



BROADCASTING & CABLE

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Syndication

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Twentieth: Placing More Products

Syndicator expanding dynamic brand-insertion experiment to *HIMYM*, stations nationwide

WITH DIGITAL VIDEO recorders now in nearly 80% of U.S. households, according to Nielsen, finding innovative ways for advertisers to reach audiences is becoming more important than ever.

Executives at syndicator Twentieth Television, a News Corp.-owned division of Fox, think they discovered one answer, using Israeli and Los Angeles-based SeambH's dynamic product placement technology to insert brands into already produced television shows.

Twentieth ran a pilot on SeambH's technology last fall, digitally inserting brands into its off-net sitcom, *My Name Is Earl*, and allowing television stations in top markets—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Phoenix and Philadelphia—to do the same locally.

This fall, the company is doing the same thing with *How I Met Your Mother*. The test, of which both Twentieth's national sales people and local TV sales people are availing themselves, is going so well that the syndicator plans to expand the experiment to stations in all markets. "When you ask advertisers what's most important to them, managing up message with content is the number-one response we get," says Judy Kenny, Twentieth executive VP of ad sales. "We are constantly looking for ways to deliver to



SeambH's technology allows Chevy to insert its brand into a scene in Twentieth Television's *How I Met Your Mother*. Each episode offers an average of three insertion avails.

clients what they already get in other dayparts." While product placement is nothing new, SeambH's technology changes the game because it allows brands to be quickly and seamlessly inserted into programs that already have been produced, and to do it very close to air time.

For example, in *How I Met Your Mother*, SeambH allows advertisers to digitally pose their brand on a laptop sitting on a desk, on a teddy bear's t-shirt or a magazine on a shelf. The insertions are passive, but they usually are placed in the center of the screen and remain visible for at least 10 seconds.

"It has to be natural, and if it's not, it won't register as positive in the viewer's mind," says Roy Baharar, SeambH CEO. "The result is very high brand recall."

According to Baharar, each 22-minute episode of *How I Met Your Mother* provides an average of three insertion opportunities. Most advertisers purchase their standard media buys of 30-second spots, then enhance those buys with digital insertions. Insertion opportunities are separated into national and local, so there's no sales overlap.

SeambH provides Twentieth and local TV stations with a Web-based tool that allows them to see what insertions are available in each episode. Once the insertions are sold, the salespeople brand, and redistributes the episode to the TV station via a broadband Internet connection to a dedicated server provided by SeambH. The technology allows many different versions of the same episode to exist, all with custom local insertions.

"We love it because it gives us something exclusive to offer in the marketplace, and this is unique and different," says Shannon Fazio, general sales manager of Cox-owned independent KICU, who has worked with such local advertisers as Round Table Pizza on digital brand insertions. "When they come out with other shows, they had better do the shows that we buy."

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