

A&E Breakout Kings

Problem

How does a network drive tune-in for a new series?

Solution

Use eye-catching creative with unique executions to create buzz in the market.

Background

On the heels of the success of *The Glades* in 2010, A&E sought to add another hit series to its scripted drama catalogue. The network's strong ranking has been largely attributed to its wide variety of compelling real-life series. However, A&E was looking to *Breakout Kings* – created by *Prison Break* producers Nick Santoro and Matt Olmstead – to further the network momentum in the scripted drama category. *Breakout Kings* was scheduled to premiere before the upfront, so launching a hit and showing the advertising community the strength of its programming was a top priority.

Objective

A&E wanted to drive buzz and build brand awareness for both the network and the new series in New York and Los Angeles, the two biggest Nielsen markets and the two most important markets for reaching the entertainment and ad sales community. Efforts in these key markets would allow A&E to generate ad sales revenue, elevate the network's perception in the industry, and attract new talent for future programming. The overall media plan focused on adults 25-54 with a dual male/female audience skew.

Strategy

In order to signal the *Breakout Kings* premiere as a must-see event, drive buzz and build awareness, A&E and its planning agency employed a strategy similar to that often taken by studios for major motion picture releases. The teams built an extended teaser campaign to be followed by an aggressive tune-in push across broad-reaching media formats in an effort to “be big and be everywhere.”

The multi-phase rollout began with street-level reach/frequency formats in New York and Los Angeles. Transit and street furniture media were adorned in creative with the word “COPS”, with an “N” conspicuously graffitied over the “P” to read “CONS” – a reference to the show's primary plot line and character divide. A high-profile Houston St bulletin in New York added a 3D barbed wire prop to the top of the board to create the appearance of a foreboding prison wall.

The second phase, with creative showcasing the show's main characters, layered in additional elements in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. The new executions included a domination of Grand Central Terminal in New York, as well as wrapped double-decker bus fleets in New York and Los Angeles. The seat backs of double-decker tour buses were wrapped to make it appear the person sitting in front of you was handcuffed to the seat.



Plan Details

Markets: Los Angeles, New York

Flighting Dates: January 24 - April 3, 2011 across markets

Tease Phase: January 24 - February 20

New York (Manhattan)

- #50 showing (150) vertical phone kiosks
- #50 showing (150) king-size bus posters
- Newsstand unit targeted to Grand Central
- Houston St. bulletin w/ 3D barbed-wire prop

Los Angeles

- #25 showing (115) entertainment-skewed transit shelters
- #25 showing (200) entertainment-skewed king-sized bus posters
- Sunset Strip bulletin



Tune-In Phase: February 21 - March 20

New York (Manhattan)

- #50 showing (150) vertical phone kiosks
- #50 showing (150) king-size bus posters
- Newsstand unit targeted to Grand Central
- Houston St. bulletin
- Grand Central Station Subway Domination
- Wrapped double-decker buses w/ custom seat decals
- #25 showing (670) Metro North and LIRR car cards

Los Angeles

- #25 showing (115) entertainment-skewed transit shelters
- #25 showing (200) entertainment-skewed king-size bus posters
- Sunset Strip bulletin
- (2) wrapped double-decker buses w/ custom seat decals



Chicago

- #25 showing (90) El-Train 2-sheet posters
- (25) panel package Central Business District transit shelters

In addition to the above, the agency utilized a national 2:30 cinema content piece from February 11 – April 28, and ran national

Results

Over the course of the campaign, the broad-reaching and impact media, in conjunction with the national cinema presence, generated impressions in excess of 687 million. In addition, the custom double-decker bus program was cited in a feature article in Medialife Magazine as an innovative and unexpected media execution.

However, the true measure of a successful campaign for a cable network is in the ratings. Breakout Kings had 2.8 million total viewers for the premiere episode. For the key A25-54 and A18-49 demos, Breakout Kings set network series premiere records with 1.6 million and 1.5 million total viewers, respectively. The night of the premiere, Breakout Kings was the highest rated cable program in the A25-54 demographic, and second highest against A18-49.

The strength of Breakout Kings contributed to A&E's most successful quarter of all time (Q1 2011), propelling it into the top four entertainment cable networks in the key A25-54 demographic as well as in total viewers. Additionally, March 2011 was the most watched March in network history among adults 25-54 and 18-49. Compared to March 2010, A&E was up 5% in adults 25-54, 4% in adults 18-49 and 1% in total viewers.

Lastly, while the details of the upfront negotiations are proprietary, A&E senior executives are pleased with its out of home investment in the weeks leading into the annual negotiations with New York and Los Angeles media agencies and a plan is in place to duplicate the approach in 2012 to reinforce upfront negotiations which secure the lion's share of revenue for the network.

"We are quite pleased about the success of the Breakout Kings launch," said Lori Peterzell, VP, Brand Strategy and Consumer Marketing, at A&E. "We are confident that the smartly strategized, multifaceted out of home program, in conjunction with other media in market, played a key role in driving the record breaking numbers for the premiere of our newest scripted drama series."