



Back in 2010, former Daytona 500 winner Michale Waltrip, right, uses an iRacing simulator to teach young Trevor Bayne, then 18 years old, the finer points of NASCAR race strategy.

## Ford Earns Warm Salute From NASCAR for Efforts

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members through their Partner Recognition Program, as well as fleet sales. Through these efforts in 2010, Ford generated more than \$200 million in vehicle sales.

"The 'Driving Business Award' is a testament to the hard work and dedication Tim Duerr, our Motorsports Marketing Manager, has for the Fuel for Business Council," said Jamie Allison, director, Ford Racing.

"With the full support of Ford Brand Marketing, and our dealers, we are able to fully leverage the network of Official Partners in NASCAR. The co-marketing, promotions and B2B opportunities created through the NASCAR Fuel for Business Council continue to exceed our expectations, and we are pleased and honored to be recognized for these achievements."

Through its Official Partnership with NASCAR, Ford created a number of "Driving Business" successes in 2010 such as:

- Ford sold over 5,000 Partner Recognition Program vehicles through the Fuel for Business Council during the 2010 racing season. Since joining the Council in 2007, more than 20,000 Partner Recognition Program retail vehicles have been sold directly to Official Partners' employees on the council.
- In addition, Ford nurtures Fleet relationships with our Official Partners resulting in thousands of additional units per year.
- Office Depot and Ford jointly created a network where Ford dealerships now purchase office supplies through Ford's corporate purchasing network with Office

Depot. As part of the partnership Office Depot associates receive Ford Partner Recognition discounts on new vehicles.

- Formed a DRIVE4COPD partnership that included COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) screening made available to more than 3,000 Ford employees in addition to delivering the important DRIVE4COPD screening message to 300,000 Ford Racing fans.
- In a partnership with 3M, Ford supported two fan sweepstakes in 2010 that generated 200,000-plus registrations. For 3M's promotion, Ford provided brand new 2011 Ford Fiestas as the grand prizes.
- Partnered in Goodyear's "Support Our Troops" national campaign to give back to the men and women of the US Armed Forces, awarding a new 2011 Ford Taurus to one lucky fan.
- Supported Sunoco in their "Decal Race" sweepstakes by providing a 2011 Ford Explorer as the grand prize.
- Implemented partnerships with Bank of America, Goodyear, DuPont and Sunoco that sold more than 1,300 Ford vehicles in 2010 alone.

The prestigious "Driving Business Award" recognizes a NASCAR Official Partner who has driven business and results through their NASCAR Official Partnership on the NASCAR Fuel for Business Council.

To be considered for the award, Fuel for Business Council members must provide quantifiable results in both selling and purchasing with other members of the council as well as deliver demonstrated success in co-marketing promotions within the council.

## U-M Dearborn Professor Earns Clean Energy Nod

A company whose technology could lead to cheaper lithium-ion batteries won the top prize of \$50,000 in the 2011 Clean Energy Prize business plan competition.

The winning company, CSquared Innovations, is a start-up project based on technology developed in the lab of Pravansu Mohanty, a professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at UM-Dearborn.

CSquared Innovations has developed a faster, cheaper, laser-based method of nano-structured materials and coatings for lithium-ion battery electrodes, solar cells and industrial coatings. The company should launch shortly from U-M Tech Transfer's Venture Center.

Gov. Rick Snyder spoke last week at the awards ceremony at the University of Michigan's Rackham Auditorium.

"It's great to see the intersection of three things that I love," Snyder told an audience that included hundreds of students.

"We're talking about innovation and entrepreneurship, we're talking about clean energy, something that is vitally important for our future. It's about economic growth, and doing it in the most responsible way possible in terms of the legacy we leave and the opportunity it provides us – and the third thing is that it involves students. To have those three things come together is really special."

The Clean Energy Prize, established by DTE Energy and U-M in 2008, is designed to encourage entrepreneurship in Michigan and the development of clean-energy technologies. This year's contest was organized by U-M's College of Engineering.

### Ford's Computer Testing of SYNC Makes Detroit A 'Mini-Europe'

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varying levels of technology.

"Creating the mini Europe here in Detroit allowed us to do both simulated and real-world testing in a fairly short amount of time and still deliver a robust product," said Pleet.

Emergency Assistance will be the most advanced system of its type available, able to directly communicate with emergency services in double the number of European countries as any other automotive emergency call services.

Just like its North American counterpart, Emergency Assistance can provide vehicle drivers and passengers with a connection to local emergency services in the event of an accident. The service is a subscription-free, no-additional-cost feature that uses a customer's existing mobile phone to make the direct connection to an emergency operator.

## Young Ford Driver 'Got His Kicks' on Race Simulator

BEDFORD, Mass. – It was standing room only in the Daytona media center back on Sunday, Feb. 20, when driver Trevor Bayne walked in following his dramatic win in the No. 21 Ford car in the fabled Daytona 500.

But in the same room a year earlier, just a handful of people looked on as he drove an iRacing.com-powered simulator while veteran driver Michael Waltrip talked him around Daytona International Speedway.

This wasn't Bayne's first exposure to iRacing; in 2009, a friend bought the then-aspiring young NASCAR Nationwide Series driver a gift subscription to the iRacing service.

According to Rocky Bayne, Trevor's father, his son has a setup in his house, and while he doesn't participate in any

of iRacing's NASCAR-sanctioned races, young Bayne nonetheless enjoys participating in private testing sessions using the simulator.

