

RTE

How the power of television worked for RTE.



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RTE

Agency:
Chemistry

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INTRODUCTION

This submission outlines how Ireland's national broadcaster, experiencing competition for the first time in its 40-year existence, used television advertising to attract new and lapsed advertisers to the medium. It demonstrates how a single campaign met the entire year's new business targets, recouped all the investment costs after the first burst and has continued to run as a lead generator in short, efficient and cost-effective bursts.

MARKETING BACKGROUND

For the vast majority of its history, RTÉ Television enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the Irish marketplace. The demand for TV advertising exceeded supply. As a result, TV advertising was bought on a pre-empt basis – spots were sold to whoever paid the highest price. During this period, RTÉ Television did not have to try too hard to market itself to potential advertisers – it was simply the case that, if advertisers could afford TV, they advertised on RTÉ Television.

In recent years, the situation began to change. Firstly, media fragmentation began to erode RTÉ's share of the market, with other media commanding ever-increasing shares of advertisers' budgets. Secondly, RTÉ found it had competitors – both international and indigenous channels, terrestrial and satellite. In summary, RTÉ found it was losing out to rival media.

OBJECTIVES

The campaign had three primary objectives and one secondary objective:

1. Convince advertisers who don't currently use TV advertising to consider TV as a medium
2. Communicate that TV is:
 - a good value medium
 - highly impactful
 - cheaper than you think to produce
3. Specifically, generate 100 sales enquiries (requests for information packs), leading to 60 face-to-face presentations, leading to 40 conversions (new advertisers).
4. A secondary objective was to (ideally, if the campaign proved successful!) produce a case study which could be used to convince potential advertisers in the future

TARGET AUDIENCE

Our target audiences were businesses, senior marketing, overall management and finance roles. These prospects divided into two distinct groups based on their attitudes or objections:

1. "Can't afforders": Mostly smaller advertisers ruling out TV as a medium because they perceived it to be too expensive from a media and / or production cost point-of-view
2. "Rejectors": Many other potential advertisers rejected the medium for a variety of reasons, such as "my target market doesn't watch TV anyway" or "it's not appropriate for my brand"

MARKETING STRATEGY

Of these two attitudinal groups, by far the biggest potential for new TV advertising business – and the easiest sale – were those potential advertisers who thought they couldn't afford it.

Therefore, we decided to make this

our primary audience as far as our proposition was concerned.

We were also aware that the “advertising behaviour” of RTÉ would do much to address the second group – if RTÉ itself was using a mass medium such as TV to address quite a small business-to-business audience, it must be effective.

MEDIA STRATEGY

In order to make the most of quite a small media budget (€80,000), we used a combination strategy, bought on a spot-by-spot basis. First, we placed highly targeted spots, in and around news, current affairs and business programmes. While these delivered very high ratings, they also consumed quite a lot of budget, therefore, we augmented these with “distress” spots – last minute bookings as a result of cancellations that were bought very cheaply but extended the OTS.

We produced four TV ads, of varying lengths (40-, 30- and 25-second) each with a 15 second cut-down: “Alien Abduction”, “Plug”, “Rugby” and “Racing”.

In targeted spots, we used a combination of longer lengths and 15” cut-downs to top and tail breaks; in distress spots we used mostly 15”, with the emphasis on generating a response.

CREATIVE STRATEGY

There were two parts to our creative strategy.

First, we wanted to demonstrate to the target audience how powerful TV advertising can be. To do this, we needed to involve the viewer with the communication, making them realise that being on TV was the ideal. In other words, by involving them in the ruse, getting them to accept that they really wish they could advertise on TV.

Having done this, we then needed to remove the obstacles to being on TV. This meant telling them that there

are no financial or practical obstacles to being on TV. From both a production and a media viewpoint, we wanted to make them aware that it was “cheaper than they think”.

The call-to-action was a prompt to phone for further information. Callers were sent a TV advertising information pack, containing all the details a potential TV advertiser might need:

- efficacy
- production costs
- value for money (compared with other media)

Leads were then followed up by the RTÉ TV sales team.

In effect, these ads demonstrate the power of TV as a medium by playing to the medium’s strengths. That’s why these scripts are fun and entertaining and why we used recognisable formats from the medium, all being hijacked for commercial purposes.

All ads show how easy it can be to get your message across without huge costs. And collectively they prove the power of the medium by virtue of RTÉ using that medium only to target potential advertisers. Therefore, we dealt with all the obstacles our primary audience, the “can’t afforders” put up.

However, the secondary target audience, the “rejectors”, who would not consider TV appropriate for their brand, were also addressed by this communication. They could also be swayed by seeing RTÉ use TV for such a small B2B audience – if this ad convinced them, surely their ad might convince their target audience?

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Unlike most of our clients, there is no need for us to index the campaign results, as RTÉ are more than happy to use this campaign as another means of convincing potential TV advertisers that’s it’s cheaper, easier and, most of all, more effective to use than they think.

Since then, RTÉ have been using this campaign as a “tap”: it is being

ADVERTISING BURST	ADULT TVRS	CALLS RECEIVED	GENUINE LEADS
29/08/01 - 03/09/01	173	353	240
10/11/01 - 13/11/01	138	160	121
TOTAL	371	513 (513% of Target)	361 (601% of Target)
NEW ADVERTISING GENERATED BY CAMPAIGN (First Burst Only)			€130,000
TOTAL CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURE (Production & Media)			€111,000
NET PROFIT (First Burst Only)			€19,000



run in short bursts to generate leads which are then followed up by the sales team. The maximum duration of subsequent campaigns is three days – by which time, a sufficient quantity of leads are generated.

SUMMARY

This paper documents the successful strategy adopted by a national TV broadcaster, advertising itself to potential advertisers on TV for the first time ever.

It shows how a mass medium like TV can be deployed effectively to reach a very targeted audience.

The success of the campaign proves the point that advertising on TV is not necessarily prohibitively expensive – from a production or media perspective.

It shows that an investment in advertising can deliver a return on

investment incredibly quickly.

Finally, it’s a very fine example of a media owner practicing what it preaches. For years, potential advertisers were being told that TV advertising works; this case study proves it, not least to the media owner itself.

“For far too long, TV has been the sole preserve of major advertisers and business-to-consumer advertisers. This initiative proved to us that, used correctly, it is also by far the most effective medium for business-to-business and that it can equally benefit smaller advertisers – like RTÉ. This campaign has been one of the most successful in the company’s history. It has now paid for itself many times over. And we continue to use the case study to attract new advertisers to RTÉ.” Geraldine O’Leary, Director, Sales & Marketing, RTÉ.



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