



[Contact Us](#)[Log Off](#)[Edit Profile](#)[Letters to the Editor](#)[Subscriber Services](#)[Media Kit](#)[About TVWeek.com](#)[Archives](#)

Search: [Advanced Search](#)

New originals and classic shows together at last.



Click to learn what's happening to your TV Land.

Media Planner
February 21, 2005

Big Q1 Events Good Launch Venues

Strategically Showcase Ad Campaigns in Awards, Sweeps, Championships for High-Profile Brand Exposure

By Mark Dominiak

Special to *TelevisionWeek*

Story continues below...



At this time of year the press devotes a great deal of attention to ads showcased on such high-profile stages as the Super Bowl, Golden Globes, Academy Awards, February sweeps, March Madness and midseason premieres. But rarely discussed amid the hoopla is the strategic media approach that led planning teams to select those particular venues in the first place.

In this age of "fair and balanced coverage" it seems reasonable to use this space from time to time to discuss common strategies planners use to provide brand messages with a stage, high-profile or not. With the big-event season firmly in swing, the traditional launch strategy seems a good first profile.

The traditional launch strategy is the approach of choice when brands want to generate splash in the marketplace and follow the initial burst with ongoing but diminishing presence, varying in size as budget permits.

The basic objective is to create awareness that will jump-start consumer interest and kick off the purchase process in consumer minds. Ongoing efforts attempt to harvest purchases from consumers who have been intrigued by initial brand messaging. With its variety of big-event programming, the first quarter provides brands many perfect tools with which create splash as part of launch strategies.

Newsworthy Message

Brands that benefit most from a traditional launch approach are those with something newsworthy to say. New brands, brand extensions and brands launching new campaigns can all benefit greatly from a traditional launch strategy. From a purchase process perspective, a brand's launch message is meant to provide consumers with information new to them. The brand's hope is that its news prompts deep enough need-state recognition to trigger the purchase process.

Because the large burst of awareness characteristic of a traditional launch is best accomplished through mass media, it's fair to say that brands with mass appeal benefit from this approach to a greater degree than do niche brands. From a niche brand perspective, masses of impressions can't help but generate waste. But for a mass brand, there is a high likelihood any impression may prompt awareness or even a sale.

Construction of a traditional launch plan, like any other, is an exercise in deciding where and how to allocate resources. It's given that the majority of resources will be invested within the first month or months of the effort. How aggressively the initial burst period is supported will determine how many subsequent months receive coverage. •The first decision centers on geography. If the launch is a regional rollout, simply start with priority markets and expand. For a national launch, is there enough funding to purchase national media? If not, how broad can coverage be and which markets should be prioritized? If national support is affordable, should funds be reserved for key market heavy-ups?

Media selection is a second important decision. Which of the many to use? Are there enough resources to use multiple media? Bottom line, if a traditional, big-splash launch is the objective, it's silly to make conservative selections. Broad-reach media such as television should be priorities, and high-profile programming should be preferred. Splash can be created in other media by using larger units. And don't forget about other big-event environments, such as cinema.

Finally comes the weight-level decision. The more a brand chooses to load up during initial launch, the bigger the presence will appear to consumers. But at some point, presence becomes redundant and extra impressions won't have additional impact. This situation should be avoided, since redundant splash impressions could be used to better effect as back-end continuity.

Careerbuilder.com provides an excellent example of a brand using traditional launch strategy. Key to the strategy is Careerbuilder.com's first-ever television campaign, featured on the big-event stage the first quarter provides. In a recent release, Careerbuilder.com cited its Super Bowl presence as primarily responsible for generating awareness gains along with record numbers in unique site visitors, applications and resumes.

The Super Bowl is not the only big-event television element in its launch effort. Careerbuilder.com is also using the Academy Awards, the Grammys and March Madness to boost marketplace splash. Additional plan elements include local radio, print, out-of-home support ranging from stadium presence to mobile marketing and in-kind support from newspapers, local television and Web sites of traditional offline media companies.

Not only does this type of strategy generate a good deal of reach and awareness, brands also benefit by piggybacking off the buzz big television events or splashes generate. According to Multivision, a broadcast monitoring service, Careerbuilder.com's Super Bowl media coverage generated north of 75 million impressions in the top 50 markets. As the cliché goes, there's no such thing as bad press.

However, there are two big drawbacks to a traditional launch strategy. First, brands gamble by committing so many resources up

front. If the purchase process natural to the brand is long, resources (presence) may run out before consumers reach a purchase mind-set, creating advantage for competitive brands with messaging in market when consumers decide to purchase.

Additionally, a traditional launch strategy doesn't necessarily flow from consumer insight; it flows from the brand's desire to create splash, assuming sales will follow. A brand creates its own energy in a place and time (say, when the fiscal year happens to begin) or borrows energy inherent in a convenient event to capture consumer attention. When launch timing doesn't coincide with a legitimate consumer need state or behavior, a brand's chance of moving consumers to marketplace action is poorer.

Careerbuilder.com's launch effort synchs well with consumer insight. Consumers re-evaluate many aspects of their lives in first quarter, current job situation included. Messaging in the Super Bowl and Academy Awards may be just the prompt some consumers need to start checking their options. For Careerbuilder.com, that first-quarter shot in the arm may be enough to keep its business model humming all year long. •

Mark Dominiak is principal strategist of marketing, communication and context at Insight Garden. He can be reached at mark@insightgarden.com.

[E-mail to a Friend](#)[Format for Printing](#)

CLASSIFIEDS

[Classifieds](#)

RESOURCE/TOOLS

[Datebook](#)

[Roving Eye](#)

TV LINKS

[TV Week Links](#)

CURRENT ISSUE



ADVERTISING

[Media Kit](#)

SPEAKOUT

[Do you and your significant other share the remote control while watching TV, or do you fight over it?](#)

NEWSMAKERS

[Newsmakers](#)

WEEKLY RATINGS

[Weekly Ratings Chart](#)

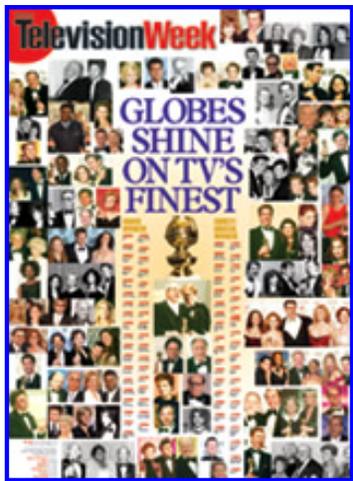
AWARDS CENTRAL

[Awards Central](#)

The WB at 10

[A History of Programs on The WB](#)

GOLDEN GLOBES



Winter 2005 Critics Poll

[Winter 2005 Critics Poll: 'Lost' Finds Top Spot](#)

TV Currents

[Discovery Tailors Make-Goods](#)

[Contact Us](#)[Register](#)[Letters to the Editor](#)[Subscriber Services](#)[Media Kit](#)[About TVweek.com](#)

Copyright 2005 [Crain Communications Inc.](#)

Site Design, Programming and Administration by [Chaffee :: Interactive](#)