

Marketing to the Emerging MAJORITIES

July 01, 2004

Entertainment Marketers Hit Community Hot Points When Targeting Emerging Majorities

A truism of the political scene is that "all politics are local." A similar declaration could be made about marketing entertainment and media to emerging majority communities. While national and even global advertising, PR and marketing plans play a major role, grassroots is a key way to get and hold the target audience's loyalty and attention.

So whether it's MGM marketing Soul Plane or Tide laundry detergent sponsoring a segment on Tom Joyner's radio show, marketers have to be involved at the community level.

Entertainment Properties

The issues involved in marketing an entertainment property to an emerging majority community are similar to those in the general market. The biggest one is gaining visibility and mindshare. Or as Damon Haley of Urban Marketing Corp. of America (UMCA) puts it, a marketer has to ask himself: "How can I motivate someone to watch this?" For him, the answer is to give people something they can connect with on a personal level.

"And the best way to do that is grassroots marketing," Haley says.

Many of UMCA's grassroots efforts include the use of "ambassadors" who visit high-traffic locations such as barbershops and clubs. The job of an ambassador is to "talk something up" or to hand out palm cards (postcards with information on the front and back of them), Haley says.

For the FX TV movie "Redemption," which starred Jamie Foxx as a gang leader who became a children's book writer and youth activist while in prison, UMCA held poetry slams in 10 markets across the country prior to the movie's debut. At the slams, participants read their own redemption-themed poems.

"By participating in the slams, people could feel as if they got a piece of the movie they could attach themselves to," Haley says. "It's similar to a kid going to McDonald's and getting a Happy Meal toy from a movie. It gives them a connection to the film."

At each slam, the person voted as having the best poem received a prize of \$500.

"Grassroots works so well in these [African American, Asian and Hispanic] communities because they put a lot of stock in what they hear from their friends," Haley says. "It's not a big advertising machine coming at you telling you to see something or do something."

Haley says emerging majority consumers respond well to grassroots marketing because there's a certain level of comfort in seeing something in their own neighborhood. "If someone sees a poster for a movie in their local cleaner's they're more likely to go see it, because they're comfortable there and they know the setting," Haley says.

UMCA had movie posters at the slams, which were promoted on radio, signage and palm cards.

To promote MGM's Soul Plane, which was released in late May, UMCA dressed women in old-school stewardess outfits and stationed them in public places such as New York City's Times Square.

As part of its promotion for Popeye's 75th anniversary, King Features is launching a Hispanic marketing effort.

"Hispanics show the highest recognition among all groups with Popeye," says Nisreen Shocair of King

Features. "A lot of Hispanic kids didn't have Nickelodeon or the Cartoon Network growing up in different countries. But Popeye got a lot of play on the channels they did have."

Shocair says there will be a sweepstakes promoted in the Spanish-language supplements in English-language newspapers such as the Houston Chronicle and the San Antonio Express.

While many of the plans are still being worked out, Shocair says the company hopes to have TV, print and online elements as part of the campaign.

Entertainment Tie-ins

In a move intended to further establish itself within the African American community, Procter & Gamble announced an agreement with Reach Media last month to sponsor a number of promotions and segments on its "Tom Joyner Morning Show."

Joyner is on 115 stations across the U.S. and reportedly reaches one out of every four African Americans each week.

David Kantor of Reach Media says P&G knows it must do more than just advertise or align itself with Joyner to reach African Americans.

"P&G, or any marketer trying to establish a foothold with these groups, must give back to these communities," Kantor says.

A daily feature on Joyner's show is the "It's Your World" soap opera, and each day a P&G product will be announced as the segment's sponsor. Selected P&G products will also sponsor a weekly segment, "Thursday Morning Mom," in which Joyner reads one of many letters sent in by children or husbands about the daunting tasks their mothers perform in order to provide for their families. Joyner then awards the mom \$1,000.

P&G health-related products such as Pepto Bismol will sponsor the Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day promotion. And the company will be sampling its products and handing out coupons at Sky Show live remotes and on Joyner's 2005 Fantastic Voyage Cruise.

Revlon ran a "Wedding Wish" promotion last year for its Crème of Nature hair care, bringing together two components the African American community is passionate about—music and religion.

Melanie Few of Results, the company which put together the promotion, says Revlon not only gave away an all-expenses-paid wedding day, but provided the entertainment as well, in the form of Grammy Award-winning gospel singers Yolanda Adams and Mary Mary.

Advertising for Wedding Wish included print ads in African American publications such as Jet and Essence. Results also sent letters to African American churches asking them to alert their wedding planners.

"We got more than 200 Black churches to put a notice in their church letters about the program," Few says. "These communities wanted someone from their churches to win, so a lot of them got involved."

Participating couples had to send videotaped messages explaining why they wanted to win.

In January, Results also ran the Super Bowl Gospel Celebration in Houston, TX, (in conjunction with the football game) with Motorola, American Family Insurance and St. Joseph's Aspirin. Few says the goal for the companies was to convey the message that the Super Bowl was not something that only the wealthy could attend, as well as to raise brand awareness and introduce new products.

Performers included Patti Labelle, Yolanda Adams and Mary Mary.

Motorola used the event to introduce a new phone. In the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl, it held events at retail locations promoting the Gospel Celebration with the help of NFL players. Motorola also gave away several free phones at the Gospel Celebration.

St. Joseph's wanted to raise awareness of heart disease within the African American community and gave away two tickets to the game at the Celebration. Consumers registered for the ticket giveaway at supermarkets and retail locations around the country.

American Family Insurance looked to increase brand awareness in the African American community, and gave away 30-minute calling cards.

Awards Shows

Terra.com, which recently signed on to host the official website for the "5th Annual Latin Grammy Awards," will use a varied list of promotional techniques to attract users to the site in advance of the broadcast on September 1, 2004.

"This is one of the marquee events for Hispanics in the U.S.," says Mark Lopez of Terra.com. "And we want to give visitors to our site the opportunity to discuss the show and artists with one another."

Lopez says that over the next few months, Terra.com and its advertisers (as yet unidentified) will be running consumer promotions including a chance to win tickets to the show. "Advertisers will have the opportunity to take part in off-line promotional opportunities, sampling, signage at events, and coupons and other giveaways," he says.

Other events include street parties in New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston.