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Entertainment MARKETERS OF THE YEAR

Meet the masterminds behind 2003's most successful entertainment offerings

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Russell & Rolf SCHWARTZ & MITTWEG

'LORD OF THE RINGS': Promotion team widens the ring, tweaks the emotional pull of a movie series turned instant classic

RUSSELL SCHWARTZ (below, upper photo) had sold the spectacle, the lore, the effects, "the precious." Then, facing the third installment of the wildly successful "Lord of the Rings" franchise, he went for the heartstrings.

Mr. Schwartz, president of domestic marketing at Time Warner's New Line Cinema, focused on the emotional drama of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" to lure back fans of the first two films and broaden the audience to those who hadn't yet latched onto it.

"Our campaign wasn't about 'bigger and better,'" he says. "It was about the story and characters. This was the most emotional, the most human, of all three movies. There was a very big promise of resolution, and that's how we positioned it."

To create a sense of finality and urgency, Mr. Schwartz and his team came up with the tagline "The journey ends."

After the first two movies brought in a whopping \$660 million domestically, few Hollywood watchers predicted "Return of the King" could top that. It did. "Return of the King" has outpaced both previous films in the trilogy, taking in more than \$345 million at



the U.S. box office alone, and still counting. (It also picked up 11 Oscar nominations).

Release dates, a key part of any marketing strategy, played a crucial role for New Line, with Mr. Schwartz and Rolf Mittweg (below, lower photo), the studio's president-chief operating officer of worldwide distribution and marketing, plotting the best course. The studio has prided itself on counterprogramming its competitors, and in no year was that perhaps more evident than 2003.

New Line's decision to launch "Elf" in early November, ahead of such anticipated fare as Walt Disney Co.'s "Haunted Mansion" and Universal Pictures' "The Cat in the Hat," was an attempt to grab the family audience in the pre-holiday window. The Will Ferrell film, which cost a paltry \$32 million to produce, pulled in more than \$170 million at the domestic box office. It and "Lord of the Rings" were the two biggest, but not the only, New Line hits in a strong year.

"Elf's" director, Jon Favreau, says Mr. Schwartz understood the film and didn't try to use "Old School," Mr. Ferrell's recent hit, as a touchstone. "I never had to compromise this movie," Mr. Favreau says. ■ —T.L. STANLEY



NEW LINE CINEMA

AdAge SPECIAL REPORT ENTERTAINMENT MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



KEITH MURNYAN

Susan DUFF

HILARY DUFF: Perseverance pays off as Disney tween breaks out as multifaceted entertainment property

MANY TALENTED KIDS migrate to Hollywood with dreams of seeing their names on a marquee. Of course, few make it. Around three years ago, a very adorable Hilary Duff broke through as a superstar of the 6-to-14-year-old tween set on the Disney Channel's middle school saga, "Lizzie McGuire." Since then, she's become the center of an entertainment business empire.

That budding operation includes a recording contract, dolls featuring Hilary's likeness and a hilaryduff.com Web site. Now old enough to drive at 16, Hilary is making the transition to movies, with a slate of projects including this summer's "A Cinderella Story" from Time Warner's Warner Bros. There are concert dates supporting her debut album, "Metamorphosis," from Walt Disney Co.'s Hollywood Records, and a summer 2004 tour is in the works. The album has gone triple platinum, selling 3 million copies.

All the while, Hilary is sticking to a good girl image that parents—and advertisers—love. Her Q Score, a measure of celebrity likability, placed her in the top 10 out of 1,750 performers included in a recent Marketing Evaluations survey among kids aged 6 to 11.

Hilary's mother, Susan Duff, 50, a former

makeup artist and sales manager, had no formal preparation for Hollywood's famously hardball ways when she brought her two daughters (sister Haylie is 18) from Houston to Los Angeles in 1998 to pursue their passion for acting. What she had was innate business sense and the judgment to pick a cadre of savvy advisers—managers, attorneys, publicists—to nurture brand Hilary Duff long before there was such a thing.

