

As appeared in the April issue of Response Magazine

Response

The Source for Electronic
Direct Marketing Professionals

PUTTING THEM ON THE SPOT



DRTV spots are performing well across the board this year.

BY BRIDGET MCCREA

When Collette Liantonio hunkers down to lay out her plan for a new short-form DRTV spot, she likes to use a clean slate and original idea. “I like to create spots from scratch,” says Liantonio, president of Concepts TV Productions in Boonton, N.J. “I don’t even want to see anyone else’s spots, even if I’m creating a competitive show.”

Fiercely independent and creative, Liantonio was shocked last year when a little birdie told her that a competitor not only copied much of her Better Pasta Pot show, but that he had the gall to run her show on a monitor in the very studio where he was shooting his own pasta pot show.

“They studied my show right as they were producing theirs so they could emulate the camera angles that we used,” says Liantonio. “That’s just not right.”

It may not be “right,” but mimicry is very common in an industry characterized by copycats and knockoffs. Liantonio attributes the lapse in judgment to a definite lack of “original brains” in the short-form arena. “It’s not that there can’t be competitive products, but at least write your own script and shoot your own spot,” she says, adding that the race to be “first and best” is getting harder and harder to win in the short-form arena.

Despite the rampant competition, Liantonio says her firm’s Better Pasta Pot did claim its share of the pasta pot-craze, and went neck-and-neck with a similar product for first position. “I know for a



Spot Production

fact that one campaign is spending \$750,000 per week on media profitably,” says Liantonio. “That’s one in a very crowded field. Once again, it was not a patented item. Everybody and his brother got in the act. It was crazy.”

The craziness comes from a simple source: the fact that short-form spots are hot right now, and everyone is using them — from the gadget producers to the housewares marketers to corporations like Radio Shack and Microsoft. In the past year, many marketers have also begun using spokespeople in their spots — a rarity until just recently, says Liantonio — and using the shows to drive both retail and online sales.

The latter is particularly popular, according to Liantonio. “We’re seeing a lot of short form being used to drive people to Web sites,” she says, adding that short form

is also being used for higher-ticket items, such as high-tech products. “It’s not all gadgets and gizmos anymore, but those products certainly aren’t suffering either.”

Yet another way marketers are milking more profit out of their \$19.95 ceiling on short-form products is by creatively charging double the shipping and handling costs for what — to the consumer — appears to be two separate orders. After agreeing to pay \$7.95 shipping and handling on a \$19.95 pasta pot, for example, customers are offered a free package of accessories, as long as they pay the \$8.95 shipping and handling charge.

Add it up, says Liantonio, and you get a \$36.85 short-form product. “\$29.95 does-



In addition to the Better Pasta Pot, some of Concepts TV's most successful spots include Mighty Titan knives, the Nutri Counter and Finishing Touch hair remover.

n't work with short-form housewares and gadgets,” says Liantonio. “This is helping marketers stay on the air at \$19.95.”

The Cost of Spot Production

The approximate costs for a 60-second spot over last year's numbers, and based on interviews with spot producers working from budget to high-end shows:

	2002		2003	
	Low-end 2002	High-end 2002	Low-end 2003	High-end 2003
Script consultation/concept	\$2,000	\$5,500	\$2,500	\$5,500
Script	\$2,500	\$7,500	\$2,500	\$8,000
Music/audio	\$1,000	\$4,500	\$1,200	\$4,500
Crew/equipment	\$5,000	\$24,000	\$5,000	\$24,000
Location/studio	\$2,500	\$15,000	\$2,500	\$15,000
Art direction/stylist	\$2,000	\$6,500	\$2,000	\$7,000
Props	\$1,000	\$6,000	\$1,200	\$6,000
Editing	\$4,000	\$28,000	\$4,000	\$20,000
Catering	\$600	\$2,750	\$800	\$2,750
Director	\$2,000	\$10,000	\$2,500	\$10,000
Voice-over	\$1,200	\$3,000	\$1,200	\$3,000
Animation/graphics	\$1,500	\$16,000	\$1,500	\$10,000
Mark-up (10-35%)	\$2,530 (10%)	\$45,062 (35%)	\$2,690 (10%)	\$42,088 (35%)
TOTAL	\$27,830	\$173,812	\$29,590	\$162,338

©Reprinted from RESPONSE, April 2003 AN ADVANSTAR PUBLICATION Printed in U.S.A.

Copyright Notice Copyright by Advanstar Communications Inc. Advanstar Communications Inc. retains all rights to this article. This article may only be viewed or printed (1) for personal use. User may not actively save any text or graphics/photos to local hard drives or duplicate this article in whole or in part, in any medium. Advanstar Communications Inc. home page is located at <http://www.advanstar.com>.

CONCEPTS
TV PRODUCTIONS INC.

Worldwide Direct Response Marketing



328 West Main Street, Boonton, NJ 07005
Ph: 973-331-1500 Fax: 973-331-1550 West Coast: 310-824-8801
email: collette@conceptstv.com • www.conceptstv.com