

YouTube Fueling Product Placement Video Programs

by Laurie Sullivan, Friday, June 15, 2012 5:59 PM



Google's \$100 million investment in original video programming in niche markets on YouTube will unearth some interesting models this year.

Brands will move toward product placement in online content that serve up in video programming on desktop, tablets and smartphones, replacing TV commercials, according to Suzie Reider, head of industry development at YouTube.

"Companies like American Express can't keep running television commercials," Reider said, pointing to Nike's 30% annual decline in TV ad investments. "The consumers they're trying to reach are

online, streaming content off Hulu and Netflix, and downloading the last season episodes from Amazon.com."

Investments in commercials continue to dwindle, fueling a new industry for marketing content based on niche product programming. Alphabird plans to prove it. The company began to build a production arm, adding to its audience development and video ad business.

On June 20, Alphabird CEO Chase Nortin will announce a deal with Paul DiMeo. The award-winning actor from "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" will spearhead the company's first comedy Web series featuring branded product placements set to debut Q1 2013.

DiMeo and writer/director Ken Hanes will executive-produce the series, along with Alphabird's Russell Naftal and Johnny McMahon. In the scripted series, he will play a down-on-his luck celebrity carpenter who gets fired from a reality makeover series and returns to his first job: a \$15-per-hour handyman. DiMeo's character must perform menial tasks while trying to get back into the Hollywood limelight.

"The Handyman" will enable the engagement of brands, such as home improvement and appliances to integrate their messaging and products within the show's format. The digital-branded content becomes the production arm of Alphabird. It will give lifestyle brands an opportunity to do what soap operas did in the 1950s and 1960s.

Alphabird opened a Beverly Hills office and hired former digital entertainment production and development team from some of Endemol, whose programming includes the reality television series "Wipeout," "Big Brother" and "Deal or No Deal." The team earned 2012 Webby Awards for "MLB Fan Cave," "Married on MySpace" and "James Hyde Steals the Show."

The former Endemol head of digital development and distribution Russell Naftal, head of digital production Johnny McMahon and head of integrated partnerships and marketing Kelli Usher join Alphabird. Mike Caruso, former VP of entertainment at Viacom, and music producer for Lil Wayne

and Drake, becomes the VP of Alphabird's music production division.

2 comments on "YouTube Fueling Product Placement Video Programs".

Walter Sabo from **SABO media** commented on: June 18, 2012 at 9:28 p.m.

In 2007 HITVIEWS placed the first products inside content that was created by users and placed on video sites such as YouTube. Clients included Pepsi, CBS, Fox, Timberland, and many others. Each video averaged over 1M organic views.

Robert Wright from **iAsk** commented on: June 19, 2012 at 1:34 p.m.

In order to confer authenticity on the brand being promoted, I believe that the topics/ brief should be chosen by the brand, with the content and delivery produced by competitors... My message, "keep it Real"