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By: Scott Donaton

Small Business / Media

Television Pioneer Breaks New Ground With Studio Ad Buyers

David Sheehan's ACADEMY AWARDS MOVIE MAGIC aired on 259 television stations in 198 markets covering 96.544% of U.S. DMAs during the latter part of February leading up to this past Sunday's Oscar ceremonies. The 2007 Academy Awards brought back a feel for old Hollywood, in its glory days. You don't see many commercial spots like in the Super Bowl because the Academy buys the time so their own show can exceed the allocated amount of space on the air that the network regulates. However, in syndicated television, David Sheehan has embarked on a new way of doing things.



David Sheehan and Jack Nicholson

The distribution success generated an unusual spot-buy ad sales marketing bonanza for a small Southern California production and syndication company owned and operated by the dean of TV entertainment reporters, aka, David Sheehan.

..... Not only has "Academy Awards Movie Magic" set records as the most successful syndicated special in history, the show that is all about the Oscar movies is supported by spot-buy advertising primarily bought by three major movie studios: Disney, Warner Bros. and the Weinstein Company.

The Disney brand was represented in the show by :30 spots on new releases "Bridge to Terabithia", "Wild Hogs" and "Meet The Robinsons", with the Disney Buena Vista Home Entertainment brand advertising its new DVD release of "The Prestige".

Warner Bros. bought its :30 in Academy Awards Movie Magic for the new Hugh Grant - Drew Barrymore romantic musical comedy "Music and Lyrics", while the Warner Home Entertainment brand placed its :15 spot for the DVD release of Martin Scorsese's Best Picture and Best Director Oscar winner "The Departed" as a unique "closed captioning brought to you by" sponsor.

Harvey Weinstein's Weinstein Company used Academy Awards Movie Magic to trumpet "Factory Girl", its racy 'R' rated Edie Sedgwick bio-drama starring Sienna Miller, with a :30 running in rotation with a second :30 for the new wide re-release rollout of the other Weinstein bio-drama: the Renee Zellweger starrer "Miss Potter".

The company behind the show, Hollywood Close-Ups, Inc., gave the movie studios special accommodation by putting up a series of three different nationwide satellite feeds during the February 10 thru February 25 Academy Awards Movie Magic broadcast window, so that creative commercial content material could be changed to reflect opening dates.

The :30 for Disney's "Bridge to Terabithia", for example, began with an "Opening February 16" tag and switched for the second show feed to a "Now Playing" tag.

Likewise, Warner Home Entertainment's :15 for "The Departed" DVD release advertised its February 13 HiDef street date in the first satellite transmission and switched to an "Own It Now" tagline for the show's second feed. Meanwhile, Disney's Buena Vista Home Entertainment :30 for "The Prestige" proclaimed "Own It on DVD and Blu-ray Disc February 20" during the first two feeds of Academy Awards Movie Magic, switching to an "Own It Now" tag for the show's 3rd feed.

The only non-studio spot in Academy Awards Movie Magic is a :30 purchased by the John Paul Mitchell hair care products, promoting a new shampoo with the slogan "only your salon guarantees the real Paul Mitchell."

I think this is something new in advertising. If you accept change, you get art. That is the art of advertising in a nutshell: Changing people. Getting them to think and do what they previously have not. This requires provocation. Hollywood is usually ahead of the game, and this is somewhat of a change. Which is good.

I like a lot of what's going on in advertising today, but it's an embarrassingly small minority of our output. Small companies have an agility to move the industry forward. David Sheehan's Hollywood Close-Ups, Inc is an indisputable example. We should set similar goals. Not mimicking what others have done, but refining an industry that easily falls into the status quo.

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