the customer's ownership experience over time."

Connected vehicle technology includes one or more connections to the Internet, such as via smartphone or satellite. There are two areas of experience that are focused on: driver-centric and car-centric. Driver-centric content, like internet-connected radio, cloud-based content, and apps, help personalize the driver's car ownership experience. The other, car-centric content, offers companies like Toyota the opportunity for remote diagnostics, over-the-air software updates, cyber-security, and vehicle relationship management. The market for connected vehicles is growing rapidly as increased Internet speeds and products become more widely available.