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**A PUBLIC RELATIONS APPROACH TO RECRUITING STUDIO AUDIENCES FOR
START-UP SHOWS**

**By
Chekesha K. Bunch**

A Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree in the Graduate Division
of Rowan University
June 30, 2003**

Approved _____

Date Approved 6-30-03

ABSTRACT

Bunch, Chekesha K.

A Public Relations Approach to Recruiting
Studio Audiences for Start-Up Shows
2003, Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin,
Public Relations

This thesis sought to determine the methods audience coordinators used to recruit studio audiences. This portion of the thesis included a ten-question interview emailed to audience coordinators for current daytime talk shows in New York City. Interviews were also conducted with production executives and a director to determine the purpose and significance of audience as well as audience-related costs.

Second, the thesis sought to answer what audiences like and dislike, what they have done, what they will do, and what they believe as it pertains to studio attendance. This portion of the thesis included a fifteen-question survey addressing incentives, show topics, and confirmations to name a few.

The audience coordinators' recruitment tactics addressed in the interviews were compared with the tactics ratings found in the survey. The results of the surveys, interviews, and review of related material indicated that many of these tactics are ineffective and financially and socially damaging to a show. Therefore, it is necessary for audience coordinators to not only re-evaluate their current recruitment practices, but their perception of what audience coordination entails.

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It has been seven years since I started the graduate program at Rowan University. During these years, many things have changed. Rowan was changed from college to university status; a new state-of-the-art library was built; new classes were added to the public relations graduate studies curriculum; and I continued to put off writing my thesis—until now.

I dedicate the completion of this thesis to the one constant motivating force in my life—my father Ron L. Bunch, who was able to see in me what I was unable to see in myself. I thank my prayer partner and voice of serenity, Aunt Bootie, for listening to my complaints and cries and for letting me know that if I did not finish my paper today, there was always tomorrow.

I would like to thank my grandmother and number one fan, who stood by me through good times and bad; my team of cheerleaders: Pierre Bernard, Ron Briscoe, Lou Sullo, and Tonya Waters, for their support and encouragement; the incredible “banks” of knowledge for their insight and expertise: Adam Szyfman, Troy Watkins, and the Burlington County Reference Librarians.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of my thesis advisor, Dr. Don Bagin, who received 99.9 percent of my questions a week before the thesis was due and never complained. His patience, dedication, and guidance will never be forgotten.

Finally, I give God the glory for being my pillar of strength in my weakest times and for showing me that through Christ, all things are possible.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

For many Americans there is no bigger and cheaper thrill than seeing the taping of a favorite TV show. In Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago, where the majority of network shows are taped, tickets are given away free, making these tapings the least costly activity compared to other expensive tourist attractions. For popular talk shows such as *Oprah*, *Live with Regis and Kelly*, and *Late Night with David Letterman*, advance ticket requests are required and often take months to obtain. However, the newer shows often have difficulty putting bodies in their 150 to 200 studio seats.

With daytime TV viewers likely to watch news networks, courtroom shows, relationship programs like TLC's "A Baby Story," or turn of the set entirely, talk show ratings are plummeting.¹ The ubiquity of talks shows and the increase in cable shows geared towards women not only affects television viewership but studio audio attendance.

Most people who are interested in attending a television taping overlook shows that seem low budget, unpopular, or new to the talk show circuit. In most cases, they would prefer standby tickets for a popular show like *Live with Regis and Kelly* than guaranteed tickets to a less popular show like *The Caroline Rhea Show*².

These factors make it progressively more difficult for audience coordinators to recruit studio audiences particularly for start-up shows. Therefore, audience coordinators may need to re-evaluate and adjust their current recruitment procedures accordingly.

¹ David Bauder, "Talk Shows' Popularity Plummet," <<http://elibrary.com/libweb/ellib/do/document?set=search&groupid>> May 22, 2002 (accessed March 3, 2003).

² Cross, Joye, Production Manager: *106 & Park* (Black Entertainment Television), personal interview, New York, NY, April 14, 2003.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the most effective ways for audience coordinators to recruit potential television studio audiences particularly for start-up talk shows. The researcher identified the subjects' current attitude towards three new talk shows and their hosts, audience incentive and confirmation preferences, the importance of variables such as show topics and location, the effectiveness of various marketing tactics as it relates to studio audience recruitment, and pre/post show attendance behavior.

Importance of the Study

It is important for this study to be done because it is necessary for audience-based shows to have willing and energetic audience participants to fill the studio. Joye Cross, production manager for *106 & Park*, an audience-based music video show said, "Audience lends to the success of a show. This is the reason shows spend tens of thousands of dollars each year to get audiences. Unfortunately, many shows too many times still come up short in their audience numbers."³

The results of this study will directly and indirectly benefit television production and distribution companies, broadcast and cable networks, and advertisers by identifying ineffective publicity, advertising and overall recruitment practices that are financially and/or socially damaging to a show.

³ Ibid.

Plan of Study

As part of the thesis, the researcher conducted personal, telephone, and email interviews with seasoned audience coordinators and production executives in the television talk show industry. In these interviews, the researcher explored the correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live-viewing (studio audience) attendance, the problem of getting audiences and the tactics used for recruiting them.

The researcher surveyed potential audience members to determine the most effective recruitment procedures. Three new start-up shows premiering in Fall 2003 (*The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *The Sarah Ferguson Show*, and *Living It Up! With Ali and Jack*) were used as examples for this survey. Audience coordinators who recruit for any audience-based television show, particularly start-up shows, could use the survey results.

Delimitations

The sample size for this study was 299, resulting in a margin of error greater than $\pm 5\%$. Research shows that the sample size is significant.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this paper, the term “audiences” are the people who make up the studio audience.

The term “audience-based talk shows” are daytime talk shows with multiple topics and similar formats. These shows tape in the daytime in New York City, compete for audience, and rely on the participation (laughing, clapping, shouting, question-asking, facial expressions, etc.) of the people in the studio audience. These audience-based talk shows include: *The Caroline Rhea Show*, *The John Walsh Show*,

Live with Regis and Kelly, The Maury Povich Show, The Montel Williams Show, The Ricki Lake Show, and The View.

The term “start-up shows” are programs that have never aired on television but have a scheduled on-air date or new programs that are in their first season.

CHAPTER II

Review of Related Material

Since the television ratings game came into play, countless studies have been conducted to determine values, attitudes, behaviors, trends, interests, etc. as it relates to the television viewing audience. Networks, production companies, and distribution companies have spent ample time and money trying to find or create the next big hit drama or sitcom to land a top spot on the Nielsen ratings list. This constant evolution of marketing research has consisted of identifying “what’s hot and what’s not,” economic and social interests, and family and educational values. This information gives producers the best opportunity to create successful and long-lasting programs. “Sometimes it’s a hit and sometimes it’s a miss.”⁴

Producers are specifically looking for the next big hit talk show. With *The Oprah Winfrey Show* ending in less than three years, producers are feverishly searching for the next Oprah. “She’s gone in May 2006, but you have to be on the air by 2004 to generate a ratings track record if you’re going to seriously be considered as a replacement,” said Bill Carroll, Vice President of Programming for Katz Media Group.⁵ Viewers can therefore expect to be inundated with new talk shows and Oprah Wannabes.

With this in mind, the researcher believed that it was important to address an audience that is commonly overlooked: the studio audience. For this thesis/project, the researcher studied the competitiveness of talk shows, changes in daytime programming and viewing behavior, the role and significance of the studio audience,

⁴ George Haynes, Account Executive Momentum Worldwide, telephone interview, Atlanta, GA., April 29, 2003.

⁵ Steve McClellan, “Looking for the Next Oprah,” *Broadcasting & Cable*, 132:6, July 1, 2002.

the difficulty in recruiting audiences, and the various recruitment tactics performed. The gathered information may be useful to networks, production companies, and distribution companies carrying audience-based shows-- specifically daytime talk shows.