"That's how some of our members use the service," said iRacing.com President Tony Gardner. "On the other hand, the majority of our members, including quite a few NASCAR Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Truck drivers, enjoy competing in our online races."

Gardner noted that Sprint Cup driver and Formula One veteran Scott Speed has been keeping his driving skills sharp on iRacing, as has Timmy Hill, who made his first NASCAR Nationwide Series start this past weekend at Phoenix International Raceway in Arizona.

Speed, who began his driving career in formula cars, has

run up 23 wins from 39 road-racing starts in 2011 on top of another half-dozen oval track victories.

Yet another enthusiastic iRacing.com competitor is 21-year-old Ladon Cassill, the 2008 NASCAR Nationwide Series Rookie of the Year.

It's the younger NASCAR drivers – like Cassill – many of whom graduated to iRacing from traditional games, who are the most enthusiastic participants in iRacing's six NASCAR-sanctioned racing series.

Hill, 18, who is being touted as one of NASCAR's up-and-coming stars and along with Bayne a strong candidate for Nationwide rookie honors, has won more than 60 races on iRacing, most recently in the World Tour of iRacing's "virtual" Daytona 500 held online the same weekend as the

actual race in Florida.

Meanwhile, iRacing was founded in 2004 by Dave Kaemmer and John Henry.

Kaemmer was co-founder of Papyrus Design Group, developers of award-winning racing simulations including "Grand Prix Legends" and "NASCAR 2003."

Henry is principal owner of the Boston Red Sox baseball team and the Liverpool Football Club in the U.K., as well as co-owner of NASCAR's Roush Fenway Racing team.

iRacing.com has current partnerships with NASCAR, IndyCar, Grand-Am, International Speedway Corp., and Speedway Motorsports.

The iRacing company is based in Bedford, Mass.

Coincidentally, Bayne will be visiting the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn on Wednesday, March 9.

## Ford Vehicles Improve in Road-Test and Reliability

YONKERS, N.Y. – Honda and Subaru still make the best vehicles overall, but Ford posted the largest gain, improving both its road-test and reliability scores in the past year, according to *Consumer Reports* annual Automakers Report Card for 2011.

Ford has outpaced its cross-town rivals in reliability in recent years, and this year its average test score for all tested models rose from 66 to 70.

Current offerings such as the Fusion, Flex, and Mustang have been impressive, and even the new Fiesta scored well in tests. *Consumer Reports* currently recommends 71 percent of the Ford vehicles it has tested.

The *Consumer Reports* annual Automakers Report Card reflects the performance, comfort, utility, and reliability of more than 270 vehicles that *Consumer Reports* recently tested.

Each automaker's overall score is based on a composite of road-test and predicted-reliability scores for all of its tested models.

The road test score is based on more than 50 tests and evaluations, covering performance, safety, fuel economy, comfort,

and convenience.

Reliability scores come from *Consumer Reports* Annual Auto Survey, which included histories of 1.3 million vehicles.

Honda, Subaru, and Toyota are the top three for the third year in a row. Most of their vehicles do well in *Consumer Reports* tests and are relatively trouble-free.

Honda, including its Acura division, has had the best reliability record of any manufacturer and has made mostly good to outstanding vehicles. In fact, no Honda product scores less than average in reliability.

Currently, *Consumer Reports* recommends 76 percent of the Honda vehicles it has tested. But some new Hondas have been unimpressive, including the CR-Z and Insight hybrids, which didn't score well enough in CR's tests to be recommended.

The redesigned Odyssey, still CR's top-ranked minivan, dropped a few points in its test score, compared with the previous year.

Subaru, which has the highest average road-test score (81), makes only about a half-dozen models, but almost all do well in *Consumer Reports* road

tests and have been reliability stalwarts.

Toyota, Lexus, and Scion models remain solid choices overall. Reliability remains better than average with a steady average test score of 74 for all tested vehicles. However, some newer Toyotas have slipped in interior fit and finish. Two Toyotas, the subcompact Yaris and the FJ Cruiser SUV, are not Recommended because of their low road-test scores. *Consumer Reports* currently recommends 74 percent of the Toyota vehicles it has tested.

General Motors has also improved in both its average road-test and reliability scores. The newer GM models, such as the Buick Enclave and LaCrosse, and the Chevrolet Equinox and Traverse have performed well in *Consumer Reports* tests.

GM's average test score for all tested models has improved to 67 from 65 last year. But the company still fields a few lackluster cars, including the Chevrolet Impala sedan and Colorado pickup.

The below-average reliability of Cadillac and GMC models also drag down its overall score. Reliability has improved to average overall, but it's still

not stellar for many models. Currently, *Consumer Reports* recommends 46 percent of GM models it has tested.

If front-seat comfort, fit and finish, and driving dynamics were all that counted, European cars would rule the roost. European cars generally perform well in *Consumer Reports* road tests, but many have confusing controls and inconsistent reliability. Volvo is the only European make with an above-average reliability score.

Volkswagen's brand reliability has improved of late, but Audi's spotty reliability brings the combined automaker's score down. If the new Jetta sedan, with its low-grade interior and mediocre fuel economy, is an indication of where Volkswagen is headed, it's going in the wrong direction. *Consumer Reports* recommends 53 percent of the Volkswagen and Audi models tested.

Mercedes-Benz and BMW, with below-average reliability, are near the bottom of *Consumer Reports* Automakers Report Card rankings.

SUVs from both carmakers, especially, had reliability problems, according to CR's Annual Auto Survey.

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