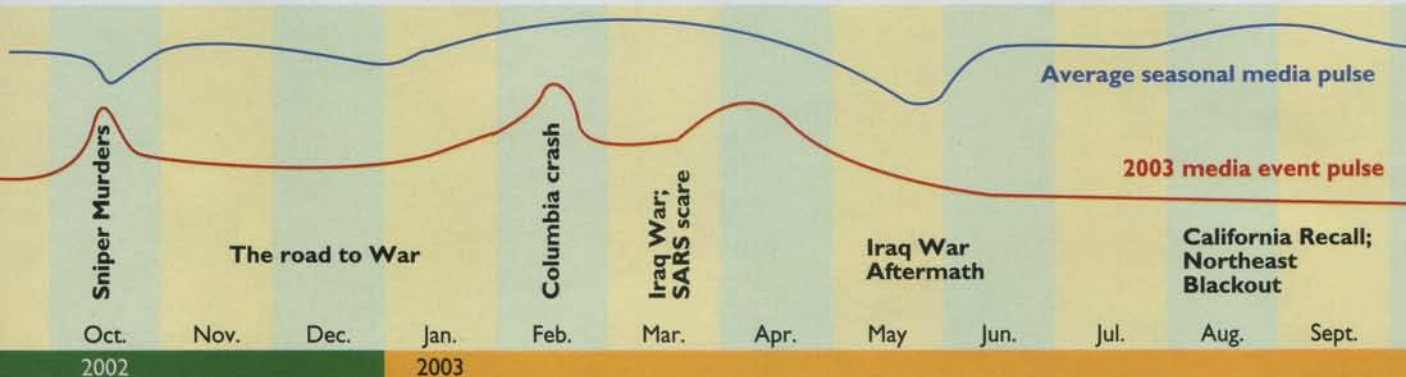


From the Lab

Recent Events Steel DRTV for Latest October Swoon

Put your new commercials away and hide them for a few weeks. "Red October" is here, where direct response results traditionally fall by at least 30 percent. Then again, the industry has had its share of media troubles since last October. How well has DRTV been able to persevere?



The past 12 months have featured events that have rocked the world at large, as well as the DRTV marketing world, including:

SEPTEMBER 2002 — President Bush seeks permission from Congress to act in Iraq; West Coast ports shut down; huge protest at Seattle International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank summit.

OCTOBER — Sniper attacks in Washington, D.C., area; Bali bombing kills 200; Chechen rebels take Moscow theatre hostage.

NOVEMBER — United Nations (U.N.) Security Council approves Iraq resolution.

DECEMBER — U.S./U.N. struggle with Iraq over weapons reports.

JANUARY 2003 — Bush presents case for war in State of the Union address; France objects to U.S. rush to war.

FEBRUARY — Space Shuttle Columbia crashes, killing seven astronauts; Secretary of State Colin Powell argues for war on Iraq at U.N. Security Council; Rhode Island club fire kills dozens.

MARCH — SARS strikes in Asia; War in Iraq begins.

APRIL — SARS spreads across world; Baghdad falls to U.S. troops; North Korea claims it has a nuclear bomb.

MAY-JULY — Iraq war declared "over," aftermath begins; Federal Trade Commission (FTC) creates national do-not-call list; controversy over Bush administration prewar claims escalates.

AUGUST — Bomb destroys U.N. compound in Iraq; continued terrorism grips Israel/Palestine conflict; Bombay blasts kill more than 50; California governor in recall battle; huge blackout hits northeast United States and southeast Canada.

What has this meant for DRTV? And how will the usual October downturn fare in this climate?

Long-form DRTV

85 percent of the year's top 20 infomercials have been running for more than one year, and more than half of those have been running for two years or more.

Short-form DRTV

36 percent of the top 20 spots have been running for more than a year, with nearly half of those spots running for at least two years.

General Conclusions

- Campaigns that survived the last year's rough media climate had momentum going in.
- Long-form shows tend to stay longer in the direct-to-consumer space, while short form offers a quicker payout in retail and the DR lifespan of the best spots is shorter. 70 percent of products with spots that have spent the last year on TV aren't yet at retail.

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Founded by Adam MacDonald, TEST Marketing Group gives direct response marketers an edge by combining in-depth knowledge and "big picture" DR experience to provide uniquely creative and practical input in developing a successful DR campaign. TEST also provides help selecting the right inbound and outbound telemarketing, fulfillment, media and manufacturing vendors for their clients' specific needs. For the latest trends in creative direct response marketing, call (714) 546-5555 and ask for Adam MacDonald, CEO, at ext. 202 or E-mail adam@testmg.com.

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