Students' hopes riding on recycling in national marketing competition

November 3, 2010

The hopes of three Freeman School students are riding on recycling in a national marketing competition.



Freeman School students Amanda Diamond, Carly O'Meara and Beckie Warren, left to right, are traveling to locations across the South to promote recycling as part of a social media campaign to generate buzz for Honda's new CR-Z sport hybrid coupe.

A team featuring Freeman students Amanda Diamond, Carly O'Meara and Beckie Warren is one of 10 finalists in the Honda CR-Z Media Challenge, a national marketing competition that asked students to devise social media campaigns to generate buzz for Honda's sporty new hybrid car. As one of the 10 teams in the finals, the Freeman students received a CR-Z to use for six weeks, a $150 gift card to help with implementation expenses, and a Flip Video camcorder to document their campaign.

Since receiving the CR-Z on Oct. 11, Diamond, O'Meara and Warren have logged hundreds of miles traveling to locations across the South in the sporty hybrid to hold recycling drives that double as promotional events for the environmentally friendly

car. The trio visited LSU and Auburn in October and plan to visit the University of Memphis in November. The students hope to use cash generated from the recycled goods to pay for their gas, enabling them to return the gift card to Honda without using any of the $150.

“Our motto is, ‘We're riding on recycling,’” says O’Meara. “When people come to give us their plastic bottles and aluminum cans, we’re able to show them the Honda CR-Z as well.”

The campaign—which they’ve dubbed “Honda CR-Z Road Trip 2010”—concludes on Nov. 20 with a “Recycling Block Party” in Pocket Park on Tulane’s campus that will feature live music and displays from local green businesses.

After reviewing reports on the campaigns from each of the 10 finalists, Honda will select three teams to visit its headquarters in Torrance, Calif., and present a recap of their campaigns to a panel of executives, PR industry leaders and journalists. Those three teams will also become “virtual interns” for Honda, participating in brainstorming sessions, drafting and editing PR materials, and attending promotional events to support the launch of the CR-Z. In addition, the team chosen by Honda for executing the best overall campaign will be invited to the CR-Z’s official launch in Washington D.C. in April 2011.

While the trips to California and Washington D.C. are nice rewards, O’Meara says the ultimate prize is the chance to demonstrate their marketing skills and social media savvy for potential employers.

“Who’d think we’d have the chance to do our own marketing campaign for one of the world’s biggest car companies?” O’Meara says. “This is just a great opportunity.”

To see photos and videos from their recycling trips, visit Honda CR-Z Road Trip 2010 Facebook page.

(And when you’re finished, click the "like" button to give the students a better shot at winning the challenge!)