

Niche Success

DRTV Delivers Affordable TV Advertising

By Doug Garnett, President, Atomic Direct

Published in *Electronic Retailing*, June 2005

In the old world of the 3 networks, TV only made sense for mass market products. But in the world of 500 channels, this is no longer true. There is now excellent niche opportunity with television.

While traditional TV is too expensive for most niche products, DRTV delivers the same powerful communication at a dramatically lower cost.

In fact, DRTV is an excellent approach for niche products — *if you sell through retail channels as well as TV, stay away from old-school DRTV, and learn some key lessons from past niche success.*

One great example of niche success is the 1/2 hour show for the Drill Doctor Drill Bit Sharpener.

This campaign has been on-air for 4 years and targets a market so specialized that nearly 1/2 of purchasers own arc welders. Despite this, Drill Doctor recently passed the “2 million sold” mark. Critical to this campaign’s success is reaching out to new TV purchasers. Fully 1/3rd of our TV sales come from people who have never bought from TV.

Niche product success requires new creative approaches.

Unlike the latest ab product, niche campaigns fail if they rely on common infomercial formulas.

But be careful how you break away from these formulas. Do not break away so that your DRTV feels more like traditional advertising. Rather, drop the formulas to make sure it

communicates *with* your consumer and doesn’t feel like “yell & sell”.

We’ve found that new TV purchasers stay tuned to communication that’s credible. But they turn DRTV off when they get a whiff of typical “BS” — like classic yell & sell or beautiful, overproduced testimonials.

Niche success requires unique media buying choices.

Relying on traditional media resources is the way to niche failure. So to succeed:

- *Don't use big media agencies.* Big agencies usually can't put in the effort needed to make these smaller campaigns succeed.
- *Media buyer databases don't predict effective niche media.* We find the stations suggested by mass market success often don't work well for niche products.
- *Cycle your media.* With a niche product, a given airing may work, then stop working, then work again. So, plan to cycle your media and look for a media buyer who is willing to work in cycles.
- *Daytime.* Around 90% of our airings for a niche product are daytime airings. Today's DRTV is no longer an overnight medium. DRTV has finally come into the light of day.

Before Walmart, there was an excellent network of specialty stores.

Niche products were regularly introduced and marketed through this network because it offered consumers a valuable experience not found at Walmart.

The specialty network may have been outlets. Shouldn't you consider building your overtaken by mass merchants, but DRTV can niche success through DRTV's specialty store? take its place *and* drive niche sales at mass

About the author:

Doug Garnett is president of Atomic Direct — a boutique DRTV agency with a unique vision of how brand-name products can be advanced through DRTV. Doug's clients include Rubbermaid, Alberto-Culver, the Drill Doctor and White's Electronics. He also teaches advertising in the School of Business Administration at Portland State University.