

HONDA
Power
Equipment

J. Addams & Partners Case Files #1: Launching the HRX Lawnmower



Challenge

Launch the Honda HRX, the most technologically advanced lawnmower in the world. It mulches, bags or simultaneously mulches and bags grass clippings without the need to change bags or add parts.

Program

We advised our client that because Honda has earned its reputation for technological and environmental innovation, it needed to position the HRX as a cutting-edge technology product to provoke curiosity and interest and transcend the staid lawnmower category.



In carrying out this position, the communications teams designed an atypical logo and high-tech marketing, advertising and press materials in hard copy, on CD and on the Web site. We brought

in a scientist as spokesperson, advisor to the campaign and byliner for some of the press materials.

We launched the product last fall at an elaborate press event/demo held one day prior to the year's largest outdoor power equipment trade show. We teased the launch with a pre-event e-mail



and snail mail campaign. After the event, we followed up by distributing electronic and cleverly packaged hard copy press kits to all of the targeted media outlets and pitching the technology and environmental aspects of the story. The second phase follow-up continues.

continued

Honda HRX Lawnmower **GENERAL OVERVIEW** 1

Introduction

In order to meet or exceed customer expectation, Honda engineers strive for continuous improvement - providing new and innovative features to improve its products. When the experts at Honda realized that an increasing number of lawnmower users desire the ability to bag a portion of the lawn clippings *while* also mulching the remaining quantity, the design began for a revolutionary model incorporating this feature.

Unlike existing models that can bag and mulch only when parts are removed and appendages changed, Honda's new HRX lawnmower line is designed with the Versamow System allowing for the first time the simultaneous action of bagging and mulching grass clippings. This unique system easily enables concurrent distribution of clippings to both the bag and the ground.

Capabilities

- The high performance Honda HRX lawnmower series is designed to:
- attain best-in-class performance in both mulching and bagging modes (this normally requires two separate models, each designed for the respective purpose).
 - increase the convenience for the user to convert between mulching and bagging modes without the use of any tools or the removal of any equipment.
 - provide new functionality by allowing a partial mulch/bag operation that allows the user to choose what percentage of grass clippings are mulched or bagged.
 - improve bagging performance by increasing the distance the operator can mow between bag cleanings, while maintaining the high grooming standards that homeowners - and their neighbors - demand.



HRX

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Results & Comments

HRX



Results

- The HRX is being covered favorably by major business and trade outlets, including *Consumer Reports*, *NBC's Today Show* and a number of lawn, garden and outdoor publications.
- The HRX launch won a 2004 MAX Award for excellence in marketing from Georgia State University and the *Atlanta Business Chronicle*.
- Even though the HRX has one of the highest price points in the segment, initial production sold out early in the season.



Comments

Congratulations to all of you for your contributions to this top rating and review in the most important consumer publication in North America. Yes, a lot of credit goes to the development team, no doubt, but unless the product and its associated information is communicated effectively to the media, nothing will come of it. J. Addams & Partners and the Honda PR Team did the legwork, wrote the copy, produced the press kits & events – doing what PR pros are supposed to do, and it paid off. Kudos to all of you. Thanks again.

~ Kurt Antonius, Senior Manager, Public Relations, American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Probably the most impressive press kit I've seen in a long time and I see a bunch of them. Assume you had a lot to do with that? Very well done...and very complete. Will likely show it to my JRN 450 class at Central Michigan University— public relations writing. I teach PR/ Journalism there.

AP Associated Press

~ Ed Hutchison, spring garden editor, Associated Press

Can you also pass on a complement to the press release author? I must see a dozen of these a week from everything from tires to new trucks to motorcycles and even clothing lines, and this is the only one that stands out on the shelf. Very creative and nicely put together. Has to be the most unique that I have seen this season.

~ Matthew Baynard, Product Evaluations Section Editor, The Rubicon Media Group Inc.

