

Brand Building with DRTV

By Doug Garnett, President, Atomic Direct

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DRTV has come a long way from its start over 20 years ago. And along the way, its power has changed. Today, DRTV's biggest impact comes at the retail store, where between 10 and 20 units are sold for every unit that is sold by phone.

A New DRTV

This retail power has led to a new DRTV - a brand building DRTV - that drives sales while building brand. And the list of brands using this new wave of DRTV reads like a who's who of the brand world: DuPont (Teflon), Rubbermaid, P&G, Unilever, Microsoft, Apple, Home Depot, Sears, Target and AAA. Although this power starts in the typical DRTV categories (e.g. fitness & housewares), it extends beyond, into consumer electronics, hardware, beauty, recreation, insurance and more.

The idea of branding with DRTV may come as a surprise to many who think DRTV success requires over-the-top actors who promise miracles in three easy payments. But the best of brand building DRTV is creatively executed with superb production quality. (If you're concerned about those old "yell & sell" DRTV commercials, think of them like the local used car lot ads - you wouldn't associate your brand with either creative approach.)

The Power of DRTV

The brand power of DRTV is the result of the intersection of five key benefits.

- Superb Communication: DRTV delivers the communication power of television and of product demonstration.
- Low Cost: DRTV is the most cost-effective television available, often delivering 2 to 10 times more impact per dollar than traditional TV.
- Superb branding: DRTV is action-orientated and engages consumers with your brand more quickly than the passivity of "statement-oriented" advertising.

- Create Demand: DRTV creates demand at retail - and this definitely influences retail buyers and executives.
- ROI Media: DRTV has the ability to measure direct consumer response to media and can shift buys to the media that perform best.

How can a brand start tapping this new power of DRTV?

First, understand that the most powerful DRTV branding comes from demonstrating the product. So, many brands pick flagship products then build their DRTV to demonstrate the features of that specific product which showcases attributes of their entire brand.

Note also that the best DRTV branding has come when brands build long-term relationships with superb DRTV strategic agencies. First, by picking DRTV specialists - not general advertising agencies - because specialist agencies best deliver DRTV's economic power. Second, by picking a DRTV *agency* who understand branding - not a DRTV production company masquerading as an agency.

The Niche Opportunity for Brand DRTV

We could be tempted to think that only the largest mass brands can use DRTV. But the development of excellent niche cable outlets has made DRTV affordable to a surprising range of companies including many who could never afford traditional TV. For example, during the past four years my agency has led a successful brand DRTV campaign for a very specialized product - drill bit sharpeners. This buyer audience is so focused that fully half of our purchasers own arc welders.

Given all this success, isn't it time for your brand to tap into DRTV's brand-building potential?

About the author:

Doug Garnett is president of Atomic Direct - a boutique DRTV agency with a unique vision of how to build brands through DRTV. Atomic's clients include Rubbermaid, DuPont (Teflon), Alberto-Culver, AAA and the Drill Doctor. He also teaches advertising in the School of Business Administration at Portland State University.