URGED TO GO HOME

"If I have anything to do with it, it's that I can recognize decent people and keep them around Hilary," Ms. Duff says. Predictably, in the early days, Ms. Duff and her girls faced rejection, including not-so-subtle suggestions from casting personnel that they should consider returning to Texas. "It was not what my children wanted to do," Ms. Duff says. They persevered. The opportunities came.

Along the way, Ms. Duff learned to decipher the nuances of deal memos and profit participation statements. "I had to learn about percentages, international residuals, all of that," she says. "You have to learn, or you're going to be at their mercy."

Last year, Ms. Duff earned a reputation as



LARRY MARANO

a tough negotiator during talks with the Disney Channel over Hilary's continuing participation in the Lizzie McGuire franchise. The two parted ways after failing to come to terms (though the show continues as a daily strip on the Disney Channel and Lizzie McGuire-inspired merchandise rocks on). "The driving force is always what's best for my child," Ms. Duff says.

Since then, Hilary's career hasn't missed a beat. At a time when pop culture performers bump and grind (not to mention the

occasional immodest flesh flash on national TV), Hilary's natural demeanor gives her refreshing appeal.

"We have a lot of dialogue in our house about appropriate behavior," Ms. Duff says. Coming up: development deals with Viacom networks CBS and MTV for series to air in the 2004-05 season. There's also Stuff by Hilary Duff, a line including cosmetics, clothing, accessories and home items, which will show up on Target store shelves in coming weeks. ■

—JENNIFER PENDLETON



Chris CARLISLE

FX: Once caught in rerun rut, cable network blossoms via edgy first-run fare like 'Shield,' 'Nip/Tuck' and promotion efforts

FX HAS BEEN AROUND for a decade, but with a schedule relying heavily on reruns as recently as three years ago, few knew what the News Corp.-owned basic cable channel stood for. It was adrift in the multichannel universe, without a clear identity.

In 1999, a headhunter called Chris Carlisle, a marketing veteran of Warner Bros., ABC and NBC, about a position at FX. His awareness was as low as the public's. "What the hell is an FX?" he recalls saying. A year into his tenure, the FX Networks head of marketing and

promotion oversaw development of a new on-air look and began stoking awareness with Madison Avenue buyers via an industry campaign asking, "Are you Xperienced?"

The next challenge was to build perception in the wider world. Here, Mr. Carlisle wanted to apply the high-stakes concepts of movie marketing to cable. But he knew the strategy would only work if FX scored some breakout shows. Enter "The Shield" in 2002. Mr. Carlisle recognized the potential of this gritty saga of a rogue cop, and took a page from



ALBERT WATSON

Hollywood's theatrical playbook. FX put up giant billboards featuring an arresting image of star Michael Chiklis, all bald head and menacing stare (photograph shot by Mr. Carlisle himself), in key corners of Los Angeles and New York. "The road to justice is twisted," it advised would-be viewers.

FX also took the unusual step of creating a 2-minute, 45-second trailer for "The Shield" to play on FX and other cable channels. Kaleidoscope Films created the trailer. Intralink Film Graphic Design, Los Angeles, handles the bulk of FX's creative work, and Fox handles media buying in-house.

The tactics helped propel "The Shield" to

become the No. 1 original drama series on basic cable that year, by far the most successful series in FX's history. For "The Shield's" second season, FX hyped the series by inserting a CD-ROM, filled with upcoming scenes, into Time Inc.'s *Entertainment Weekly*. The ratings held up.

STUNNING BILLBOARD

In 2003, FX scored again with "Nip/Tuck," a dark drama about plastic surgeons in Miami. FX put up billboards featuring a traffic-stopping image—a close-up on a glamorous blue eye, framed by stitches. Theme: "Truth is only skin deep." Promo spots feature quick cuts and a pulsing sound track, plus close-ups of shapely backsides, Botox injections and operating room splatter.

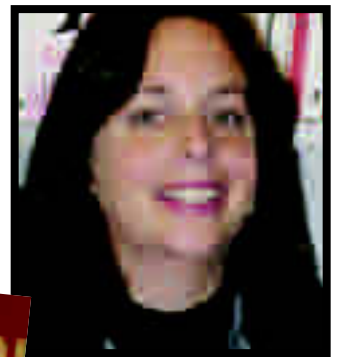
"If someone is going to venture out to FX, you need to be ... distinctly alternative," says Mr. Carlisle, 47, now exec VP-marketing and promotion. "Nip/Tuck" scored near the top of the cable ratings, pulling in an average of 3.25 million viewers.

