

# The DRTV Times

TV ADVERTISING THAT PAYS!



Concept Media  
Infomercials from script to SCREEN

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## MAXIMIZE COOPERATION—MAXIMIZE SUCCESS!

By Edward Easton

At the recent ERA convention in Las Vegas DRTV producers held roundtable discussions to confront a growing problem in their industry.

The problem has to do with an increasing preponderance of production delays fostered by client ignorance and misunderstanding of the production process itself.

According to Ron Perlstein, Executive Producer of Concept Media, "Most client companies view the DRTV producer as a magician who is single-handedly going to boost the company's bottom line. After all, that's his job; it's what they've hired him to do. Very often he does, to such spectacular effect that the process does indeed *seem* magical. In reality, it is anything but. When such success occurs, it is always a case of careful planning and a zealous *adherence to a production schedule.*"

Successful clients are also *savvy* clients who help to make the DRTV producer's job go smoothly. It's in the client company's own best interest to do so. Successful clients—and producers—know where their collective responsibilities begin and end. But in all cases, all participants in the process know the *value of cooperation and collaboration.*

DRTV production involves a complicated *sequential* process. Individual tasks must be *completed by certain dates* in the production schedule in order for the whole project to move forward. A script must be finished and signed off on, including the inevitable last minute revisions. Locations must be scouted,

talent contracted for, testimonials taken, crews signed on and facilities arranged before a single frame of film gets shot

Each of these tasks involves a number of sub-arrangements that must be made, and while much of this is the producer's responsibility, the client knows that his *cooperation is vital in each and every step* along the way to getting the show produced on time and on budget.

When this process is interrupted or suffers delay, it can have a domino effect all the way down the production timeline.

For example, an infomercial scheduled to air in February at a time when the audience is just recovering from the economic frenzy of the holidays can wind up not airing until a month later, when the audience has made financial commitments elsewhere that precludes its taking advantage of the infomercial's offer.

In such a case, the audience response can be a fraction of that predicted for the *earlier* time frame. To make matters worse, the client will have gone over-budget to make the infomercial, pyramiding loss upon loss.

Guess whom the client will blame if things do not go according to plan?

It is thus vital for the producer to educate his client on the necessity for timely executive access. The client CEO must sign off on many of the creative decisions presented for his approval, and he must do so in a manner that will keep the process moving forward. It is the only sure path to ultimate success.

## SELECTING THE RIGHT CELEBRITY SPOKESPERSON

By Edward Easton

During the 1920's Rudolph Valentino was suspended by his studio and his contract forbade his working for any other motion picture producer. Rudy had been a professional ballroom dancer before he became a movie star. Now he became one again—with a contract for Lux soap who hired him and his controversial wife Natasha Rambova to put on a series of tango exhibitions sponsored by the makers of Lux. His tango scene in "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" made Valentino a star and dance exhibitions demonstrating the tango were an ingenious way for Lux to harness Valentino's tremendous popularity in support of their product. Lux sales quadrupled all over the English-speaking world.

Since that time and even before, the celebrity spokesperson has been the sure ticket to success with all forms of advertising. But matching the right celebrity with the right product has since developed into a high art.

This is even more important in the DRTV world, where budgets are limited and the target audience sometimes more so.

For example, Charlton Heston was used not long ago to sell a new video edition of the Bible over most of rural America. Who hasn't seen him as Moses in "The Ten Commandments"? Strangely enough, he was also on the air in the *same markets* as the NRA president touting that organization. Can you see him selling either in localities surrounding big cities? Such places have a preponderance of audiences in the gun control camp, and they don't buy many bibles either.

Image is all in the DRTV world, and so is matching the right celebrity to the right product.