

PROMO

Magazine

KEYNOTE INTERVIEW

ROCKETING TO SUCCESS

Jay Coleman is the founder and CEO of Entertainment Marketing & Communications, Inc. (EMCI), a Stamford, CT based agency that links consumer companies with music and entertainment properties. EMCI originally launched in 1976 as Rockbill, Inc., and handled such landmark entertainment alliances as Pepsi-Michael Jackson, Jo van-The Rolling Stones, and the corporate sponsorship for Live Aid.

EMCI broadened its stable beyond pop music in the 1980s by creating revolutionary promotional concepts in home video, videogames, and television. PROMO caught up with Coleman, who will be presenting an overview of entertainment promotion as a Star Power keynote speaker, to get his opinion on the industry, past and present

PROMO: What is the state of entertainment marketing today?

Jay Coleman: We've been involved in entertainment marketing for nearly 25 years, and there's no doubt the business has grown by leaps and bounds across all segments - not just music, but movies, television, Broadway, live entertainment, the videogame business, the home video industry, and of course, the new online space. Advertisers are constantly looking for new opportunities as it becomes more difficult for companies to distinguish themselves. And as a result, marketing continues to expand. We're also seeing growth because more things have worked than not. A lot of companies have experimented with movie tie-ins, or sponsoring rock tours, or tying in with Nintendo or PlayStation, and this type of integrated marketing has generated solid results. The consumer's interest in entertainment, although always changing, will never diminish, [especially] as their disposable income grows. And as our ability to access information and become aware of things quicker grows, so too will this industry.

PROMO: Are certain types of promotions proving especially effective?

Coleman: We're seeing more clients looking at entertainment not just as a p.r. platform, but as a way to drive their business. And the continual challenge is how they pay off their investment. Sponsors are continually challenging the packagers - which is us - to show them how they can get measurable results in areas outside exposure and branding. They want to know how they are going to get more product on the floor and how they are going to energize their whole marketing package.

PROMO: Are there any recent campaigns that particularly impressed you?

Coleman: A good example is what Sears did with the Backstreet Boys this past back-school season. For Sears, it was a big step in targeting teenage girls during a very heavy selling period, and trying to make the stores a much cooler space to shop. Part of that equation was to make sure they had the right merchandise mix, but once you have the right product, you still need customers in the stores. The great thing for Sears was most of their stores exist as anchors of malls. There's no question teens frequent malls, the question is how to get them into Sears and not just The Gap.

With the Backstreet Boys, Sears saw an increase in teen traffic, which gave them a great story to tell on MTV, and allowed them to go to pop radio stations and do cross-promotion. The campaign provided a catalyst to talk to a demographic that has big growth potential for Sears.

When a company goes out and buys a property or ties in with a movie or a tour, it has to stand back and say, 'In order for me to get the maximum out of it, I have to invest the right time and energy to leverage it.' If you start with the right property, you can definitely make it work if you're willing to put the resources behind it. What marketers have learned over the last 10 years is that, if you spend "X" for a property, you're probably going to spend 2X or 3X to make it work right. It's one thing to go out and pay "X" million dollars to be an Olympic sponsor, but most companies have come to the conclusion that they'll pay four or five times that to make the investment pay off. If you're not willing to do that, you probably shouldn't go into it in the first place.

PROMO: Can you speak about how the Internet is affecting entertainment marketing?

Coleman: The Internet is becoming what we always hoped television would be: the ultimate in choice. As movies, television, and full-motion commercials come into this space in the next two to three years, you're going to see a lot of activity with sponsors using the Internet not just to deliver information but to brand themselves as well.

Sponsors such as beer, soft drinks, apparel -- the ones traditionally involved in broadcast or print advertising are just starting to migrate to the Internet because they can reach target eyeballs. Advertisers now look at the Internet as a sponsorship platform, not just banner space. All those things will make the market bigger, more exciting, and probably more fragmented.

On the other hand, people in the traditional space have to realize they need to adapt with that change. Television is starting to do that with cross-marketing. Many TV broadcasters obviously made investments in Internet space, and we will see a lot more synergy between media.

PROMO: Is there a campaign of which you're especially proud?

Coleman: We produced E*Trade sponsoring Tina Turner, and we just announced they'll follow up with the Diana Ross and the Supremes tour. The call to action was based on saying, 'Hey, if you're even thinking about trading stocks online, join E-Trade, and we'll buy you tickets to the show.' It's been a very powerful tool in getting fence sitters to actually make the move.

We're excited about technology. EMCI is a pioneer in space marketing - literally outer space. The consumer still has a major fascination with space. If you look back over the 20th century, the most watched TV event was the moon landing, The biggest event on the Internet was pictures from Mars. The biggest movie franchises still use space as a platform.

We took a look at that and said, 'Wow, this a way to capture the imagination of the public.' Back in the fall, we announced that, for the first time, a company will sponsor a rocket launch. We brought in Pizza Hut to sponsor the launch of a rocket kicking off the construction of the new international space station. This summer, a 230-foot tall rocket will be launched from Russian soil featuring a full-color Pizza Hut logo on the center. That's a great way to break through the clutter and it's great metaphor for moving into a new millennium.

We were also the architects for shooting the Pepsi commercial on the Mir space station, and we will announce more [projects like that] over the next few months. We're looking to outer space as the truly new way in big-idea marketing.

PROMO: What's the most important lesson you've learned in this industry?

Coleman: Ever since we started in the late 1970s, it's really been about - and this has become a cliché - out-of-the-box thinking. We were the first to say, 'What if we could produce our own Super Bowl halftime show and put it on another channel to give people a choice?' We did that in 1992, and 40 million people tuned in.

EMCI is about always challenging ourselves. We put the first commercial on a home video and the first signage with a home videogame. When we first did those things, they didn't exist, and there were roadblocks to getting them to exist. But we were able to think out of the box, and make it a win-win proposition for everyone involved.

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