The ad industry is noticing. "In the past two or three years, we have increased our presence on [FX] across most of our clients," says Andrew Donchin, director of national broadcast at Aegis Group's Carat USA, New York. ■

—JENNIFER PENDLETON



Adrienne & Suzanne SPARKS & HERZ



“THE DA VINCI CODE” is a rare bird—it offers something for everyone, including secret societies, religious conspiracies, codes, art history, murder and a touch of romance. “People who don’t read books are going out to buy this book,” says Adrienne Sparks, 34, associate director of marketing at Bertelsmann’s Doubleday Books.

In stores since March 18, 2003, “The Da Vinci Code” already has 6 million hardcover copies in print. As of Feb. 8, it had spent 45 weeks on *The New York Times* best-seller list—25 of those weeks in the top slot.

How big is 6 million in 11 months? After 10 years in print, “Midnight in the Garden of Good & Evil” has sold 3.3 million copies, including paperback sales.

Doubleday distributed 10,000 advance review copies to booksellers and reviewers.

‘THE DA VINCI CODE’: Pieces of elaborate marketing puzzle are carefully constructed by book team

Author Dan Brown, whom Suzanne Herz, Doubleday VP-associate publisher and executive director of publicity, describes as “incredibly charming, like your favorite college professor,” went out on a rare pre-publication tour to meet booksellers large and small. Ms. Sparks kept 300 of the most enthusiastic industry insiders talking by sending background information about the book to an e-mail list the team called the “‘Da Vinci Code’ noisemakers.”

On the publicity side, Ms. Herz, 42, was “saturating the reviewers.” *The New York Times*’ Janet Maslin was one of the book’s most fervent early fans. In her review, which ran the

day before “The Da Vinci Code” hit stores, Ms. Maslin wrote: “The word for ‘The Da Vinci Code’ is ... wow.”

After the bookselling community was “thoroughly primed, we shifted focus to the customer,” Ms. Sparks says. Spier, New York, created an image of the Mona Lisa with a tagline that read: “Why is this man smiling?”

‘TIMES’ FULLY CODED

One month before the book’s release, Doubleday sent posters and shelf talkers of the Mona Lisa ad to bookstores to give readers a taste of the title. On pub date, even *The New*



York Times was fully coded—every section had a teaser ad that drove readers to a page ad in “Arts.”

Since publication, Doubleday has kept readers involved with the book through online code-breaking contests; more than 500,000

people tried to win the last contest. At this point, even if Doubleday put the kibosh on all marketing efforts, Mr. Brown’s behemoth best seller probably wouldn’t be in danger of disappearing. Other publishers have rushed “Code”-inspired books to print, Ron Howard and Brian Grazer have optioned the film rights, and, well, everybody is still talking about it. “It’s so deeply in the air that it’s creating its own publicity,” Ms. Herz says. ■ —JENNA SCHNUER



Mona SCOTT

MISSY ELLIOTT: Once ‘painfully shy’ performer steps out front with Adidas and Gap deals, and adoring audience

MARKETING SOMEBODY who didn’t want to be marketed was the dilemma facing Mona Scott. The reluctant client: rapper Missy Elliott.

Ms. Scott characterizes Ms. Elliott as “painfully shy” when she took on the performer as a client in 1997.

How things have changed. As Ms. Elliott’s record sales—and popularity—grew, Ms. Scott slowly ramped up the artist’s in-the-public-eye appearances and marketing partnerships. By the time 2003, arrived, so had Missy Elliott. Her Gap TV commercial with Madonna made news before it had even hit the air—and made the artist-formerly-known-as-shy one of the most visible music stars in the U.S. (How well-known? The March 13 episode of Lifetime’s biography series “Intimate Portrait” will focus on Ms. Elliott.)

In the early 1990s, Ms. Elliott and her group Sista were signed to Elektra Records, but their album was never released and the rapper turned to producing. In ‘97, guest performances on other artists’ albums led to a production and label deal with Elektra, part of

Time Warner. (Ms. Elliott heads up Elektra’s Gold Mind imprint.)

