

The Starter Wife

Problem

How does a television miniseries find its audience?

Solution

Target both a general audience and potential viewers who identify with the main character.

Background

The main challenge was to drive tune-in to the premiere of the The Starter Wife miniseries on USA Networks. It was important to strongly connect with potential viewers prior to the premiere of the show, as the outdoor program ended a week into the series.

Another challenge was that the usual broad target of A18-49 needed to be more focused on men and women who are (or who want to be) part of the “it” crowd. The advertisements should also connect with any real-life “starter wives” who would be able to relate to the main character.

Objective

The agency decided to utilize formats that were in line with Debra Messing’s character in the show: interested in luxury and up-scale shops & boutiques, always at the salon, etc. Based on these challenges, the campaign had to speak to this very specific audience without isolating the general viewing audience.

Strategy

The agency built out a media plan that allowed ads to saturate the marketplace and reach viewers without being overbearing. A key facet of this strategy was placing advertisements in locations that echoed The Starter Wife lifestyle. One of these elements was the Hampton Luxury Liner, a bus that travels between Manhattan, Long Island and the Hamptons. A coach bus was fully wrapped with The Starter Wife creative and was in service for the entire month of May. The bus featured sneak peeks of The Starter Wife on its television screens the weekend before the premiere. An aerial banner program ran during Memorial Day weekend over beaches in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to remind beachgoers to tune in.

Sidewalk/street decals were purchased and placed directly outside of trendy boutiques and well-known designer shops in both New York City and Los Angeles. The decals were also used to target trade magazines in both markets. Phone kiosks outside major department stores supported these formats. Traditional bulletins and transit signage were secured to reach the general population in creating awareness about the show. During an interview with Debra Messing on The Today Show, host Meredith Vieira proclaimed she was “seeing the actress’ face on every bus in Manhattan!”



Plan Details

Flighting Dates: April 30 - June 24
Markets Selected: New York (Manhattan only) and Los Angeles (focus on West Hollywood area)
OOH Formats Used: Bulletins, transit, phone kiosks, wrapped coach buses, street decals

Results

According to a June 6, 2007 article in MediaLife Magazine, The Starter Wife “became the year’s biggest cable debut among adults 18-49 and USA’s best premier ever on a Thursday night in that demographic.” The premiere averaged 2.9MM viewers A18-49 and 5.4MM total viewers overall.

The Starter Wife consistently ranked in the top 25 in households of ad-supported cable shows and in the top 10 in A18-49 and A25-54. The show helped USA Network to remain in the top cable network for primetime over the month of May.