Research for this thesis/project included the following:

- Conducting computer searches using Rowan University's "Digital Dissertations," on-line database of recent dissertations about the role of the studio audience in daytime television talk shows.
- Conducting computer data base searches using Burlington County Library's "EBSCO Host Master File and Business Source Elite" on-line data base of recent newspaper, magazine, and journal articles written about audience recruitment, marketing, event planning, the competitiveness of talk shows, and the decline in talk show popularity.
- Conducting computer database searches using Burlington County Library's "Big Chalk Electric Library" on-line database of recent newspaper and magazine articles, books, and television/radio transcripts on the competitiveness of talk shows and the decline in talk show popularity.
- Acquiring books pertaining to event planning, direct marketing, and talk shows.
- Conducting personal, telephone, and email interviews with audience coordinators and production executives in the television talk show industry regarding the purpose and significance of audience, the

difficulty in recruiting audience, and effective and ineffective audience recruitment tactics.

The researcher conducted a search on EBSCO Host and Electric Library cross referencing the following key words in various combinations: talk shows, audience, studio audience, recruit, marketing, popular, ratings, event planning, and decline.

This cross-referencing yielded the following results:

- Talk shows and audience – two hundred eighty- five articles were found, nine of which were related to this thesis/project.
- Talk shows and studio audience – eight articles were found, three directly related to this thesis/project.
- Recruitment, audience and marketing – eleven articles were found; one was directly related to this thesis/project.
- Event planning, marketing, audience – seven articles were found; one was directly related to this thesis/project.
- Talk shows, popular, ratings, and decline - eight hundred seventy-eight articles were found – sixteen of which were directly related to this thesis/project.

The review of the related material indicates that talk shows are not as popular as they were five years ago resulting in an overall ratings drop. The February sweeps results were not good for the top nine first-run talk shows that saw declines, including six with a double-digit drop-off from the previous year.⁶ Not since Rosie

⁶ Joe Schlosser, "Can We Talk? Not Anymore," *Broadcasting & Cable*, 132:27, March 18, 2002

O'Donnell hit the scene in June 1996 has a new talk show emerged as a hit. Instead, the daytime scene has seen failures from Dr. Laura and Roseanne to Martin Short and Queen Latifah.⁷

Huge drops of 20 – 60% in key female demographics for talk shows over the past five years have highlighted the extent of the daytime declines. The damage can be further gauged by the fact that the new “Dr. Phil,” the biggest hit in syndication since *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, would place a distant seventh among all talk shows with its key female ratings numbers if it were competing against the talk lineup five years ago, according to Nielsen Media Research data.⁸

The problem is twofold: Audiences seem to be tiring of the tabloid-natured *Jerry Springer Show*, where ratings have declined dramatically since its heyday. And cable channels appealing to women, such as the Food Network, Home & Garden Television, and The Learning Channel, have chipped away at the declining daytime audiences with shows about decorating, parenting and cooking.⁹

“The 500-channel universe has changed everything,” said Carroll. There are more talk shows, more court shows, more off-net comedies and dramas. Talk shows rarely used to run against each other. Now it is not uncommon to have four talk shows running against each other during the same hour each day.¹⁰

Many talk show audience coordinators and production executives said that these changes in the industry have caused talk shows to be even more competitive with each other and has affected studio audience numbers. “If you take the studio audience out of the picture, you take away the talk show spectacle as we know it.

⁷ Gary Levin, “Talk Shows Go in Search of Audience,” *USA Today*, August 26, 2002, p. 1d.

⁸ Steve Brennan, “Daytime Syndie at Crossroads,” *Hollywood Reporter*, January 17, 2003, p. 73.

⁹ Levin, op. cit.

¹⁰ Schlosser, op. cit, p. 6.

The audience provides tribal impact, people provoking people to say and do things that they would never say or do unless they were drunk or assured anonymity.”¹¹

Audience is also an integral part of a show because viewers feel at home and want to feel a part of something big. “We (as viewers), feel a lot of energy when we watch a baseball game or a football game because the people in the stands create that energetic atmosphere. When viewers watch television shows, they get that same energy.”¹²

Just weeks after MSNBC was ready to pull the plug on Phil Donahue’s six-month-old show, executives saved him by adding a studio audience. Donahue said that until then he did not fully appreciate the energy that an audience can bring.¹³

Talk show producer Suzanne Bass said that it benefits the hosts of a show to look out and see all the seats filled because it makes them feel a greater sense of support. When they feel supported, they perform better and the show is better as a result.¹⁴

From a director’s perspective, Andre Weston said that having a full audience offers a better variety of shots. Good audience shots show viewers what they are missing. A full audience gives a director more creative freedom.¹⁵ Directors also rely on studio audiences for their “overt participation,” which includes clapping, laughing, booing, cheering, and other similar non-verbal behaviors.¹⁶

For popular talk shows, getting audience is usually not a problem. However, start-up shows are in a different category altogether because they have to compete

¹¹ Stuart Fischhoff, “Confessions of a TV Talk Show Shrink,” *Psychology Today*, 28:41, September 19, 1995.

¹² Katina Corrao, freelance audience coordinator, email interview, New York, NY, May 17, 2003.

¹³ Peter Johnson, “Audience Enlivens Donahue’s Talk Show,” *USA Today*, p. 3d.

¹⁴ Suzanne Bass, Producer *Living It Up! With Ali and Jack*, email interview, New York, NY, May 22, 2003.

¹⁵ Andre Weston, freelance TV director, telephone interview, New York, NY, April 16, 2003.

¹⁶ Robert McKenzie, “Audience Involvement in the Epideictic Discourse of Television Talk Shows,”

<[http://elibrary.com/libweb/ellib/do/document?set=search &groupid...](http://elibrary.com/libweb/ellib/do/document?set=search&groupid...)> April 1, 2000 (accessed March 14, 2003.)

with well known, already established talk shows not only for a viewing audience but a studio audience. All audience coordinators and producers interviewed agreed that there is a problem getting audience for start-up shows (see Appendix A).

Supervising Producer for *Living It Up! With Ali and Jack*, Rob Dauber, said that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and studio viewing because a show that rates well usually has a wait list for tickets. A show that does not do too well has a harder time finding people to fill its studio seats.¹⁷

As the ratings for *The Montel Williams Show* began to drop, audience coordinator Courtney Castle said she felt the decrease in the number of ticket requests. "I find it more and more difficult year after year to continue to fill audience. When a show starts to slump, I can definitely feel the effects in the audience."¹⁸

Audience has always been Dauber's greatest concern. He has worked on many shows where audiences were a little over half full. He said that it is embarrassing when people will not even attend a show that is free of charge.¹⁹

Faced with an empty studio, the *Last Call* crew has been known to simply remove empty chairs sometimes getting down to an audience of 65.²⁰

The average show seats about 150 people; however, all of the audience coordinators interviewed stated that they have to overbook by at least 50% for every show (see appendix A). *The Gordon Elliott Show* in Los Angeles used to book 400 people to net 150 attendees.²¹

The difficulty in recruiting audiences has caused audience coordinators to resort to desperate means. According to Los Angeles insiders, some of the studio audience

¹⁷ Rob Dauber, Supervising Producer *Living it Up! With Ali & Jack*, email interview, New York, NY, May 18, 2003.

¹⁸ Courtney Castle, Audience Coordinator, *The Montel Williams Show*, email interview, New York, NY, May 20, 2003.

¹⁹ Dauber, loc. cit.

²⁰ Beth Pinsker, Tracy Hopkins, "The Lure of the Crowd," *Entertainment Weekly*, October 14, 1994, p. 45.

²¹ Ibid.

members cheering and laughing on talk shows come directly from prisons and halfway houses.²²

Pulling people off the street is another talk-show standby. Mona Kligman, former executive in charge of production for *The Iyanla Vanzant Show*, has had to distribute fliers on the street just hours before the show.²³ The staff for *The John Stewart Show* conducted a “dragnet” for passersby when a band failed to bring its 26 promised guests.²⁴

A former producer for *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show* said that the audience shortage problem was so bad that they were spending nearly \$30,000 a week on transportation, food, door prizes, and attendance fees to fill their studio seats.²⁵

Castle agreed that providing free transportation is an effective recruitment tactic but said that she still resorts to hollering, “Free tickets,” in Times Square hours and sometimes minutes before the show’s taping. Phone blasting is a tactic that definitely does not work. Castle bought thousands of telephone numbers, recorded a message promoting the show, and sent it out to people offering free tickets. “Not one person called back,” she said.²⁶

Not knowing their audience is the biggest mistake that audience coordinators make when recruiting audience. “When you don’t know who ‘they’ are, it’s hard to go out and recruit them.”²⁷

²² Beth Landman Keil, et. Al., “A Truly Captive Audience,” *New York*, 31:13, May 25, 1998.

