Device that would turn consumers into EV energy distributors wins GfK's 2023 NextGen Data Science Competition

Team from CUNY's College of Staten Island claims $5,000 grand prize, presentation at Insights Association event

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With the current lack of charging stations still posing a huge obstacle for electric vehicle (EV) adoption, three undergraduates from New York City have proposed a radical solution – turn EV owners into energy sellers and sharers, creating a more democratic marketplace.

A team from CUNY's College of Staten Island won GfK's 2023 NextGen Data Science Hackathon Competition. From left: Ortega, Babad, Costello

The students won this year's GfK NextGen Data Science Hackathon Competition with their imaginative idea, known as PowerShare. The team – from the College of Staten Island (CSI), part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system – will share a $5,000 grand prize and present their work at the Insights Association's Annual Conference in April. Members of the CSI team are:

• Tammy Babad – Senior, Computer Science (CUNYBA)
• Brendan Costello – Freshman, Economics
• Brandon Ortega – Junior, Information Systems and Informatics

The winning team's innovation – a nozzle that can connect to other vehicles, allowing energy transfer in either direction – would allow EV owners to buy, sell, or share energy with each other. The device would also alleviate some of the need for fixed charging stations throughout the country.

Competitors in the 10-day event had access to a variety of GfK data and needed to develop innovations related to some aspect of sustainability. GfK produces the competition in collaboration with the Insights Association. Judges evaluated the teams – which had just 5

minutes each to present – primarily on their use of data science and analytics, although the business potential of their innovations also played a role. This year's client judges were:
- Steve Nemeth – Strategic Planning & Research Manager, American Honda Motor Co.
- James Wiltshire – Manager, Voice of Customer and New Initiatives, Kia America

Also evaluating the student presentations were Rolfe Swinton (VP, Data Innovation and Partnerships), Jeremiah Bullock (Client Solutions Manager), Maritza Marquez (Director of Studies, Market & Consumer Intelligence) and Nicole Wiebe (Director, Marketing Science). In addition, Chris Robson (Senior Director, Data Science, Human8 (formerly Gongos/InSites Consulting) provided coaching to the teams on behalf of IA.

"It is a thrill every year to see student teams from a wide variety of majors – from Computer Science to Data Analytics to Business – come together to turn data into business innovation," said Swinton. "In corporations, we are also seeing the lines blur between marketing, IT, finance, and other stakeholders – trying to break down the silos that stand in the way of optimal decisions. The CSI team exemplified this new collaboration, producing a genuine innovation through solid data analysis. We are very glad to be nurturing a new generation of insights and data professionals, giving them an opportunity to collaborate in a time-bound, data-driven effort that they can then showcase – something valuable as students now, and as a lead-up to a post-college career."

"The novel idea developed by the students at CUNY illustrates the power of insights to fuel innovation," commented Melanie Courtright, CEO of the Insights Association. "We're excited to host the winning team next month at our Annual Conference and have our members learn about their solution firsthand and see how data inspired and influenced it. This is a rewarding experience for all involved. Supporting activities like the GfK NextGen Data Science Hackathon Competition is essential as it shines a light on our industry and attracts creative young minds to it."

Now in its 12th year, the NextGen Competition gives undergraduates firsthand exposure to solving real-life business problems with consumer insights and data. Five years ago, GfK North America reimagined the competition as a 10-day hackathon, in which students mine raw data sets for relevant insights and then convert them into business guidance. The change reflects a radical transformation in consumer insights, in which data integration and predictive analysis now play dramatically larger roles.

The Insights Association protects and creates demand for the evolving Insights and Analytics industry by promoting the indisputable role of insights in driving business impact. All revenue is invested in quality standards, legal and business advocacy, education, certification, and direct support to enable its members to thrive.

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