“Her ultimate goal for herself wasn’t as a frontman,” says Ms. Scott. “It was as CEO.” Elektra called in Ms. Scott, president of Violator Management, to help guide the artist’s career.

“I knew she could be an innovator and set trends,” says Ms. Scott, 37. “What she says, her look, she’s pushing the envelope in a lot of areas.”

After the release of Ms. Elliott’s 1997 debut album “Supa Dupa Fly,” Ms. Scott recalls, “everybody was wondering who this woman was who defied the standard with her look and her sound.”

GRAMMY WINNER

Ms. Elliott has released four more albums with total sales of nearly 7 million. She received a Grammy as best female rap artist.

“Missy is tangible to her audience. It’s never been just about her songs,” says Ms. Scott. “It’s always been about being someone her fans could relate to and identify with.”



In 2001, Missy Elliott’s breakthrough deal came when Reebok International signed her. Other deals have included Coca-Cola Co.’s Sprite and Vanilla Coke.

With the Reebok deal now over, the next big thing for Ms. Elliott is a partnership with iconic hip-hop brand Adidas. The artist’s Adidas apparel line, the Missy Elliott Collection, will debut this spring.

“I didn’t want her to just be another celebrity endorsing a line,” says Ms. Scott. The collection’s tagline plays off Ms. Elliott’s name and image: “Respect M.E.”

“They created a vibe we wanted to

present,” Ms. Scott says. The Adidas deal is the brand’s first with a non-athlete since rap group Run-D.M.C.—creators of one of music’s great brand love songs, “My Adidas”—was signed on in the late 1980s.

A few years back, Missy Elliott wasn’t viewed by most marketers as the “ideal frontman,” Ms. Scott says. Now, they’re moving to Missy’s rhythms.

“You have a heavyset black woman creating music and mesmerizing with her videos,” says Ms. Scott. “To guys she’s sexy and to girls she’s empowering. That’s rare.” ■

—JENNA SCHNUER

JOHNNY NUNEZ

MIKE BLAKE

AdAge SPECIAL REPORT ENTERTAINMENT MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



T.K. KIMBRELL

TOBY KEITH: Manager unleashes blunt-talking, flag-waving country star all the way to top of the charts; Ford along for the ride

THOUGH HE HAS SOME strong opinions of his own, T.K. Kimbrell has climbed to the top of the country music management heap by allowing his most famous recording artist, self-professed redneck Toby Keith, to speak his mind, anytime, all the time.

Mr. Keith has become the top-selling country artist with a string of No. 1 singles from his last two albums, both of which have gone triple-platinum. His "Unleashed," which debuted in 2002, featured the post-9/11 kick-some-terrorist-ass song "Courtesy of the Red, White & Blue (The Angry American)."

Mr. Keith's plan to sing it on an ABC Fourth of July special got him axed from the lineup for being too incendiary and kicked up a fight with the show's host, news anchor Peter Jennings. Dixie Chick Natalie Maines, no stranger to controversy herself, pounced on the song, saying it reinforced stereotypes of country music as ignorant and jingoistic. A battle of words erupted, and Ms. Maines showed up by satellite on last year's Academy of Country Music Awards—during which Mr. Keith won Entertainer of the Year—wearing a

shirt emblazoned with the letters FUTK.

"In a PC world, Toby stands up for what he believes in and says what he feels," says Mr. Kimbrell, the 48-year-old owner and president of Nashville-based TKO Artist Management. "It could be scary sometimes, not knowing if that was the right thing for his career. But I decided early on to just let Toby be himself."

There's no denying that "Angry American" helped cement Mr. Keith as a blunt but charming superstar much closer to old schooler Willie Nelson than amiable hat acts Alan Jackson and Tim McGraw.

A COUNTRY THROWBACK

Mr. Keith has reveled in his throwback status, and Mr. Kimbrell has worked to harness that for maximum marketing impact. The latest example: Mr. Keith's current single, another one for the troops called "American Soldier," from his late 2003 album "Shock'n Y'all" is the fastest-climbing song the artist has had.