²³ Mona Kligman, Executive in Charge of Production, *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, personal interview, New York, NY, May 19, 2003.

²⁴ Pinsker, loc. cit.

²⁵ Former producer (anonymous), *Sally Jesse Raphael Show*, personal interview, New York, NY, January 4, 2002.

²⁶ Castle, loc. cit.

²⁷ Corrao, loc. cit.

According to all of the audience coordinators, offering something free to audience members whether it is transportation or food is somewhat effective, but not effective enough to stop overbooking by at least 50%.

Overall, the related literature shows that talk shows ratings have dropped due to the increase in courtroom and women's programming. As home viewership declines, studio audience turnout suffers.

Audience-based shows desperately need lively audience members to create energy and bring excitement to the show and its host(s). The more people in the audience, the more the perception of popularity is achieved. Furthermore, a full audience allows the director to attain more diverse audience shots.

Audience coordinators are faced with the problem of how to make their show shine amongst the competition. Many of the existing audience recruitment tactics are tedious, costly, and ineffective. Despite the 50% overbooking practice, audience coordinators (and producers too) still depend on last-minute street recruiting. When all else fails, the staff removes the empty chairs from the studio. In light of this information, there is a need for an audience recruitment plan that will eliminate existing inefficient recruitment tactics.

CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN

Data base searches were conducted to determine the existence of available information on recruiting studio for talk shows. The searches utilized data bases for books, periodicals, television and radio transcripts. The searches for related material resulted in several magazine and journal articles.

The researcher did not find any books or dissertations that dealt specifically with recruiting television studio audiences.

A questionnaire was developed to determine present recruitment practices of experienced audience coordinators for daytime talk shows. The purpose of this questionnaire was to determine the advantages of a full studio audience and the methods used by audience coordinators to get audience.

Ten interviews (personal, telephone and email) were conducted with individuals working in the talk show industry. The purpose of the interviews was to determine if an audience shortage problem existed. Some of the other purposes were to ascertain the role of the studio audience, the correlation between TV viewership/ratings and studio attendance, and the recruitment tactics audience coordinators felt were working and not working. Some of the questions pertained specifically to that person's title and responsibilities. For example, when the researcher interviewed the Production Manager for *106 and Park*, the researcher asked about the audience budget because that is a production manager's responsibility.

The researcher surveyed potential audience members to determine the most effective ways to attract potential television studio audiences for start-up shows. The survey was emailed to over 2,000 people who had responded to an on-line ad for free

tickets to a start-up show airing on the Food Network. They were given two weeks to respond to the survey.

The researcher received approximately 330 surveys and discarded a total of 31 duplicate and incomplete surveys.

The survey consisted of 15 questions related to three new shows airing Fall 2003: *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, *The Sarah Ferguson Show*, and *Living It Up! With Ali and Jack*. The survey questions dealt with the respondents' predisposition of these shows. This was determined by asking the respondents if they were offered free tickets to each show, would they attend.

The importance of the likeability/popularity of host, likeability/popularity of show, show topics, family-oriented shows, and location was also determined using a "very important" to "not important" scale. The researcher asked the respondents to rate various marketing tools including direct mail, email, fliers, print ads, TV ads, voicemail, and word-of-mouth using a "highly effective" to "ineffective" scale.

The survey also sought to determine the effectiveness of incentives as it applied to each show. The incentives included giveaways, free transportation, free food, meet host in person, free child care, and an autographed picture of host(s).

The researcher sought to determine future behavior by asking if the respondents would watch the show from home, reserve tickets to a future show, and refer a friend if they enjoyed the show.

The respondents were given the opportunity to provide information on their age, gender and race if they so desired.

Once the surveys were returned and interviews completed, the results were tallied, and the results of both the surveys and interviews were organized.

The researcher tallied the total number of responses and respondents for each question and divided that by the number of responses next to each scale rating.

The researcher recorded the interview responses and the survey findings.

Conclusions and recommendations were written based on the information gained from the surveys, interviews, and the review of related material.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Survey Results and Findings

Surveys were emailed to 2,150 people requesting tickets for a start-up show on the Food Network Web site.

Two hundred and ninety-nine surveys, representing 14% of the sample, were returned. Each question, along with the total number of respondents, is listed first, followed by the number of responses to each item (N) and the percentage of responses based on the total number of respondents (%). Below is an analysis of the results of each question as it pertains to the purpose of this study.

1. How far do you live from New York City?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
1 hour or less	115	38.5
1-2 hours	80	26.8
2-4 hours	75	25
Over 4 hours	29	9.7

Over half (65.3 percent) of the survey respondents live within two hours of New York City. While 34.7 percent live two or more hours from New York City.

2. How often do you visit New York City (not including work purposes)?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
1 or more times per month	98	32.8
3 to 6 times per year	109	36.5
1 time per year	52	17.4

	N	%
less than once a year	40	13.4

Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents indicated that they visit New York City at least six times per year. Only 13.4 percent visit less than once a year.

3. When you visit New York City, what type of activity/event do you or would you enjoy?

Total number of responses: 825	N	%
Restaurants/Cafes	234	28.4
Broadway Shows	210	25.5
Shopping Districts	111	13.5
Tourist Attractions	96	11.6
T.V. Tapings	93	11.3
Night –life	81	9.8
Other:	n/a	n/a

Restaurants and Cafes were selected as the number one activity in New York City. Watching Broadway Shows and Shopping came in second and third place respectively. Night Life was the least favorite activity.

4. If you were offered free tickets to the following new talk shows, would you attend?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
<i>The Ellen DeGeneres Show</i>		
Yes	193	64.5
No	106	35.5

<i>The Sarah Ferguson Show</i>	N	%
Yes	221	73.9
No	78	26.1
 <i>Living It Up! With Ali and Jack</i>		
Yes	215	72
No	84	28

Almost two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they would attend all of the shows if offered free tickets. *The Sarah Ferguson Show* received the most positive responses with 73.9 percent. *Living It Up! With Ali and Jack* came in second with 72 percent. While *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* was third trailing by less than 10 percent of *The Sarah Ferguson Show*.

5. How much importance would you place on each of the following when deciding to attend any show?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
<i>Likeability of Host:</i>		
Very important	33	11
Important	42	14
Of some importance	117	39
Fairly unimportant	54	18.3
Not important	53	17.7

<i>Likeability of Show:</i>	N	%
Very important	102	34.1
Important	110	36.8
Of some importance	58	19.4
Fairly unimportant	22	7.4
Not important	7	2.3
 <i>Popularity of Show</i>		
Very important	5	1.7
Important	51	17.1
Of some importance	104	34.8
Fairly important	69	23.1
Not important	70	23.3
 <i>Family-Oriented Show</i>		
Very important	17	5.7
Important	4	1.3
Of some importance	117	39.1
Fairly unimportant	96	32.1
Not important	65	21.8
 <i>Show Topics</i>		
Very important	72	24.1
Important	88	29.4
Of some importance	113	37.8
Fairly unimportant	8	2.7
Not important	18	6.0

<i>Location of Show</i>	N	%
Very important	38	12.7
Important	105	35.1
Of some importance	96	32.1
Fairly unimportant	29	9.7
Not important	31	10.4

Likeability of Show was selected as the most important factor when deciding to attend a show. Show Topics was the second most important factor receiving 24.1 percent. Popularity of show was the least important factor chosen.

