

DAILY VARIETY

Reed Business Information (RBI)

LOS ANGELES ■ THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2010 ■ VARIETY.COM

Hulu show driven by Buzzmedia

By MARC GRASER

"American Idol" co-creator Simon Fuller has moved five wannabe stars into a house in the Hollywood Hills as part of his new online reality series, "If I Can Dream," for Hulu. Now he just needs to draw in some voyeurs to follow their every move.

To do that, Fuller's 19 Entertainment paired with entertainment website operator Buzzmedia to produce a campaign in the form of a six-webisode series that revolves around the contestants and Ford Motor Co.

As a promo tool for its own sites, the effort prominently features Jared, the name behind popular celebrity site JustJared.com, as the campaign's host, with the blogger appearing in several installments that launch today and roll out over the next two months.

Buzzmedia had to juggle the goals of two companies as it hyped the goings-on of the "Dream" house: 19 Entertainment wants to drive traffic to its show and build a following

See BUZZ page 8

BUZZ

Continued from page 3

with that viewership, while Ford, which has been a major sponsor of "Idol" over the years, wants to up the exposure of its new small Fiesta among younger consumers.

But the ultimate goal is "to make these people famous," said Doug Rohrer, Buzzmedia's chief revenue officer, and make them regulars in the celebrity blogosphere.

"If I Can Dream" revolves around three aspiring actors, a model and a musician as they attempt to show off their talents and break into Hollywood.

Viewers of Hulu's first original series will be able to watch live streams and interact, in real time, with the contestants via the show's own website, on Facebook and MySpace, Twitter, various blogs and via texts.

The campaign, and resulting show, enables Ford to showcase the Fiesta's new exterior design and features like keyless entry and its new Sync system, the automaker's innovative revamped entertainment offering now in all of its new vehicles.

"The show is a natural exten-



sion of Fiesta's vibrant life online," said Connie Fontaine, manager of brand content and alliances for Ford. "Like our Fiesta Movement program, the cast of the show will communicate with fans and followers via social media. The Ford Fiesta already had the attention of socially connected consumers months before it went on sale in

North America, so when 19 Entertainment approached us to cast the Fiesta in 'If I Can Dream,' it seemed only natural."

Buzzmedia's Web series puts the contestants into the Fiestas as they race around Hollywood to compete in a scavenger hunt, for example, or has host Jared calling the members using Sync.

Buzzmedia's JustJared.com, Okmagazine.com, Celebuzz and Socialite Life will also be wrapped in "If I Can Dream" and Ford Fiesta branding as part of the campaign.

"We're lucky in that we have influencers pumping out what's interesting about pop culture to a captive audience," Rohrer said. "It's not a matter of not getting to that audience. It's just a matter of what that number will end up being."

Buzzmedia has a history of connecting celebrities that appear on its websites with brands.

Its previous Web-based video campaigns paired up Ashley Tisdale with JCPenney, Nicole Richie with Starbucks, Kim Kardashian with Sony Ericsson, Judah Friedlander with KFC's Double Down sandwich and the band Forever the Sickest Kids with Electronic Arts videogame "The Sims 3."