"He's gotten press and publicity in the last year and a half that was never available to him before and has never been available to a lot of country artists," Mr. Kimbrell says. "There



have been so many benefits like a better position in the marketplace. It's enabled us to get our product at retail alongside Eminem and 50 Cent and other major artists."

Mr. Kimbrell, who used to tour as a bass player in country bands, understands the heart of an artist, his colleagues say, and wouldn't try to squeeze his musicians into a mold.

"He understands the image Toby is trying to project," says John Rose, senior executive-sales and marketing at DreamWorks Records, now part of Universal Music Group's Interscope division. "He's turned down a lot of lucrative offers from brands. He knows the right vehicles to choose, and he follows his convictions."

Over the years, that has included deals with MCI, Coors Brewing Co., Mr. Coffee

and Ford Motor Co. The Ford deal—Mr. Keith is a third-generation Ford truck driver—continues as a tour sponsorship and commercial endorsement. The artist and the marketer have been closely aligned for nearly two years, with Ford building a transforming F-150 that's been part of Mr. Keith's stage act on tour, and the country star is writing music for and starring in Ford commercials.

"T.K. understands the creative side and the business side, and he really understands Toby's fans," says Kurt Schneider, senior partner-management director at Ford Division's ad agency, WPP Group's J. Walter Thompson USA, Detroit. "He's created a collaborative relationship with us, with a lot of give and take, and that's led to its success." ■

—T.L. STANLEY



Oren AVIV

BUENA VISTA PICTURES: 'Making do' with odd set of movie properties, exec puts up stunning box-office numbers

WITH NO BIG MARQUEE name to sell several movies on his 2003 schedule, Oren Aviv turned to the story as star.

In our celebrity-obsessed culture, a bankable star can do wonders for a campaign, but Mr. Aviv, president of Buena Vista Pictures Marketing, had no such luxury for much of his slate. What he did have was a remake of a '70s comedy, a fish-out-of-water/urban-meets-suburban picture, a book-based story about kids in juvenile detention and a high-risk, big-budget adventure based on a decades-old theme park ride. And, then there was a matter of a little fish tale.

Those movies—"Freaky Friday," "Bringing Down the House," "Holes," "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl" and the animated "Finding Nemo"—pulled in more than \$960 million collectively at the domestic box office and helped buoy the entire Walt Disney Co. conglomerate last year.

"Stars were born or reborn with the success of those movies," Mr. Aviv says. "But that doesn't help us, in terms of creating attention, when we're trying to open the movie initially."

Included in the star-is-born category are Queen Latifah for "Bringing Down the



House," Orlando Bloom and Keira Knightley in "Pirates of the Caribbean," and Lindsay Lohan in "Freaky Friday."

Among those reborn were Jamie Lee Curtis ("Freaky Friday"), Steve Martin ("Bringing Down the House"), Ellen DeGeneres ("Finding Nemo") and Johnny Depp ("Pirates of the Caribbean," for which he earned an Oscar nomination for best actor).

SELLS THE STORY

When Mr. Aviv was launching those projects, however, he was focused on selling each story. "You have to mine the concept of the movie when you don't have that lead character to hang your campaign on," says Mr. Aviv, 42. "You

have to be as simple and direct as possible."

There were pivotal tactics supporting each film. For "Pirates," the studio staged a roadblock of the movie's trailer across nearly every Disney-owned TV channel. The 2½-minute spot ran simultaneously across more than a dozen networks in March for the summer-opening film. It was the public's first look at the action adventure, and it created immediate buzz on Web sites and in the entertainment media.

"He finds the unique selling proposition," says Jerry Bruckheimer, the producer of "Pirates of the Caribbean."

The studio chose sneak peeks as a way to build buzz for "Bringing Down the House," with Queen Latifah's production company kicking in some grassroots marketing efforts. Mr. Aviv's team repeated the sneak peeks with "Freaky Friday" and used the Disney Channel extensively to help move the comedy out of a girl-only realm and into an all-family pick. For "Holes," the marketer keyed in on the quirkiness of the story.

