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What do Chevy Chase and Doritos have in common? Everything, says Stamford-based Entertainment Marketing & Communications International Ltd., which put the comic and chip giants together. "We tried to find the right fit," says Jay Coleman, EMCI chief executive officer. Above, Chase hangs out on the commercial's set.

He's pitching in Chevy Chase to do his part for Frito-Lay

By Jennifer B. Hartman
Special Correspondent

What do Chevy Chase and Doritos have in common?

Everything, says Jay Coleman, founder and chief executive officer of Stamford-based Entertainment Marketing & Communications International Ltd. (EMCI).

"We tried to find the right fit," said Coleman, who put together a multimillion-dollar contract that features Chase in his first TV commercial ever.

"We had to ask ourselves, 'who is a perfect fit for Doritos? Who fits the profile'" said Coleman.

The contract calls for Chase to do three 30-second commercials for Doritos Tortilla Thins brand Tortilla Chips, a new product of Dallas, Texas-based Frito-Lay Inc. The first commercial will air tomorrow night on NBC.

Chase was a good selection to represent Doritos, said Coleman. "The character of the brand is irreverent and in-your-face. Chevy captures that whole spirit of fun," Coleman said.

Coleman wouldn't give the exact terms of the deal, but did say "it's estimated to be worth several millions of dollars," to Chase and EMCI.

The pairing was a match made in heaven for Frito-Lay, too. "Chevy has an unmistakable sense of humor and it really works for us," said Lynn Markley, spokeswoman for the snack chip company. "He has a very broad, very hip appeal."

EMCI, a privately held entertainment-marketing firm, was founded 17 years ago in New York City, Coleman said.

He said the company relocated to Stamford six months ago, and maintains satellite offices in Manhattan, Los Angeles, Tokyo, London and Toronto. The firm is now located at 24 Richmond Hill Ave. in Stamford.

"It's the same old story. We moved because we got tired of commuting to Manhattan," said Coleman, an Easton resident.

Headed up by Coleman, the principle shareholder, and two partners - Steve Grossman, also of Easton, and Bill Kosovitch of New York - the company has about 35 employees. Its sales for 1992 were in excess of \$10 million, the CEO said.

Up until seven years ago, EMCI operated as a music-marketing company known as Rockbill Inc. The name was changed after the company expanded.

"We do a lot more than music sponsoring and marketing now," Coleman said. The company does not create the ads, Coleman said, but brings together corporate entities with a "whole spectrum of entertainment figures."

The Stamford company has played a formative role in linking the advertising world with pop music icons, according to Coleman.

Some of the best-known ad campaigns that EMCI helped launch include those featuring Michael Jackson and Hammer for Pepsi, and George Foreman for Frito-Lay. The company has also worked with the likes of David Bowie, Tina Turner, Michael J. Fox and Lionel Richie, said Coleman.

To help a competing network and Frito-Lay vie for viewers at halftime during Super Bowl 1992, EMCI produced the first alternative live halftime show, "Doritos Zaptime," the Frito-Lay sponsored "In Living Color" special.

Why hasn't Chase done television commercials before? "It's not unusual for a lot of movie stars to shy away from television because they try to manage their exposure," Coleman said.

A deal such as this one varies with its own intricacies and dynamics, said Coleman.

"In this case, we were hoping to get a star who had never done anything like this before."

What convinced Chase to give it a go?

"He felt comfortable with the product," said Coleman. "He was convinced that Frito-Lay and its agency BBDO would produce a fun spot. And the timing was right."

Chase will return to the small screen with "The Chevy Chase Show," a late-night comedy talk show that premieres Sept. 7 at 11 P.M. (EDT) on the Fox network.

"Considering the competitiveness of late night TV, the extra visibility and exposure that this commercial will give him can be beneficial," Coleman said.

The first of the three commercials that airs tomorrow on NBC depicts Chase attempting to prevent certain disaster in a comedic drama that portrays a steamroller approaching a woman as she munches on a bag of chips.

Efforts to contact Chase were unsuccessful. His publicist, Heidi Schaeffer, contacted in Los Angeles yesterday, said the actor was unavailable for comment because he's busy "devoting his energies to his new show."