

MediaPost – Media Daily News
October 20, 2009

Cablevision Runs New iTV App

By David Goetzl

Cablevision has signed four advertisers for its interactive advertising platform that is live across its footprint of 3 million homes in the New York area.

Gillette has run a campaign, with Benjamin Moore just rolling one out. And New York retailer Century 21 is set to use the platform during the holiday season.

The system offers the opportunity for a marketer to pursue lead generation -- which can establish a connection with a consumer beyond a one-way, 30-second message.

Cablevision is displaying the platform, which is activated by set-top boxes, to more than 80 media buyers in Manhattan this week. The system is powered by proprietary technology that Cablevision developed.

As the iTV ads run, a banner appears at the bottom of the screen, prompting viewers to click their remotes to receive more information. Then on another screen, as the programming continues to run in a small box, they can opt-in to receive a special offer in the mail. Media executives refer to that as a request for information (RFI). An outside fulfillment house handles the mailings.

So far, Gillette has run an iTV spot offering a sample of a body wash. Cablevision will not release details on how many of the people who viewed the spot actually requested a free sample. But the cable operator said 30,000 samples were distributed in a week -- apparently beyond Gillette's expectations, since Cablevision said that was the full allotment.

The iTV ads run on 25 cable networks during the two minutes an hour when Cablevision owns inventory on the local level.

Benjamin Moore is offering viewers the chance to receive a coupon for a free color sample, while Century 21 will dole out \$10 gift cards. Unilever is also using the iTV platform for its Degree brand.

Cablevision will not detail pricing levels for running iTV ads, or what kinds of premiums advertisers might pay for them. Executives, however, indicated that marketers often purchase them as part of larger deals, so it is difficult to break out costs.

Cablevision executives said advertisers appreciate the iTV opportunity because it allows for Internet-style metrics with the benefits of TV's sight-sound-and-motion trump card.

In addition to the new iTV offering, Cablevision offers other advanced advertising opportunities, including a chance to run addressable ads in 500,000 of its homes -- a figure soon to ramp up to its full 3 million footprint. There are also channels with long-form ads and opportunities for dynamic ad insertion in VOD programming.

"Five years from now, I think most of our inventory will have some type of enhancement," said David Kline, president of Cablevision's Rainbow Advertising Sales Corp.