6. Rate each of the following marketing tactics that might be used to recruit studio audiences.

Total number of respondents: 299

	N	%
--	---	---

Direct Mail

Highly effective	55	18.4
Effective	130	43.5
Sometimes effective	84	28.1
Rarely effective	12	4
Ineffective	18	6

Email/Online Ads

Highly effective	95	31.8
Effective	138	46.2
Sometimes effective	43	14.4
Rarely effective	13	4.3
Ineffective	10	3.3

Fliers

Highly effective	17	5.7
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	N	%
Effective	85	28.4
Sometimes effective	119	39.8
Rarely effective	38	12.7
Ineffective	40	13.4
<i>Print Ads</i>		
Highly effective	54	18.1
Effective	71	23.7
Sometimes effective	143	47.9
Rarely effective	21	7
Ineffective	10	3.3
<i>TV Ads</i>		
Highly effective	84	28.1
Effective	134	44.9
Sometimes effective	58	19.4
Rarely effective	16	18.7
Ineffective	8	2.7
<i>Voice Mail</i>		
Highly effective	25	8.4
Effective	55	18.4
Sometimes effective	85	28.4
Rarely effective	68	22.7
Ineffective	66	22.1
<i>Word -of -Mouth</i>		
Highly effective	123	41.1
Effective	98	32.8

	N	%
Sometimes effective	64	21.4
Rarely effective	8	2.7
Ineffective	6	2.0

Out of all the respondents, 41.1 percent rated Word-of-Mouth as the most effective recruitment tool. On-line Ads and Television Ads were selected as the second and third highest effective recruitment tools. Voicemail was the least effective (22.1 percent) and fliers were the second least effective (13.4 percent).

7. From the list below, which topics most interest you?

Total number of responses: 801

	N	%
Human Interest	153	19.1
Travel	137	17.1
Home Life	232	29
International Affairs	27	3.4
Finance	43	5.4
Health/Beauty	133	16.6
Travel	28	3.5
Politics	32	4
Tabloid/Scandal	16	1.9
Other:	n/a	n/a

The top three most interesting topics selected by the respondents were Home Life (29 percent), Travel (20.6 percent), and Human Interest (19.1 percent). The topics of least interest were Tabloid/Scandal (1.9 percent) and International Affairs (3.4 percent).

8. How effective are below incentives for the following shows?

Total number of respondents: 299 (for each show)

<i>The Ellen DeGeneres Show</i>	N	%
<i>Giveaways</i>		
Highly effective	122	40.8
Effective	84	28.1
Sometimes effective	54	18.1
Rarely effective	12	4
Ineffective	27	9
<i>Free Transportation:</i>		
Highly effective	145	48.5
Effective	81	27.1
Sometimes effective	21	7
Rarely effective	17	5.7
Ineffective	35	11.7
<i>Free Food:</i>		
Highly effective	132	44.1
Effective	76	25.4
Sometimes effective	55	18.4
Rarely effective	12	4
Ineffective	24	8
<i>Meet Host in Person</i>		
Highly effective	130	43.5
Effective	84	28.1
Sometimes effective	54	18.1
Rarely effective	5	1.7
Ineffective	26	8.7

<i>Audience Participation:</i>	N	%
Highly effective	92	30.8
Effective	88	29.4
Sometimes effective	79	26.4
Rarely effective	16	5.4
Ineffective	24	8
<i>Free Child Care</i>		
Highly effective	59	19.7
Effective	36	12
Sometimes effective	101	33.8
Rarely effective	32	10.7
Ineffective	71	23.7
<i>Free Autographed Picture of Host(s)</i>		
Highly effective	71	23.7
Effective	75	25.1
Sometimes effective	54	18.1
Rarely effective	50	16.7
Ineffective	49	16.4
<i>The Sarah Ferguson Show Giveaways</i>		
Highly effective	128	42.8
Effective	102	34.1
Sometimes effective	46	15.4
Rarely effective	4	1.3
Ineffective	19	6.4

<i>Free Transportation</i>	N	%
Highly effective	140	46.8
Effective	111	37.1
Sometimes effective	12	4
Rarely effective	4	1.3
Ineffective	32	10.8
<i>Free Food</i>		
Highly effective	134	44.8
Effective	101	33.8
Sometimes effective	40	13.4
Rarely effective	4	1.3
Ineffective	12	6.7
<i>Meet Host in Person</i>		
Highly effective	155	51.8
Effective	67	22.4
Sometimes effective	42	14
Rarely effective	9	3
Ineffective	26	8.8
<i>Audience Participation</i>		
Highly effective	103	34.4
Effective	88	29.4
Sometimes effective	80	26.8
Rarely effective	12	4
Ineffective	16	5.4
<i>Free Child Care</i>		
Highly effective	62	20.7

	N	%
Effective	51	17.1
Sometimes effective	72	24.1
Rarely effective	29	10
Ineffective	85	28.1
<i>Free Autographed Picture of Host(s)</i>		
Highly effective	93	31.1
Effective	77	25.8
Sometimes effective	59	19.7
Rarely effective	29	9.7
Ineffective	41	13.7
<i>Living It Up! With Ali and Jack Giveaways</i>		
Highly effective	123	41.1
Effective	106	35.5
Sometimes effective	25	8.4
Rarely effective	13	4.3
Ineffective	32	10.7
<i>Free Transportation</i>		
Highly effective	128	42.8
Effective	108	36.1
Sometimes effective	21	7
Rarely effective	8	2.7
Ineffective	34	11.4
<i>Free Food</i>		
Highly effective	119	39.8
Effective	72	24.1

	N	%
Sometimes effective	64	21.4
Rarely effective	8	2.7
Ineffective	36	12
<i>Meet Host in Person</i>		
Highly effective	101	33.8
Effective	75	25.1
Sometimes effective	72	24.1
Rarely effective	14	4.7
Ineffective	37	12.3
<i>Audience Participation</i>		
Highly effective	87	29.1
Effective	89	30
Sometimes effective	92	30.8
Rarely effective	5	1.7
Ineffective	26	8.4
<i>Free Child Care</i>		
Highly effective	55	18.4
Effective	21	7
Sometimes effective	84	28.1
Rarely effective	21	7
Ineffective	118	39.5
<i>Free Autographed Picture of Host(s)</i>		
Highly effective	68	22.7
Effective	95	31.8
Sometimes effective	64	21.4

	N	%
Rarely effective	21	7
Ineffective	51	17.1

The Ellen DeGeneres Show

Free Transportation rated 48.5 percent as the most effective incentive. Free Food was the second most effective (44.1 percent) and Meet Host in Person was the third (43.5 percent). The two least effective incentives were Free Child Care (23.7 percent) and Autographed Picture of Host (16.4 percent).

The Sarah Ferguson Show

The top three incentives chosen as the most effective were Meet the Host in Person (51.8 percent), Free Transportation (46.8 percent) and Free Food (44.8 percent). Likewise, the least effective incentives were Free Child Care (28.1 percent) and Autographed Picture of Host (13.7 percent).

Living It Up! With Ali & Jack

Free Transportation received the highest percentage (42.8 percent) of the highly effective ranking while Giveaways (41.1 percent) and Free Food (39.8) were second and third. Again, Free Child Care was selected as the least effective incentive (39.5 percent). Autographed Picture of Host was the second least effective incentive (17.1 percent).

9. What incentive(s) would you like to see offered that is/are not listed?

Videotape of the show, free lodging, cash, and shorter wait time (self explanatory)

10. If you had show reservations, which type of confirmation would you prefer?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
Written Confirmation	252	84.3
Verbal confirmation	47	15.7

Almost 85 percent of respondents prefer written confirmation for their show reservation over verbal confirmation (15.7 percent).

11. When would you prefer to receive your confirmation?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
1 day before show	0	0
2 to 4 days before the show	25	8.4
5 to 7 days before show	88	29.4
8 to 10 days before show	186	62.2

The majority of the respondents (62.2 percent) prefer to receive their show confirmation eight to ten days before the show.

12. Would you be more interested in attending a show if it were included in a travel discount package including dinner and other tourist activities?

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
Yes	220	73.6
No	79	26.4

Almost two-thirds of the people surveyed would be more interested in attending a show that was part of a travel package.

13. If you attended a live taping of a show and enjoyed it, would you

most likely:

Total number of respondents: 299

<i>Watch it from home</i>	N	%
No	2	.07
Yes	297	99.3
<i>Reserve tickets for a future show</i>		
No	1	.03
Yes	298	99.7
<i>Refer a Friend</i>		
No	0	0
Yes	299	100

All of the respondents indicated that if they enjoyed a show taping, they would most likely watch it from home, attend a future show, and refer a friend.

14. Would you prefer to receive your tickets

Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
In advance in the mail	254	85
The day of show before check in	45	15

Almost all of the respondents (85 percent) would prefer to receive their tickets in advance in the mail.

