

Vegas: Where You Can Learn To Sell Your Body (of Work)

Marketing is focus of new TV stations conference launching this week

THIS WEEK, nearly 500 marketers from local TV stations, major studios and top broadcast networks will gather in Las Vegas to talk marketing at PromaxBDA's first, and it hopes annual, Station Summit.

"Marketing has undoubtedly emerged as the most critical skill set in defining and ensuring success in the entertainment business," says Jonathan Block-Verk, PromaxBDA president and CEO, who will oversee the conference taking place at Las Vegas' Planet Hollywood hotel on June 8-9.

Marketing has not always been considered a mission-critical part of a TV station's business. But with media exploding on multiple platforms and consumers facing a nearly endless selection of content, strategic marketing has become an essential way to bring customers to a brand.

"The local broadcast industry has been all but ignored over the last 10 years by all organizations," says Block-Verk. "There's been very little that's been done to strengthen and solidify that industry."

PromaxBDA, under Block-Verk's leadership and with a big assist from six partner syndicators, hopes to change that, beginning with



TV station marketing execs are keys to success for syndicators, Block-Verk says.

this conference.

To make the summit happen, CBS Television Distribution, Debmar-Mercury, NBCUniversal, Sony Pictures Television, Twentieth Television and Warner Bros. teamed up to ensure that station executives could afford to attend the show. The studios footed much of attendees' travel bill, eliminating one big objection people have when it comes to attending industry events.

The Station Summit is comprised of two days of sessions, bookended by ABC and NBC affiliate meetings on Tuesday, June 7, and station group meetings for the CBS and NBC owned stations and the Gannett, LIN Media, Post-Newsweek, Raycom, Scripps and Sinclair broadcast groups on Friday, June 10.

On the conference's first official day—Wednesday, June 8—the syndicators will present their fall programming and promotional plans to stations. Each syndicator has its own meeting room to meet with attendees. Debmar-Mercury will talk about marketing its new talk show, *Jeremy Kyle*, in one room, while Warner Bros. addresses the launches of *Anderson Cooper* (the host will be in atten-

dance) and *The Big Bang Theory* in another.

"Local broadcast marketing executives are the front lines of success for the studios," says Block-Verk. "If these programs don't succeed on a large scale at the local level, the studios have a lot to lose. They want to cultivate as many strong, vibrant and healthy working relationships with their local customers as possible."

"It's always great to come face to face with your clients," says Susan Kantor, executive VP of marketing for Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution and Telepictures. "This is an opportunity to meet with them in one big place to talk about our launch plans and find out what's on their minds. We can all work together to make really effective plans to make these shows successful."

Day two is comprised of panel discussions on everything from how to turn your creative services department into a profit center to how to drive new business through Facebook and how to run effective promotions on shoestring budgets.

"Promotional executives are the difference between success and failure for so much of a TV station's content," says Block-Verk. "I'd like them to see themselves as leaders, as people who can fundamentally define these new paradigms of success." □

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