

CONTEST REPLACES AD CAMPAIGN FOR NISSAN LAUNCH

 MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

If contests can be used to fill a job or promote a region of the world, why couldn't they launch a car? That's apparently the thinking at Nissan Canada, which recently kicked off a competition to select 50 people to win a free 2009 Nissan Cube. Indeed, Nissan Canada's [hypercube](#) contest is a unique social media campaign to promote the company's new Cube vehicle, which launches in May. Rather than embark on yet another mass-media advertising campaign, Nissan and Capital C—its creative partner in the effort—have chosen to tap the creativity of Canadian consumers. Specifically, back in March they invited up to 1,000 Canadian musicians, DJs, dancers, programmers, designers, bloggers, podcasters, poets, writers, storytellers and artists—"anyone who considers themselves creative, hip, interesting or unique"—to explain via survey and [Twitter](#) why they should be selected to audition for one of the winning 50 spots. From that initial group the top-scoring 500 individuals were selected to audition via Facebook, Twitter and the hypercube site using photos, videos, illustrations or other media to demonstrate how they personify the Cube brand. (Current examples [can be found here](#).) Due to wrap up in mid-May, auditions will be evaluated by a panel of independent judges based on uniqueness, creativity, personality, enthusiasm, survey responses and peer voting. Consumers can register to vote on the hypercube site, and the 50 winners of the brand-new Cube will be announced in mid-June. Although not a contest, [Ford's Fiesta Movement](#) is similar in its attempt to leverage the power of social media by selecting a group of frontrunners. In Ford's words: "Over 4,000 people applied to test drive the Ford Fiesta on the American road long before its launch here. But only 100 were chosen to be the Agents of the Fiesta Movement. [...] Our 100 agents are spending six months behind the wheel of their own Fiesta, sharing their experiences, and completing monthly missions to show you what experiencing the Ford Fiesta is all about, way in advance of the U.S. launch in 2010." With advertising clutter and consumer skepticism at the heights they are, it's no wonder clever marketers are turning to alternative methods to break through the din. The contests will continue to come fast and furious, we expect—why not try one out for your net-savvy brand? (Related: [Scion drives into Second Life](#).) Spotted by: [Stas Zlobinski](#)

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Email: joncube@hypercube.ca

Website: www.hypercube.ca