

POINT OF PURCHASE

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POP
TOOLS

Driving Sales With Video Demonstrations

By David Harouche

You wander into a local Williams & Sonoma cookware store and notice a small audience gathered around a television featuring a person effectively demonstrating Calphalon pots and pans. Among other perks, the demonstrator shows how quickly and evenly heat is conducted across the bottom of the pan by stir frying some vegetables. Fifteen minutes later, you walk out of the store with a Calphalon skillet. How did this happen? You were swayed at the point of purchase, not by traditional POP, but by an in-store video demonstration.

This approach, being used increasingly by brands and retailers, employs video as a demonstration tool. The video, which runs on a continuous loop, can demonstrate anything from Calphalon cookware to Skill power drills.

Multimedia Plus, a video production house that creates POP videos, worked with executives at Sushi Metsuyan to develop a POP video demonstrating the company's products, which include sushi ingredients, utensils and educational materials.

At each retail location, a video display is set up showing an "attention getting" demonstration that lasts for approximately five minutes before automatically rewinding and starting again. Consumers can see how to use the products and learn new recipes and helpful hints to make cooking and cleaning up easier.

"The best thing about video is that you get to demonstrate products in an ideal circumstance and situation," says Bernard BenLevi, president of Sushi Metsuyan. "With a live demonstration, you cannot guarantee that it will be cost-effective or that there will be chemistry between customers and the

demonstrator. People are so used to watching television and movies — if a screen is large enough and the video [is] entertaining enough, you are sure to get their attention and interest."

The Power Of Video

Video is an effective demonstration tool for a variety of reasons. Traditionally, companies have hired individuals to demonstrate products at the point of purchase. While issues such as cost and training have been factors for using video, an even greater factor has been the current low unemployment rate. Low unemployment has made it difficult to find good employees who are able to consistently make persuasive demonstrations. In a live demonstration, the sales message will only be as good as the demonstrator's abilities, chemistry between the demonstrator and the customers and the situation surrounding the presentation. Video is more consistent than live demonstrations because on video, products are shown in a perfect situation. For example, after a video is taped and edited, a perfect scenario is demonstrated to every customer. Every store shows the exact same demonstration, providing consistency. Video also rein-

forces brand messages because it can be produced with the same look and feel as marketing and advertising campaigns.

Video is a highly cost-effective method to demonstrate a product because there are no hourly fees, insurance, set up and material costs on an ongoing basis. Video is a medium that contains consistent information that can be easily duplicated. Consistency provides a level foundation to measure success and target areas that need improvement.

Video is also effective because it's a medium in which consumers from every age group feel comfortable. People are highly accustomed to watching television, renting a movie and absorbing information from a screen.

Video Production — How It Works

To make demonstration videos as successful as possible, companies should carefully choose a video production company that understands the unique dynamics of the retail industry. Look for a production company that understands who your target audience.

Once the purpose, audience and messages for the video have been established, the format of the project can take on a variety of looks. Videos can be made to look like the latest VH1 or MTV hit, take on a documentary style and feel, or be similar to the nightly news report.

Prices for video production can vary from \$15,000–45,000, depending on the number of locations needed for the shoot, the number of actors and models, the length of time needed to shoot and whether or not various elements such as script writing and overall coordination are done in-house. Many times, if a series of videos is produced, production houses may be open to further price negotiations.

In general, filming a video can take between one and three days. The hours of raw footage are then edited over the course of several weeks and sent to clients for comments. A series

of changes and edits are then made with the final product ready about one month from the date of shooting. Retailers can also supply footage from trade shows or other events that they would like to have included in the final video.

A Different POP Technique

While there are numerous POP tools available to brands, video has quickly become a popular method for demonstration. POP videos offer a solution that addresses many marketing objectives of brands, retailers and manufacturers, including quality and consistency. As a result, video is quickly becoming a popular method for increasing sales and reaching new customers. **POP**

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