

Weeds on Showtime

Problem

How do you provide momentum for the new season of a critically acclaimed program and introduce the program to non-subscribers?

Solution

Create an “everywhere” feel through strategic uses of out of home media.

Background

In 2005, Showtime launched the half-hour comedy series *Weeds*. The show was an instant hit among fans and garnered critical acclaim, resulting in numerous industry awards for both acting and writing. With the return of *Weeds* in August 2006, the second season presented the perfect opportunity for Showtime to aggressively pursue a broader audience, while using the program as an image-builder to enhance the overall perception of the Showtime brand.

Objective

The objective was to create tremendous buzz around the return of *Weeds* and make the show appear “larger than life.” The campaign needed to go after both hip urbanites attracted to the show’s provocative storylines and dark humor as well as entertainment enthusiasts attracted by the quality of the show. The target demographic was adults 18-49, slightly male, upscale and educated. The challenge was to provide momentum for the new season launch for current viewers while introducing the program to non-subscribers during a time when traditional television viewing was at a low point. In addition, the adult subject matter of the show’s premise and how best to convey that through out of home was equally challenging.

Strategy

In order to create a seemingly “everywhere” feel for the campaign, out of home was a critical component of the overall strategy. The goal was to engage the audience where they were through both high impact showings and unexpected, nontraditional means. Whether on the go, at work, out entertaining, or just relaxing on the beach, the core target audience needed to be surrounded outside the home and office. Everywhere they turned, *Weeds* art was staring them in the face. A secondary goal was to support and target non-subscribers within key Showtime affiliate markets, including New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Denver, Philadelphia and St. Louis.



Plan Details

Showtime focused on traditional bulletin units in the stronger affiliate markets, while utilizing transit advertising in New York and Los Angeles to target daily commuters. They accomplished this through the use of king size bus posters, bus tails, commuter rail 2-sheets, and car cards. Additionally, the New York subway system was covered by 2-sheet platform posters.

Nontraditional media also played a big part of the out of home execution. These elements provided a last minute, “fact to face” reminder to tune in. Tactics included branded Weeds pizza boxes brought right to the viewer’s homes and aerial banners targeting beach goers as they relaxed on the weekend. Branded coffee cups and umbrellas brought the message up close to busy workers at street level.



Results

The out of home campaign aided in increasing viewers to the second season premiere, with demographic increases across the board and up 11% among the key adult 18-49 target audience. The show continued to receive rave reviews for season two and was ultimately renewed for a third season. Demographic increases across the board and up 11% among the key adult 18-49 target audience. The show continued to receive rave reviews for season two and was ultimately renewed for a third season.