



SET ASIDE "Rescue Me 2.5" ran on its own Cablevision channel.

DEDICATED CHANNELS FIND SUCCESS

By Wayne Karrfalt

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In addition to experimenting with network-based digital video recording, or nDVR, Cablevision is pushing the envelope of what video-on-demand can offer advertisers by introducing dedicated interactive channels that promote individual products and services.

The channels, sponsored by such companies as Ford, Jet Blue, Walt Disney World and cable network FX, are proving extremely successful in engaging consumers, generating leads and gathering information about which kinds of creative are most effective, said Barry Frey, senior VP of advanced platforms for Cablevision.

The channels offer consumers the same interactive functionality of a Web site, but allow them to experience it on the TV screen.

"When it comes to making some decisions, like where to go next on vacation, you can have multiple decision-makers sitting around in the living room instead of everyone huddled around a PC," said Mr. Frey.

Advertisers are using the channels to generate mailing lists and valuable market research with interactive questionnaires. The channels also offer customizable tracking data on topics such as which trailers are being fast-forwarded.

Some of that creative is star-driven. FX premiered a 15-minute special dubbed "Rescue Me 2.5" on a dedicated Cablevision channel May 8 to promote "Rescue Me's" linear season three premiere on FX May 30. The segment, meant to bridge the gap between seasons two and three, was produced by and starred Denis Leary. It will also appear on the Reuters sign in New York's Times Square on the night of the premiere.

"For us, doing the promo piece inside the virtual channel was a perfect complement to the rest of the multimedia mix," said Craig Woerz, managing partner of Media Storm, the media agency for FX. ■