15. Demographic Information

Gender: Total number of respondents: 299	N	%
Male	89	29.8
Female	210	70.2
Age: Total number of respondents: 277		
18-49	216	78

	N	%
50+	61	22
Race: Total number of respondents: 263		
White	217	82.5
Black/African American	24	9
Hispanic	13	5
Asian	9	3.5
American Indian	0	0
Other:	0	0

Other suggestions/comments: None

RESULTS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

Five email, three personal, and two telephone interviews were conducted with people working in the television production field. The interview questions sought to determine the following:

- The importance of having a full studio audience
- The role of the studio audiences and how they lend to the success of a show
- The audience recruitment strategies that are effective
- The audience recruitment strategies that are not effective
- The problem with getting audiences for start-up shows.

Interview (Email) Number One: Suzanne Bass, Producer for *Living it Up! With Ali & Jack*

Years of experience:

10

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: The Carnie Wilson Show

In Person with Maureen O'Boyle

The Montel Williams Show

The Rosie O'Donnell Show

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

The shots of the audience look better if all seats are filled. When the seats are filled it gives them a greater sense of support. When they feel supported, they perform better, which makes for a successful show.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

If people love the show from the comforts of their living rooms, then they must really love the show to make the trip into NYC or LA to simply sit in the audience...if no one's watching from home, then they sure as hell aren't making the trip to sit in the audience.

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Interview (Email) Number Two: Sarah Tischler, Audience Coordinator for *The Ricki Lake Show* and *Judge Hatchett*

Years of experience:

2

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: The Ricki Lake Show

Judge Hatchett

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: No

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

It's important because the people sitting in the audience are fans of the show. If there are empty seats, then it looks like the show is not doing good. In coordinating an audience, you must make sure the rows are nice and even and filled with a good mix. Empty seats in the audience tell me someone didn't do his/her job correctly and it makes the audience look sloppy.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

Viewership/ratings definitely affect the amount of studio audience a show receives. If a show is not doing good in the ratings, there may not be a big request for tickets. If people do not watch it on TV, then they may not even care to see a live taping. I feel that if the show is a genuinely good show, people will want to see a live taping regardless of the ratings, but 9 times out of 10 if the show is a great show then it has high ratings.

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: As an audience coordinator, what strategies have worked for you in recruiting audiences?:

A: I have used promotions to try and lure people to see a live taping. By promotions I mean offering free gifts or coupons if they come see the show. Everyone wants something free and because of that they will come to a taping when I offer something free. Handing out fliers is a big part of getting an audience.

Q: What strategies have not worked?

A: Most of my strategies have worked, some more than others. I feel if

something you do recruits at least one person, that's one person you didn't have before and that's success.

Q: What is your #1 rule or approach for recruiting audience?

A: Be very outgoing and happy. Having fun recruiting people is going to make people want to come and be as happy as you. It's all psychological. If I am standing on the street not happy to be there, then who is going to want to come to see a live taping. It's all about having a great attitude!

Q: Do you overbook?

A: Yes

If so, by what percentage?

%50

Q: When you book an audience for a particular show, do you usually know the show's topic for that particular day?

A: No

Interview (Email) Number Three: Courtney Castle, Audience Coordinator for *The Montel*

Williams Show

Years of experience:

6

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: Forgive or Forget with Mother Love

Dr. Joy Browne Show

Montel Williams Show

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

Well it's important to me because I wouldn't have a job otherwise!!!

It really depends on the show. If a show is a live show that is upbeat/variety type, then I think it's important because the audience gives a big boost of energy to the host and guests. With classic talk like the Rickis, Montels, Maurys, Sallys, I think it depends on the topic. If it is a sad, low energy topic, the host rarely goes into the audience. And I don't think the guests care one way or another. But if it is an upbeat, fun topic where the audience can really get into it, then I think it matters and makes a big difference for the same reasons as it does for the variety show types.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

I've never worked on a show where there are millions of email and

letter requests for audience tickets. (like the View, Regis & Kelly, Oprah and Ricki Lake back in her day.) I got into the game when talk was beginning to die. But with the startup shows, when they caught on and a buzz began, I noticed the ticket requests pick up. As the ratings and the show began to die, I definitely felt the decrease in interest. As a whole, I find it more and more difficult year after year to continue to fill the audience. I would imagine. If a show has good ratings, then it will probably mean it is popular so people will want to get tickets. When a show starts to slump, I can definitely feel the effects in the audience.

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: As an audience coordinator, what strategies have worked for you in recruiting audiences?

A: Overbooking each show by 75%

Bus groups of 50 people. We provide transportation.

Day of show recruitment. -we go to times square and holler out free tickets.

Q: What strategies have not worked?

A: Advertising in small local papers.

-Advertising in large well-known papers.

-Advertising at all!

-Phone blasting. We bought thousands of telephone numbers, recorded a

message and sent it out to people offering free tickets. Not one person called back.

-Placing large posters in storefront windows in Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan.

-Handing out fliers in parking lots of large shopping plazas.

Q: What is your #1 rule or approach for recruiting audience?

A: Never stop, never give up. It is a constant battle. Just remember that the job has to get done. The seats have to be filled.

Q: Do you overbook?

A: Yes

If so, by what percentage?

75 %

Q: When you book an audience for a particular show, do you usually know the show's topic for that particular day?

A: No

Interview (Email) Number Four: Rob Dauber, Supervising Producer, *Living it Up! With*

Ali & Jack

Years of experience:

19

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: Living It Up! With Ali & Jack

The Rosie O'Donnell Show,

The Ricki Lake Show, Carnie

The Maury Povich Show

Sally Jessy Raphael,

In Person with Maureen O'Boyle

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

A lively studio audience helps build energy in the studio and that helps the hosts perform better.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

Once a show is on the air, it is either popular or it isn't. A show that rates well almost always has a wait list for tickets. A show that doesn't do well often has a tougher time finding people to fill its studio seats.

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Interview (Email) Number Five: Katina Corrao, freelance audience coordinator

Email Interview

Years of experience:

6

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: The Late Show with David Letterman

Who Wants to be a Millionaire

The Ananda Lewis Show

Lighten Up!

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

If no one is in a seat, that means the show is not "sold out." Who wants to see a show like that? Viewers at home want to feel a part of something big. We (as viewers) feel a lot of energy when we watch a baseball game, a football game, etc. because the people in the stands create that energetic atmosphere. When viewers watch television shows, they should get that same energy.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

(See above answer)

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: As an audience coordinator, what strategies have worked for you in recruiting audiences?

A: Most of the shows I worked on sold themselves, so my job was easy. However, when you work on a new show without a lot of publicity, you must begin to find creative ways to get them there. Giving the audience a reason to be there other than seeing a good show--incentives, gift bags, etc. have always worked, as well as raffles and big giveaways after the taping of the show.

Q: What strategies have not worked?

A: Not knowing your "audience"--

When you don't know who "they" are, it's hard to go out and recruit them.

Q: What is your #1 rule or approach for recruiting audience?

A: Let the potential audience members know that without them we wouldn't have a show--they are a big part of the show!

Q: Do you overbook?

A: Yes

If so, by what percentage?

50%

Q: When you book an audience for a particular show, do you usually know the show's topic for that particular day?

A: No

Interview (Personal) Number Six: Joye Cross, Production Manager for 106 & Park

Years of experience:

5

Q: Please name the talk show(s) that you have worked on as audience coordinator/producer.

A: 106 & Park

The Sally Jesse Raphael Show

Trackers

Q: Out of these shows, were any of them start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: Is it important for a show to have every seat filled?

A: Yes

If so, why?

A full house gives viewers at home the perception that the show is popular. It could be the worst show on television, but if people have the illusion that everyone wants to see this show live, then they will want to attend too. It is sad that popularity is more important than quality. The Jerry Springer Show is a classic example of this.

Q: To piggyback off question #3, do you believe that there is a

correlation between TV viewership/ratings and live viewing (studio audience) attendance?

A: Yes

Explain.

Audience creates an ownership of the show that the viewer can feel. It is important for a viewer to see their peers having a good time, which generates that feeling to the viewer as well.

Q: With the competitiveness of talk shows, is there a problem getting full audiences for start-up shows?

