



# News

January 27, 2008 9:00 PM

## Fresh-Start Mindset Key to Jan. Ads

### Weight-Loss, Smoking Cessation Products Tap Into New Year Attitude

By Mark Dominiak, Special to TelevisionWeek

For media planners, January can be a learning lab chock-full of advertising case studies using the fresh mindset of the new year to inject energy into brand campaigns.

Whether through snow-bound television viewing, Internet surfing, back-to-work radio listening or reading a newspaper, examples from which planners can learn can be found everywhere. Many of these fresh-mindset cases start early in January and evolve right up to the Super Bowl. Not all of these cases provide a ready epiphany, but there are examples that might spark ideas that can be applied to a planner's own brand.

My January television ritual has run the gamut from an annual date with the Sci Fi Channel's "Twilight Zone" marathon to nibbling on bowl game fare to playoff football to the breadth of new programming trotted out by broadcast and cable networks. Besides more "Stargate Atlantis," "Ghost Hunters International" and "Beyond Loch Ness" promos than I could handle, I noted across my viewing a number of expected and interesting uses of fresh-start mindset planning strategy.

#### The Usual Suspects

The most common opportunists leverage the mindset of consumers resolving to better their health in the coming year. Diet-related brands are present during January, with two different kinds of brands in evidence.

There are weight-loss brands, such as Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig. Then there's the ad-hoc weight-loss brand Subway. How many times have you seen the "bummed" (pun intended) employee eliciting "Hoochee mama" from his boss before his rear-end photo copying interlude goes awry?

Then there are packaged-goods brands that can help consumers seeking a healthier diet. Kraft's Live Active cheese ads ran in January, including invitations to visit a Web site. Taking it one step further, Live Active offered trial deal incentives to consumers. A simple Google of Live Active turned up results on sites such as fatwallet.com and slickdeals.com offering free packages or rebates of up to \$9 off. That's a pretty good trial incentive.

Activia yogurt from Dannon hit the air with advertising touting the new product's digestive benefits and underlining the need for getting back on track after undisciplined holiday diet habits. The effort includes a challenge to use the product daily for two weeks and experience its regulatory effects, or it's free.

Attacking two mindset opportunities, Zatarain's used January to suggest a change-of-pace dish from holiday staples, featuring a healthier, low-sodium line extension. On the Zatarains.com Web site, its new low-sodium rice mixes are front and center, with more information accessible at a click.

Diet-related health was not the only health advertising noticeable this month. Smoking cessation products and ongoing condition medications Cialis and Lipitor also were present. The preventive new product Centrum Cardio also was introduced.

Other ads were concerned with relationship health. Significant activity urged consumers to find love using Match.com, Chemistry.com or eHarmony.com.

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Job health is yet another category taking advantage of the fresh-start mindset. Both CareerBuilder.com and Monster.com have run frequently during the month.

Financial brands using the fresh-start mindset also have been active in January. Radio waves are bursting with ads for the get-rich-quick programs. Consumers are being inundated with messages about how they can flip a house, let their computer do the work, win at investing in stocks or wipe out debt with one of any variety of sure-fire programs.

Credit card companies have been active as well. Green Dot and Capital One have run a lot of ads this month, with Capital One's spots touting its customizable card lab, which allows customers to upload graphics for their credit cards. Customized credit cards are popping up elsewhere as well. A new card with my company logo now resides in my wallet via a nifty little e-mail solicitation. It took only a few minutes online for the process and I had the card in less than a week. It will be an interesting category trend to watch as the year goes on.

April 15's inevitable crunch has H&R Block and Turbo Tax both on the air leveraging a fresh-start mindset. As the tax filing deadline approaches, it will be interesting to see if frequency increases and executions evolve.

Feature films are using January's stage to build awareness. "The Bucket List," "One Missed Call," "Rambo" and "There Will Be Blood" ran quite a few spots. "Cloverfield" was prominent in some high-visibility areas, seemingly working to the film's advantage as it earned \$41 million in its opening weekend, setting a record for January.

Automobiles are another category heavily leveraging the fresh-start mindset. Many manufacturers are touting their best pricing of the year. Chevrolet, Toyota, Hyundai, Kia and Lexus all have run quite a few units in both national and local broadcast.

#### **Out of the Ordinary**

A number of not-so-predictable entrants into the January fresh-mindset derby also are noteworthy. Burger King used the season to remind consumers about its point of difference: the Whopper. Documentary-type executions were used to reacquaint consumers with the Whopper's uniqueness and directed consumers to WhopperFreakout.com.

There's nothing remarkable about the spots, and the Web site only features longer video versions of the consumer edits, but at its core, the effort is a good example of using the mindset platform of consumers re-evaluating their choices to remind them about the Whopper. Reactions on the faces of featured patrons tell the story and lead one to reconsider the Whopper.

My favorite example of leveraging the fresh mindset occurred in Bravo's "Project Runway." Part of "Runway's" format pits contestants against each other in clothing design challenges. In the current season, one popular challenge required contestants to design a look for Sarah Jessica Parker's Bitten line while another challenged them to develop an on-air look for Tiki Barber, the ex-New York Giants running back.

In an interesting twist, a subsequent challenge took the designers to the Hershey's store in Manhattan and asked them to design a look using only merchandise present in-store. The resulting designs incorporated everything from Reese's paper wrappers to Twizzlers.

Hershey's ran units for Reese's and Hershey Kisses during the show and received validation of the strength of the tie-in via a viewer poll that tabbed the Hershey's challenge as "Runway's" best so far this season. To cap it off, Hershey's is reported to be running a unit in the Super Bowl, capping off an interesting and fresh awareness effort to start the year.

#### **The Big Finale**

Other players in many of the aforementioned categories will cap off their efforts with a Super Bowl presence. Disney, Universal, Sony and Paramount all will air units for feature films during the big game, while Cars.com, Audi, GM, Hyundai and Toyota will continue the automotive push. CareerBuilder.com will build on its January weight with two game units.

While many are gearing up for the ad hoopla surrounding Super Bowl ads, there's much to learn from the many brands that have used the more mundane January window to leverage the fresh-start mindset consumers bring into the New Year. Not all of those brand efforts go far beyond basic media blocking and tackling, but some of them are interesting enough to provoke potentially innovative thinking for many planners' brands.

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The image is a promotional banner for TVWeek's 'Daily Viral Video' service. It features a blue background with yellow and white text. At the top, it says 'Get your daily fix of the Web's hottest videos.' Below this, there's a screenshot of the TVWeek website showing a video player and a 'SIGN UP NOW!' button. The TVWeek logo is prominently displayed in the center, and the text 'VIRAL VIDEO' is written in large, bold, white letters. At the bottom, there's a red banner with the text 'SIGN UP NOW!' in white, bold letters.

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