Mr. Aviv comes up with creative media concepts and marketing strategies from the earliest point in the movie's life, filmmakers say. "He's very thoughtful about the marketing, and he lives and breathes it," Mr. Bruckheimer says. "His touch is on everything, from the trailers to the print ads to the TV spots." ■

—T.L. STANLEY

AdAge SPECIAL REPORT ENTERTAINMENT MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



Marc & David PLATT & STONE



'WICKED': Slow to find its legs, prequel to Dorothy's adventure in Oz shows that witches are far from dead

WITCHY WEATHER HAS dropped a house on several Broadway plays this winter, but at New York City's Gershwin Theatre, the producers of "Wicked" are as pleased as the residents of Munchkinland.

Based on Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel "Wicked: The Life & Times of the Wicked Witch of the West," the musical tells the tale of the denizens of Oz before Dorothy hit town. The title originally was slated to go from page to silver screen. But Marc Platt, who was developing the project in his role as Universal Pictures' president of production, says "something wasn't bringing it to life."

Ultimately, Mr. Platt, 46, who heads Universal City, Calif.-based Marc Platt Productions, and his team connected with Broadway producer David Stone, 37, who's worked on shows such as "Man of La Mancha" and "The Vagina Monologues."

"I'm blown away by how well we're doing in the winter," says Mr. Stone, who along with Mr. Platt is lead producer of "Wicked."



"The advance keeps growing. That's very good for the show's long-term health."

For the week ended Feb. 1, "Wicked" grossed \$951,831, with an average ticket price of \$70.03, according to the League of

American Theatres & Producers. In that same week, "Hairspray" grossed \$775,289, "Movin' Out" pulled in \$490,942 and four Broadway shows announced they'd close. Only "The Producers," with Nathan Lane

and Matthew Broderick back in the lead roles, beat "Wicked."

Messrs. Platt and Stone believed they would have "Wicked" success if they hooked the marketing to L. Frank Baum's original "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," since many theatergoers may not have read the book version of "Wicked."

The print ad, created by New York agency Serino Coyne, features a white witch whispering into the ear of a green-skinned witch. The tagline reads: "So much happened before Dorothy dropped in ..."

"You know these images, but there's confusion about what you're seeing and you want to know more," Mr. Stone says.

"In developing the graphic image, the play, the book, the story became the star," says Mr. Platt. "We wanted to sell the idea."

AMEX CONNECTION

Ticket sales were whipped up by an ad backing "Wicked," but paid for by American Express Co., that ran in *The New York Times* the day of the Tony Awards. Then, about a month before the show's Halloween eve opening—"We booked that date a year in advance," Mr. Stone recalls—they sent 500,000 pieces of direct mail, ran a few weeks of radio ads and placed print ads in the *Times* and the four major suburban newspapers around New York City.

Pre-show promotions developed by the Marketing Group included a window design contest for tri-state Barnes & Noble stores (30 bookstores participated), as well as "Wicked" windows and an in-store party at Macy's flagship store.

"We knew it was working because the sales were wonderful for something essentially brand new," Mr. Stone says. Advance sales totaled \$8 million.

Next up? "Wicked" will head out on tour in 2005. Kansas, get ready. ■ —JENNA SCHNUR



Jonathan ABRAMS

FRIENDSTER: Viral marketing turns to viral nagging as Internet site rides buzz to connect 6 million advocates

IT STARTED WITH AN IDEA, a beta test, about 20 people and no marketing budget.

A year later, Friendster.com is nearly 6 million users strong, valued at more than \$50 million and referenced in the scripts of hot TV shows like Fox's "The OC." It's become, as Google before it, part of the pop culture lexicon, growing through word-of-mouth and the subsequent mainstream media coverage attracted to the buzz around it.

"It really was like that old shampoo commercial where you tell two friends and then they tell two friends and so on," says Jonathan Abrams, founder and CEO of

Friendster, who pulled in 20 of his closest friends as the first users. "And it goes beyond viral marketing to something I call viral nagging. That's when your friends don't just tell you about something, but they bug you about it and keep bugging you."

Mr. Abrams, a 33-year-old former software engineer at Netscape, created Friendster in his Silicon Valley apartment, intending to build a better way to meet people online. The free site launched in test mode early last year and quickly attracted \$13 million in venture support. Mr. Abrams' 20 friends invited their friends to join the site,



and those in turn invited others.