A: Yes

Q: As a production manager, you manage the budget, what has been your experience with budget as it relates to audience recruitment?

A: Because audience is essential to the success of many of the shows that I have worked on, tens of thousands are spent each year to get audiences. Unfortunately, many shows too many times still come up short in its audience numbers. We are still trying to figure out how to bring audiences in without taking such a huge financial loss.

Q: How does your show do with getting audience?

A: Our show does well because we only have competition with one other show in New York

Q: What show is that?

A: MTV's *Total Request Live*, which is also a music video show. I feel for the Maurys and the Montels because they are all similar in that they have the traditional talk show format. Our show is about music, specifically hip-hop and R&B, so our demographic is very specific. Although MTV's *Total Request Live* is music-oriented, it has a more diverse audience consisting mainly of the Caucasian population.

Q: Besides lack of competition, are there any other factors that make getting audience easier?

A: Yes, celebrities appear on the majority of our shows. When people call for tickets, we do not tell them who will be appearing on that day. If we did that, then we would probably have an audience control problem. On the flip side, we do not tell people when we aren't expecting a celebrity because then we might have a shortage of people. Therefore, we just tell them that they have to wait until the day of the show to find out. We are happy with our audience turn out.

Interview(Personal) Number Seven: Mona Kligman, Executive in Charge of Production for *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*(Former Executive in Charge of Production for *The Iyanla Vanzant Show*

Q: What do you look for when you are hiring an audience coordinator?

A: I look for someone who is going to "think outside of box." Most audience coordinators that I interview talk about street recruiting but sometimes that does not give us the audience that we are looking for. I basically want an audience coordinator who

has more of a strategic plan for getting audience so that it will meet our audience demographic.

*Q: What was your experience like with *The Iyanla Vanzant Show*?*

A: Well that was a very difficult show to get audience for because no one knew who she was.

Q: What did you do to get her name out there?

A: We did the usual promos and tried to play on the Oprah thing. You know she used to appear on Oprah regularly several years ago.

Q: Did that work?

A: Apparently not; the show was cancelled after one season.

*Q: What has your experience been with *Millionaire*?*

A: Much better, but I am still helping with audience recruitment. I have been up and down the street handing out fliers the day of the show. We just want people who are going to come willingly and not who are coerced.

Interview (Telephone) Number Eight: George Haynes, Account Executive for
Momentum Worldwide (A Division of McCann Erickson)

George Haynes has ten years of marketing experience and holds an MBA in Marketing from Clarke-Atlanta University. The researcher interviewed Haynes to attain basic information on marketing research as it relates to television viewers, ratings, viewing behavior, etc. The following was his response:

People's behavior, values, attitudes, interests, background, and experiences make them who they are. People's television viewing behavior and patterns are determined by these factors. When clients hire me to execute various market research projects, their primary goal is to find out what people want to see. In his research, Haynes stated that identifying popular trends is key. As a marketing professional, researching "what's hot and what's not," economic and social interests, cultural, family and educational values, etc. of a particular television demographic and supplying his clients with this data, gives them the best opportunity to create shows that people will respond to.

Interview (Telephone) Number Nine: Andre Weston, freelance TV Director & A&R for Queen B Entertainment

Q: How long have you been directing?

A: I was an assistant director for three years before I got my first directing opportunity four years ago. So it's been a total of seven years.

Q: Have you directed any shows that have used a live studio audience?

A: Yes

Q: From a director's perspective, is it important to have a full studio audience and if so, why?

A: If you are talking about a talk show, the host has to have someone to receive feedback from whether it is verbal or nonverbal. From a director's point of view, having a full audience offers a better variety of shots. Good audience reaction shots show viewers what they are missing. A packed audience gives a director more creative liberty.

Interview (Personal) Number Ten: Anonymous, former production executive for *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show*

Q: Can you tell me about your experience with audience?

A: We never intended to pay for audience except maybe an ad here or an ad there. The

problem of getting audience is getting worse because there is another show that tapes right next to our studio and we are losing our audience to them. We are paying our audience member not only to attend the show, but we are feeding them and providing transportation. It is costing us roughly \$30,000 a week.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This thesis sought to determine the methods audience coordinators used to recruit studio audiences. This portion of the thesis included a ten-question interview emailed to audience coordinators for current daytime talk shows in New York City. Interviews were also conducted with production executives and a director to determine the purpose and significance of audience as well as audience-related costs.

Second, the thesis sought to answer what audiences like and dislike, what they have done, what they will do, and what they believe as it pertains to studio attendance. This portion of the thesis included a fifteen-question survey addressing incentives, show topics, and confirmations to name a few.

The current recruitment tactics in practice were compared with the ones favored by the survey respondents. The results indicated that many of these tactics are ineffective and financially/socially damaging to a show. Therefore, it is necessary for audience coordinators to not only re-evaluate their current recruitment practices, but their perception of what audience coordination entails.

Conclusions

A review of the audience/producers interviews and analysis of the survey findings resulted in the following conclusions:

- All of the interviewees agreed that it is important to have every seat occupied in a studio for the benefit of the host and the show as a whole.
- All of the interviewees agreed that there is a correlation between TV viewership and studio audience attendance in that there is a domino effect. When people at home see a studio full of people enjoying themselves, they want to have a similar experience and are more likely to attend shows that rate well. In many cases, television viewers may become studio audience members.
- All of the survey respondents said that if they enjoyed a show taping, they would most likely watch it from home, attend a future taping, and refer a friend. This information demonstrates the correlation between TV viewership and studio audience attendance from a different perspective. The reverse occurs in that studio audience members become television viewers (of that same program).
- Over 65 percent of the survey respondents live within two hours of New York City. Out of them, almost 40 percent live less than one hour away from New York City. Over 30 percent visit one or more times per month. Therefore, it is beneficial for audience coordinators to recruit “locally” and to target those areas within a 150 –mile radius of the show. These areas include but are not limited to Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan, The Bronx, Staten Island, New Jersey, and parts of Connecticut.

- Restaurants and Cafes, Broadway Shows, and Shopping Districts were listed as the top three New York City attractions. This information provides coordinators with key target spots. Coordinators can recruit at the TKTS Line where Broadway show tickets are purchased and build relationships with restaurant personnel as well as with people who work in popular shopping districts like Century 21.
- Almost two-thirds of the respondents are in favor of attending all three start-up shows. It is essential for coordinators to focus on audiences that need little or no persuasion to attend a show before targeting the immovable people.
- Show Topics was selected as the second most important factor when deciding to attend a show. All of the audience coordinators interviewed said that they are not aware of the show's topic when booking audience for a particular day. This concludes that coordinators do not recruit audience members in conjunction with the members interests (i.e. topic-cooking , audience- culinary student).
- Effective incentives and recruitment tactics used by coordinators included offering free transportation/gifts, overbooking by at least 50%, giving the audience something to look forward to, and being outgoing and friendly. It is concluded that if it is still necessary to overbook by at least 50%, the recruitment tactics in place are not highly effective, with the exception of free transportation which rated almost 50% highly effective for all three start-up shows.
- Ineffective recruitment tactics used by coordinators included handing out fliers, phone blasting, advertising in large well-known newspapers,

advertising in small local newspapers, advertising period, and not knowing your audience. These results were supported by the survey findings that found Voicemail and Fliers to be the two least effective marketing tools.

- Almost 75 percent of survey respondents said that they would be more interested in attending a show if it was a part of a discount travel package. Many show tapings last between 30 and 60 minutes. It may not be worth it for someone to travel to New York City just to attend a show. Offering the show participants a hotel discount or booklet on other New York City attractions might persuade people to attend.
- An overwhelming majority (84.3 percent) of the survey respondents prefer written confirmation over verbal confirmation. Sixty-two percent of them prefer to receive confirmation eight to ten days prior to their show date. If audience coordinators adhere to these audience preferences, there is a greater probability that audience members with reservations will show up.
- Other incentives of interest not listed included free lodging, cash, and a free videotape of the show. Shorter wait time is the most feasible and least costly of them all.
- Almost all of the survey respondents prefer to receive their tickets in advance in the mail. People are not that trusting and do not want to take the chance of their tickets not being at the door. They have a greater sense of security knowing that the tickets are in their hand when they arrive. It is worth the extra expense to mail out ticket if it going to result in greater audience turn out.

