



The Caplan Group

Providing cost effective results oriented communication strategies.

Local Auto Dealership's Online Ad Contest Draws National Interest



In tough economic times it doesn't make sense to continue to do the same old advertising and expect different results. One of our clients, Honda of Bowie, came to us with a challenge that would demand our most creativity and keen attention to innovation.

"We turned to The Caplan Group to come up with a fresh way to reach Honda buyers and they thought using the internet was the best way," said Phil Morelli, President of Honda of Bowie. We came up with a strategy to have an online contest for Honda of Bowie with minimal traditional advertising support. The client offered up an attractive prize (a 2008 Honda Civic) and we promoted a consumer generated commercial contest utilizing You Tube. Success of the campaign required working closely with the client to set the parameters, orchestrating the technical aspects, and creating awareness. The end result would be a campaign that branded the Honda of Bowie name and website to the online community and a new demographic.

The campaign was off to a great start when our targeting of students resulted in the campaign becoming an academic project at a local university. Between the attention generated among the high schools, colleges, and the general public interested in winning a free car, the entries were flowing in at a steady pace and ultimately driving traffic to the Honda of Bowie's website.

"In a severely fragmented market with tons of clutter, social networking and the internet are the most effective way to get your message to the consumer, especially prospective Honda buyers like students," said Morelli.

Once the contest ended, the entries were reviewed by an independent panel of judges who selected the winning commercial. The panel was comprised of three individuals with various media backgrounds that would help them provide different perspectives when judging the contest. Steve Rosch, President & Creative Director of ROAR Audio, Music & Video, Bob Waugh DJ for WRNR 103.1 FM and Dr. David Rhea, a Communications professor at Governors State University in Illinois who spent some time as a professor at the University of MD College Park. The judges never met or conferred about the submissions but used a uniform set of criteria to rank their top three favorite commercials. The judging, like the contest itself, completely took place online.

The winner, video amateur Natalie Croc, picked up her 2008 Honda Civic and her commercial will air as part of an upcoming Honda of Bowie advertising campaign. Croc works as a long-term substitute teacher as well as a freelance writer and proofreader for companies in and around Chicago. The "ur ad here" contest proved to be a huge success and reiterated our belief that internet marketing has a much more universal impact than traditional advertising mediums ever have.

For more information about the "ur ad here" contest or to see the entries go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/bowieautoguys>



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