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## Video Report: Networks and Studios Applying New Measures to TV Promotion

By Dorian Benkoil

How do you hit moving targets as the sands shift beneath your feet? Oh, and by the way, the targets are shrinking, their numbers are multiplying, you have smaller bullets, and your shooting accuracy is being measured like never before.

**What's happening is return-on-investment metrics for entertainment marketing.**

That picture describes the world of today's TV programming publicists and promotion executives. With shrinking budgets, fragmented audiences, more outlets than ever, and confusion about the end goal of promotion (drive people to traditional TV? to DVRs? iPods? DVDs?), it's a new, confusing and very disrupted world.

"It used to be sufficient to shout in the wilderness, and if the show was successful, then the promotion department claimed credit for that success," Jeff Boortz of Concrete Pictures told *Jack Myers Media Business Report* last week at the Promax/BDA promotional trade show in New York. "Now what's happening is the beginning of return-on-investment metrics for entertainment marketing that will in my belief transform this conference five years from now."

It's not going to take that long. CBS-TV this week joined NBC Universal and two other networks that have signed on with Teletrax, a "watermarking" application that records when promotional spots have run across the network.

"We try and track or electronically monitor as many things as we can," **Scot Chastain**, SVP of affiliate advertising and promotion services, NBC Entertainment told *Jack Myers Media Business Report* in an exclusive interview. "We measure down to minute, market-by-market details" to find out whether NBC's 232 stations are fulfilling obligations to run promotions, and which promos are working.

### Using Technology to Engage Audiences

Cable networks, meanwhile, are rushing to use the newest technologies to reach their audiences like never before. Bravo Networks' new "360-degree" strategy not only promotes shows on six non-TV platforms — iPod, .com, video on demand, mobile, wireless Internet (or WAP), and DVD. — but also creates original programs on those outlets. They also use traditional advertising, two-way interactive technologies like blogs, "experiential" techniques like book signings, and social networks like **MySpace** and **Facebook**.

"This is like a swirling mass of information, and consumers seem to feel very comfortable in a swirling mass of information," **Bravo** president **Lauren Zalaznick** said.

Bravo has gone through three versions of the *Top Chef* Web site. The new one, launched this month, includes the original Web-only cooking show *Miami Spice*, a kitchen game, a recipe finder, food and drink blogs, and a special new emphasis on mobile. "Wireless has suddenly become a robust business," said **Jane Olson**, VP of Brand Strategy and Creative Director. "We get users that don't necessarily watch *Top Chef*."

**FX Networks** is keeping viewers engaged with everything from 15-minute Web-only "promosodes" of *The Shield* to viewer-submitted photos of their own bodies for the plastic surgery drama *Nip/Tuck* to **Courtney Cox** phoning in answers to the *Dirt* Web site about how she felt about using a vibrator on the show. FX's site traffic has gone up 38 percent, from last year, Marketing and On Air Promotion EVP **Stephanie Gibbons** said.

But all the new technology doesn't mean that top TV executives are ready to abandon traditional TV. CBS President and CEO **Les Moonves** told a Newhouse School breakfast audience that he didn't care where his programming was viewed - as long as he made money from it — and then argued that traditional network TV aggregates audiences like no other medium.

"I get paid for TV ads," he said.

### Traditional Ads, With Measurement

Traditional advertising, too, still holds tremendous sway. Large, static billboards — let alone the newest electronic ones — show iconic images that stick in the mind, Promax interim managing director **Lee Hunt** told *Jack Myers Media Business Report*. FX's Gibbons she uses media that reflect her audience.

"Radio is still an important part of the mix," she said. "It's the last thing people might hear before they leave their car and enter their home."

Still, promotion departments are going to have new tools, and new pressures, as technology makes it possible to track viewers as never before. With cable TV bandwidth starting to strain, viewers will increasingly be pushed to digital TV that can track their every move. TiVo already has a way for viewers to reserve a program they've just seen advertised.

"That's the holy grail of advertising. You've just created a transaction," Boortz says. "You can say, 'Hey, we've been launching five promos, and this one's getting more people, and the people that I want, not the people that I don't want, to commit to watching this show. The success will transform it so that it's the right creative, not the fashionable creative that runs.'"

In other words, the day is coming when it will be fine to be wild and creative with your creative advertising. As long as that nifty creative gives strictly measurable results.

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