Recommendations

Many would agree that some shows sell themselves. Audience Coordinators for *Emeril Live* and *Late Night with David Letterman*, would attest to that. They have the reverse problem of audience overflow. Unfortunately, coordinators for new shows with unfamiliar host(s) or older played-out shows are faced with the challenge of changing the unfamiliar to the familiar and the familiar but dull to the familiar but appealing. Based on the survey/interview conclusions, the researcher recommends that audience coordinators adopt a public relations approach to recruiting audiences for start-up shows or older shows that have lost their gloss. Below are the following recommendations as they pertain to public relations and studio audience recruitment:

1. Do your research. Extensive surveys should be done before a start-up show begins production to determine audience needs, predispositions, beliefs, interests, and limitations. Based on this information, coordinators can create their audience recruitment plan that corresponds with these components. Post surveys should also be conducted after the shows to identify the strengths and issues of the show. Sample questions could ask about the temperature of the holding room, the length of waiting time, the cleanliness of the studio, the selection of refreshments, and so on. It would also be ideal to ask audience members if they are interested in attending a future show. If they are interested, take down their names and follow up in a few months.
2. Know your product. In this case, the show is the product. Ask producers what the show has to offer that no other show can. Establish the strengths of the show. Make the audience believe that they are going to benefit from attending the show.

3. Do not settle for any audience member. Find out in advance from the show's producers what the topic will be each day and recruit accordingly. You want the people in the audience to be interested in the subject and look like they want to be there. In other words, cater to the interests of the audience. Again, research can achieve this.
4. Select the appropriate channels. Factors that should be considered are: Is the channel appropriate for the audience; does the audience have access to the channel; and does the channel allow for feedback.²⁸ Word-of-Mouth is a powerful and inexpensive marketing tool. Amazon.com went from \$511,000 in sales in its first year to billions because of word-of-mouth.²⁹ Do not overlook family, friends, the family doctor, or the mailman... Tell as many people as possible about your show and its benefits and features.
5. Dump the desperate façade. Hollering, "Free tickets," in Times Square can be socially damaging to a show because it gives the impression that the show is desperate for people and that no one wants to attend. People will draw their own conclusions as to why no one wants to attend. Instead, give the impression of privilege. Convince the audience that the show tickets are a hot item, but you just happen to have last minute cancellations. Too much bribing and begging will give you a studio full of captive, clock-watching spectators.
6. Stay Informed. Read entertainment-related magazines and journals. Know what the media are saying about your show and/or its host(s). If necessary, get involved in image rebuilding

²⁸ Fulginit, Bagin, "Public Relations Practice, Prentice Hall, 1999.

²⁹ John Tschohl, "The Power of Word-of-Mouth," *Canadian Manager*, 28:26, Spring 2003.

7. Don't be afraid to ask. Approach clubs and organizations about your show. Ask them to post information about your show on the bulletin board. Return the favor to them by promising to plug their restaurant/club to your audience.
8. Treat your Audience Special. Do not make the audience wait in line for hours. Do not make the audience wait outside in the rain or the scorching heat. Provide entertainment, refreshments and a pleasant waiting atmosphere. Have conversation with audience members. Most importantly, remember their names and use them when you say goodbye. That makes a great impression.
9. Know your competition. What do their shows offer that yours does not? How do they treat their audiences? Are they paying them to attend? Are they providing free transportation? Where are their studios located? Find out what the competition is doing and go one step above them.
10. Identify gatekeepers. Determine who has major influence in the area. Speak to tour guides- museum tour guides, bus tour guides, attraction guides, etc. and pitch your show to them. Ask them to briefly mention the show during their tour presentations.
11. Be creative. When recruiting audience for a show, set up a table and poster reading, "Enter to Win Free Tickets," near Penn Station. People are much more interested in winning something than being given something that anybody can get. After you are done collecting the entries, call everyone back and tell them that they won.


For Further Study

Audience Coordinators can conduct extensive studies (psychographic) to identify “who” the audiences are – their likes and dislikes, preferences, inclinations, and leaning on position.³⁰ The sample survey (located at the end of this chapter) delves deeper into audiences’ beliefs about the host’s character (i.e. humorous/dull, sincere/fake). This survey format is ideal for producers looking for a very specific audience profile. In addition, demographic information such as occupation and number of people in household can be added if a specific demographic is needed.

³⁰ Fulginiti, loc. cit.

Take This Quick Survey and Win a Chance
to see a live taping of Emeril!

Take A Quick Survey and...



**WIN
TICKETS
TO
Emeril**

Click Here

TV STUDIO AUDIENCE RECRUITMENT SURVEY

ATTN: FOOD NETWORK FANS- WIN FREE EMERIL TICKETS!

Several months ago, many of you responded to an online ad for free tickets to a premier show on the Food Network Web site. Your ticket request indicates that you are a Food Network viewer interested in being a studio audience member. However, would you be equally excited at the prospect of attending a live taping of a show that you knew little or nothing about? The purpose of this survey is to answer that question. The results of this study will determine the most effective ways to attract potential television studio audiences for start-up shows. Three new talk shows will be used as an example in this survey. For the sake of this survey, we will assume that all three shows are taped in New York City within five miles of one another. We appreciate your time and effort in completing this survey. To be eligible for free tickets to *Emeril*, surveys must be completed in their entirety. Winners will be notified by email in six to eight weeks. **Survey deadline is June 16, 2003.**

1. How far do you live from New York City?

- 1 hour or less 1-2 hours 2-4 hours over 4 hours

2. How often do you visit New York City (not including work purposes)?

- 1 or more times per month 3 to 6 times per year 1 time per year less than once a year

**3. When you visit New York City, what type of activity/event do you or would you enjoy?
You may select up to three choices**

- Broadway Shows
- Night Life (clubs, comedy clubs, etc.)
- Restaurants/Cafes
- Shopping Districts (Soho, Park Ave., Century 21, etc.)
- Tourist Attractions (Statue of Liberty, Radio City Music Hall, etc.)
- T.V. Tapings (Letterman, The View, Maury Povich, etc.)

Other: Please Specify

4. If you were offered free tickets to the following new talk shows, would you attend:

- a. The Ellen Degeneres Show Yes No
- b. The Sarah Ferguson Show Yes No
- c. Living it Up! With Ali and Jack Yes No

5. How much importance would you place on each of the following when deciding to attend any show:

likeability of Host

- not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Popularity of Host

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

likeability of Show

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Popularity of Show

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Family-Oriented Show

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Show Topics

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Location of Show (traveling distance)

not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Other: Please Specify**6. Rate each of the following marketing tactics that might be used to recruit studio audiences:**

Highly effective suggests would definitely respond.

Ineffective suggests would not respond.

Direct Mail: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Email/Online Ads: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Fliers: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

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T.V. Ads: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Voicemail: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Word-of-Mouth: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective
(from a known source)

7. From the list below, which topics most interest you?

You may select up to 3 choices

Human Interest

Travel

International Affairs

Politics

Finance

Tabloid/scandal

Health and Beauty Home life (cooking, gardening, design, etc.)

Other: Please Specify: _____

8. The following question is designed to determine the effectiveness of each incentive as it relates to attendance for each show.

Highly effective suggests that you would definitely attend the show

Ineffective suggests that you would not attend show

The Ellen DeGeneres Show

Giveaways: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Free Transportation: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Free Food: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Meet Host in Person: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Audience Participation: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective
(During Show)

Free Child Care: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Autographed Picture of Host(s): highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

Other: Please Specify: _____

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Other: Please Specify:

9. What incentive(s) would you like to see offered that is/are not listed?

10. If you had show reservations, which type of confirmation would you prefer?

Verbal confirmation Written confirmation

11. When would you prefer to receive your confirmation?

1 day before show 2 to 4 days before show 5 to 7 days before show 8 to 10 days before show

12. Would you be more interested in attending a show if it were included in a travel discount package including dinner and other tourist activities?

