



News

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Focus Put on Efficiency at Promax

Marketing Seen as More Crucial Than Ever in a Fragmented Marketplace

By Chris Pursell

An increasingly fragmented marketplace increases the demand for effective TV marketing with every passing year, but most network marketing budgets are failing to rise in proportion to the need.

That was the take-away from the annual Promax marketing and promotion conference in New York last week, during which the issues being presented both behind closed doors at the ABC, CBS and NBC affiliate marketing meetings and in the public sessions stressed the importance of efficiency in reaching audiences.

“Marketing has become as important as ever as content-scheduling has shifted to the hands of the consumer,” said Mike Benson, executive VP of marketing, advertising and promotion at ABC and chairman of the Promax board of directors. “Because of this, despite the fact that marketing budgets are not going up, we have to zero in on more efficient ways to spend the money.”

The overall message remained clear throughout sessions: The fragmentation of audiences has only placed more importance on creating awareness of the content.

“Throughout the conference, it was evident that people are thinking about their brands on more than one screen,” said Seth Epstein, founder of interactive agency BroadTent. “How the brand experience translates across screens is becoming more and more important. Also, while the quality of the creative

aspects of these brand translations is solid, the tactics are still being worked out. It's an evolving process and this is a time of great experimentation. Even the biggest brands are experimenting."

Promax featured keynotes from "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane and futurist Nicolas Negroponte, as well as a network CMO summit. In addition, the organization presented WWE Chairman Vince McMahon with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

But many eyes were focused upon Promax President Jonathan Block-Verk, who was making his first appearance as the face of the organization.

"As audiences defect from television to other platforms, we've made it a mission to turn Promax into a multiplatform, 365-day association where our constituents can learn to be better at their jobs," Mr. Block-Verk said. "This event is the first part of that transition, as we move the association into the content business. Next we are looking at a major digital initiative that could very well revolutionize the business."

The global non-profit organization's annual three-day conference concluded Thursday with the 2008 Promax/BDA Promotion & Marketing Awards, honoring television's best promotion and marketing work.

Honors are divided regionally into North America and World Gold, with gold, silver and bronze awards in each category. The night's big winners among the North American entries were CTV Creative Agency and MTV Networks, which earned 11 golds awards apiece; CanWest Broadcasting, which earned 10; and FX Networks which received six gold statues.

Among the World Gold contenders, Fox Channels Italy topped the list, with the most company wins at five. The campaign earning the most gold awards was Discovery Networks UK's "London Ink" launch, which took home three statues.

"We were definitely blown away by just how much fantastic work was submitted for consideration," Mr. Block-Verk said. "Yet, several campaigns definitely emerged as the most innovative, effective and creative. And this evening has really served to showcase marketing and promotion's sophistication and sheer creativity around the world."