

From the Lab

Playing in the Big Leagues: Is Your Health and Beauty Product a Home Run?

Looking to get your chance to play in the big leagues with home shopping? It isn't an easy process, but it's not impossible and is definitely worth the effort. This month's "From the Lab" provides a thumbnail outline of five key points you need to focus on in your effort to get your health and beauty product into the home shopping big leagues!

1. Are You One of a Kind?

Like everyone, shopping networks are looking for products that have unique qualities and powerful claims. What are your product's unique selling properties (USPs)? What does your product do that others don't? Differentiation and problem solving is the name of the game. Furthermore, is your product truly a TV product? Is it demonstrable? All of your answers must be "Yes!" to entertain any hopes of airtime.

2. How Is Your Record?

Claims are the issue, particularly in the field of health and beauty where requirements and regulations are the most stringent. If you are claiming qualities that are unique to your product, be prepared to support it with documented scientific results. Your claims are not only monitored by the applicable federal agencies, but what you say on screen will be dictated by the networks' rigorous legal and quality assurance (QA) departments. Meticulous support for your claims is mandatory.

3. Be a Talented Pitcher, not a Belly-Itcher.

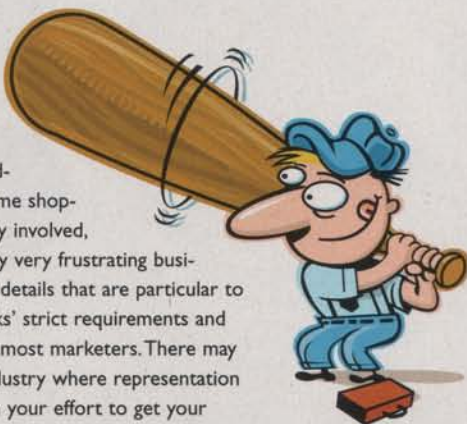
The old Little League taunt makes sense here. You may assume that the networks won't even look at a health or beauty product unless there is a popular or powerful personality there to pitch it. While a well-known face can give your product a great edge, it's not just the face but a presenter that is well trained and cognizant of the very sensitive nature of claims. Still, many of our experts agree that your personality, while very important, can really only sell a product that is unique in quality. Go back to square one.

4. Ensure 'Home Run' Delivery.

It seems a peripheral matter, but our experts all touched on the fact that often what holds the process up is labeling and packaging issues. Labels (particularly ingredient listings) must be in full compliance with federal regulation. Also, the shopping networks are going to make sure that packaging is first-rate. Is it ship-worthy? Does it arrive in the customer's hands in one safe, whole and aesthetically pleasing piece? Take care of these issues before you approach the buyer. You'll save yourself valuable playing time.

5. Your Agent Will Get it Done.

Getting your health or beauty product on one of the home shopping channels is a very involved, lengthy, and potentially very frustrating business. There are many details that are particular to the shopping networks' strict requirements and not widely known to most marketers. There may be no place in the industry where representation can be as crucial as in your effort to get your product on a shopping channel. The right relationships and connections are key and can save you time and money. Each one of our experts agree that if you want to save time, money, hassle and liability, find yourself a "Jerry Maguire" and let him do the talking.



Looking for your "Jerry Maguire?" Here are a couple of places you can start:

- Kim Banchs, TMP/Product Partners, (561) 999-8885
- Laura Fox, Fox Marketing Associates, Inc., (310) 452-2651

Questions to ask your prospective agent or broker:

- Who do you deal with, and for how long have you dealt with them?
- What products do they currently handle on what channels?
- Are they currently working as a broker, and if not, how long has it been?

Other Considerations.

- The Home Shopping Fan. Expect shopping network customers to be a loyal fan of their channel. They trust their channel. They will re-order from their channel. They will wait to buy from their channel. The expected outcome for you should be strong continuity programs and fertile ground for brand building.
- What can you expect for per-minute sales? To be successful, you can expect that you'll need to pull at least \$5,000-\$6,000 per minute, but the goal is always a single-item, single-airing sell-out.
- Will discounting for the shopping networks hurt DR sales? Resoundingly, the answer is no. Many marketers even think that the additional exposure helps boost overall product sales.

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Founded by Adam MacDonald, TEST Marketing Group operates a "Test Laboratory," where campaigns are developed by experts in a controlled environment. The TEST Laboratory is a specialized inbound/outbound phone center. The center is staffed with a group of specially trained marketing agents working on a state-of-the-art platform designed specifically to develop and measure the most profitable sales strategies for DR campaigns. Once determined, the strategy is "rolled-out" through the primary inbound and outbound telemarketer. The preferred result of this process: massive increases in net profit. TEST can be reached at (714) 546-5555. For Adam MacDonald, TEST CEO, dial ext. 202. For Chris Walshe, TEST president, dial ext. 201.

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