Yes No

13. If you attended a live taping of a show and enjoyed it, would you most likely:

Watch it from home: Yes No

Reserve tickets for a future show: Yes No

Refer a Friend: Yes No

14. Would you prefer to receive your tickets:

In advance in the mail The day of the show upon check in

15. Demographic Information:

a. Gender: Male Female

b. Age:

c. Race:

d. Email address:

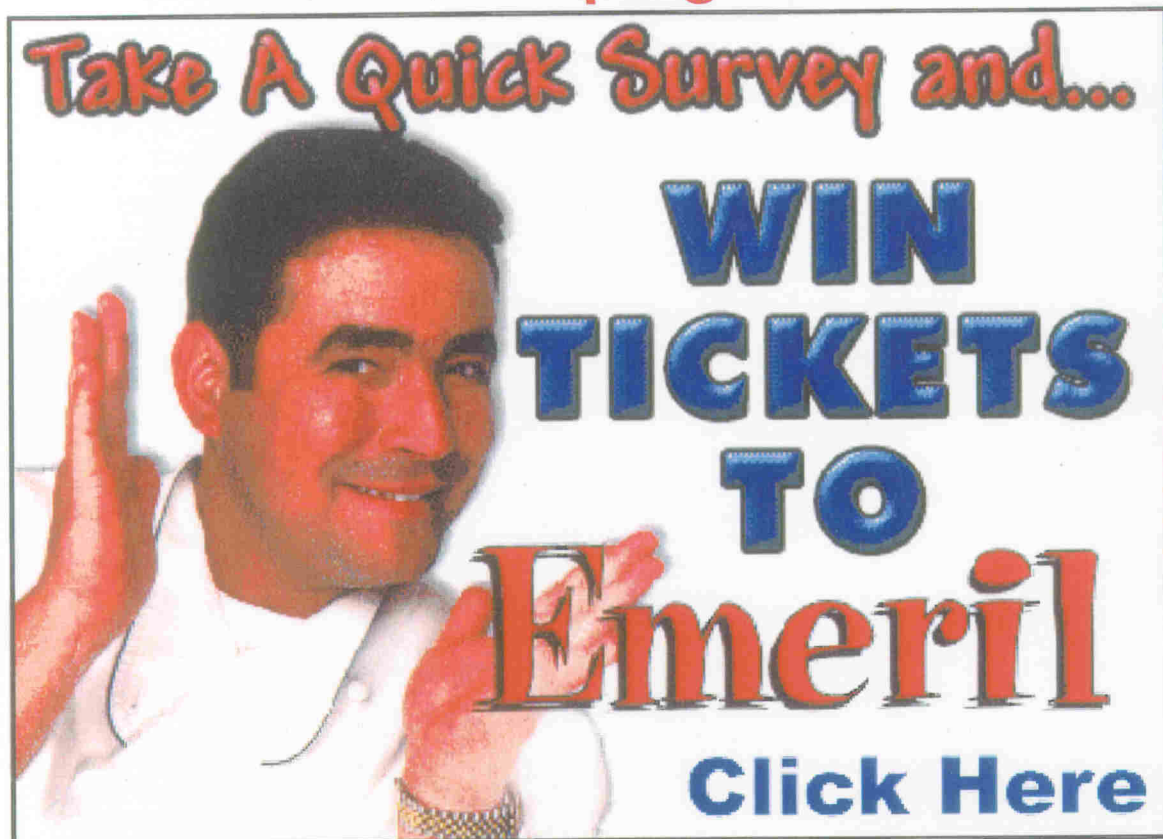
Any additional comments or suggestions:

Reset Survey

Send Survey

Thanks again for your participation in this survey!

Take This Quick Survey and Win a Chance
to see a live taping of Emeril!

A promotional graphic for Emeril's show. It features a photograph of Emeril Lagasse on the left, smiling and clapping his hands. To the right of the photo, the text reads: "Take A Quick Survey and..." in a stylized, outlined font; "WIN TICKETS TO Emeril" in large, bold, blue and red letters; and "Click Here" in blue letters at the bottom right.

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You may select up to three choices**

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- Tourist Attractions (Statue of Liberty, Radio City Music Hall, etc.)
- T.V. Tapings (Letterman, The View, Maury Povich, etc.)

Other: Please Specify

4. If you were offered free tickets to the following new talk shows, would you attend:

- a. The Ellen Degeneres Show Yes No
- b. The Sarah Ferguson Show Yes No
- c. Living it Up! With Ali and Jack Yes No

5. Have you heard of Ellen DeGeneres?

- Yes No

What is your attitude towards her?

<http://www.mimdesigns.com/survey/>

6/28/2003

favorable unfavorable indifferent

5. If you answered yes to part one of question #5, which terms would you use to best describe her?

Select one answer from each column per row

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Humorous | <input type="radio"/> Dull |
| <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable | <input type="radio"/> Unknowing/Uninformed |
| <input type="radio"/> Generous/charitable | <input type="radio"/> Selfish/Greedy |
| <input type="radio"/> Attractive | <input type="radio"/> Unattractive |
| <input type="radio"/> Genuine | <input type="radio"/> Fake/Insincere |
| <input type="radio"/> Personable/Approachable | <input type="radio"/> Impersonal/Unapproachable |

7. Have you heard of Sarah Ferguson?

Yes No

What is your attitude towards her?

favorable unfavorable indifferent

8. If you answered yes to part one of question #7, which terms would you use to best describe her?

Select one answer from each column per row

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Humorous | <input type="radio"/> Dull |
| <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable | <input type="radio"/> Unknowing/Uninformed |
| <input type="radio"/> Generous/charitable | <input type="radio"/> Selfish/Greedy |
| <input type="radio"/> Attractive | <input type="radio"/> Unattractive |
| <input type="radio"/> Genuine | <input type="radio"/> Fake/Insincere |
| <input type="radio"/> Personable/Approachable | <input type="radio"/> Impersonal/Unapproachable |

9. Have you heard of Jack Ford?

Yes No

What is your attitude towards him?

favorable unfavorable indifferent

10. If you answered yes to part one of question #9, which terms would you use to best describe him?

Select one answer from each column per row

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Humorous | <input type="radio"/> Dull |
| <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable | <input type="radio"/> Unknowing/Uninformed |
| <input type="radio"/> Generous/charitable | <input type="radio"/> Selfish/Greedy |
| <input type="radio"/> Attractive | <input type="radio"/> Unattractive |
| <input type="radio"/> Genuine | <input type="radio"/> Fake/Insincere |
| <input type="radio"/> Personable/Approachable | <input type="radio"/> Impersonal/Unapproachable |

11. Have you heard of Alexandra Wentworth?

- Yes No

What is your attitude towards her?

- favorable unfavorable indifferent

12. If you answered yes to part one of question #11, which terms would you use to best describe her?

Select one answer from each column per row

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Humorous | <input type="radio"/> Dull |
| <input type="radio"/> Knowledgeable | <input type="radio"/> Unknowing/Uninformed |
| <input type="radio"/> Generous/charitable | <input type="radio"/> Selfish/Greedy |
| <input type="radio"/> Attractive | <input type="radio"/> Unattractive |
| <input type="radio"/> Genuine | <input type="radio"/> Fake/Insincere |
| <input type="radio"/> Personable/Approachable | <input type="radio"/> Impersonal/Unapproachable |

13. How much importance would you place on each of the following when deciding to attend any show:**likeability of Host**

- not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

Popularity of Host

- not important fairly unimportant of some importance important very important

likeability of Show

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Popularity of Show

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Show Topics

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Other: Please Specify

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15. From the list below, which topics most interest you?
You may select up to 3 choices

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Interest | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International Affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Tabloid/scandal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Home life (cooking, gardening, design, etc.) |

Other: Please Specify:

16. The following question is designed to determine the effectiveness of each incentive as it relates to attendance for each show.
Highly effective suggests that you would definitely attend the show
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The Ellen DeGeneres Show

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Other: Please Specify:

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Free Transportation: highly effective effective sometimes effective rarely effective ineffective

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Refer a Friend: Yes No

22. Would you prefer to receive your tickets:

In advance in the mail The day of the show upon check in

23. Demographic Information:

a. Gender: Male Female

b. Age: _____

c. City: _____ **State:** _____

d. Race: _____

e. Occupation:

f. Number of members in household:

g. Email address:

Any additional comments or suggestions:

Thanks again for your participation in this survey!

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