



## **Earth Friendly and People Friendly, A Growing Business Does Both -Sarah Roberge**

*Web Direct Brands, Inc. is trying to make a difference. For the year of 2008, employees who purchased a hybrid car, or a car that was otherwise fuel efficient (40+ mpg highway driving or 30+ mpg city driving), would share in a gift of \$3,000 gift from the company for eco-awareness.*

Odessa, FL ([PRWEB](#)) January 1, 2009 -- Matt Raab, the Vice President of Web Direct Brands, Inc. in Odessa, FL, says that this initiative coincides with a number of other actions employed by the company, such as the use of natural lighting and recycled or reused packing material. Natural lighting is provided by skylights in the company building, while waste paper is shredded for packing materials; any salvageable packing materials from incoming shipments are also reused. In addition to these steps, the company is trying to cut back on waste materials by eliminating the use of consumable products. The company used to provide bottled water for employees, but has replaced the waste of bottled water with the use of a reverse osmosis water filtering system so employees can still have fresh, tasteful water without the waste of plastic bottles (which were recycled). Similarly, while the café provides plenty of coffee for employees, the company is eliminating the use of paper cups by encouraging employees to bring mugs from home.

"We are a growing company and we wanted to make a difference now, and use our actions early on to instill eco-consciousness as a part of our company's culture," says Raab. It will be easier to start off as an eco-conscious company than to change later, and the company sincerely appreciates its numerous clients who are aware of the carbon footprint reducing benefits to shopping online, he explains.

In addition to being energy aware, the company is also animal friendly; roosters, a cat, and a dog all make Web Direct Brands their home. "When we purchased the land, the chickens were already here, and we figured they had primary rights to it," states Raab. So, rather than drive off the birds or have them destroyed, the company purchased feed for them. The cat, Monticore, and dog, Lucy, were both strays found by employees of the company. And it's not just the animals that benefit. Many employees purchase treats for animals, outside of the basic needs for which the company provides. And company executives point out that studies show a correlation between pet ownership and improved coronary and mental health.

"We built this building to focus on employees, so they can focus on our customers," says Anthony Gaeto, President and CEO. With this in mind, the building was constructed around living trees, and the employee work stations are centralized around each planter. Similar to the company pets, indoor plants provide numerous health benefits to employees, with the added advantage of also lowering heating and cooling costs and improving indoor air quality. Likewise, the fitness equipment displayed on the showroom floor is available for employee use. Gaeto explains that Web Direct Brands began selling the equipment when he realized one of his employees is a fitness buff, showing how he utilizes and draws on employee interests and talents. Furthermore, the company stocks the small café with only healthy foods. "The plan, down the road, is to stock lunches employees can purchase for a discount," Raab reveals. For now, it operates on self service, but eventually company executives plan on hiring a cook to prepare meals for purchase.

It's this kind of attention to employee comfort and well-being, coupled with green friendly practices, that led Web Direct Brands, Inc., to extend the eco-aware gift. On December 15, 2008, Scott Griffin, Art Director, took



advantage of the offer when he purchased a 2005 Honda Accord Hybrid. "I chose the car for its fuel economy and bigger size," he says. His vehicle at the time would not accommodate the future demands of his family, so he decided that now was the time to purchase a vehicle. The gift from the company allowed him to choose a vehicle with perks like a leather interior and internal navigation. The sportier appearance of the Accord Hybrid also appealed to him. "I'm a young man and I wanted something that was above the standard (appearance of) a hybrid," he explains.

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