Users have to be invited, and once they sign up, they're linked to their friends' network of people. The friend sphere keeps growing exponentially, reinforcing the old six-degrees-of-separation adage that we're all somehow connected through someone we know.

CAREFUL POSITIONING

Dating Web sites like Match.com and eHarmony.com had already flourished, but the success of Friendster stirred up new interest in social networking sites. Some have seen their numbers spike, and new ones have been encouraged to launch.

Though he's not a marketer by trade, Mr. Abrams did have brand building as a goal from Day One and gave careful consideration to positioning. It all started with the name.

Friendster was a conscious choice because he didn't want it to be perceived as a dating site. He dismissed any choices that contained words like "love" or "match" or "marry" so it could have a broader base for potential users.

Friendster has no media budget still, and has done no traditional advertising. There's one marketing

executive on board the company now, but mainly to field opportunities like merchandising and potential entertainment ideas based on the Friendster community.

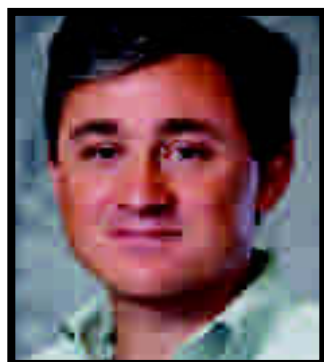
Pop culture watchers and business mavens say Friendster came along at just the right time and captured the zeitgeist.

"People are desperate for connection, but they're increasingly skeptical," says Jane Buckingham, founder and president of Youth Intelligence, a New York and Los Angeles trend watcher. "This site has a halo effect. If your friends have endorsed this person, then that must mean he's OK."

In a social climbing world, whom you know is very important. "Friendster lets you feel like you're part of something exclusive," she says. "It plays into our need to belong." ■

—T.L. STANLEY

AdAge SPECIAL REPORT ENTERTAINMENT MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



Frank GIBEAU

EA SPORTS: Billion-dollar 'Madden NFL' series makes marketing and publicity work hand in hand with videogames

FRANK GIBEAU, videogaming's billion-dollar man, has done more than build the No.1 U.S. videogame software publishing house. Electronic Arts' exec VP-marketing has led the industry's synthesis into what's been dubbed "the new radio." Musicians are

using videogames to get exposure for their new releases, taking advantage of a venue where the coveted young male audience spends 75 or more hours on average a year.

"He understands how [videogames] can evolve as a form of entertainment beyond



games," says John Aldrich, partner and account director at See, Electronic Arts' advertising agency in San Francisco.

At 35, Mr. Gibeau has spent his entire career at EA, starting as a product manager, and has initiated a number of industry firsts. They include the 1994 launch of arcade-style motorcycle racing game "Road Rash," which embraced the music tie-in by featuring tracks of alternative bands.

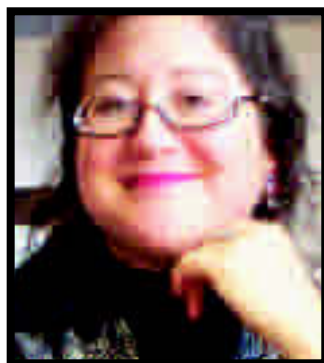
EA's "Madden NFL" series has hit \$1 billion in sales. Other stars in EA's 100-game

portfolio range from fantasy in "Lord of the Rings" and "Harry Potter" to World War II adventure game "Medal of Honor."

Mr. Gibeau credits EA's success with a fundamental strategy that tightly aligns marketing with game development. "The single thing that makes us unique is the ability to work with the studio in making great games," he says. In other organizations, "marketers and publicity organizations are second-class citizens."

Mr. Gibeau, closely monitoring trends before they make it to the mainstream, sensed the emergence of the "street" games subculture, and quickly developed the "NBA Street" franchise. The company's "Need for Speed Underground" product was developed before the rest of society discovered the "Tuner" car-racing culture, he says.

The biggest challenge remaining is the industry's move to interactive gaming, where EA already has stumbled once. "Interactive is the future," Mr. Gibeau says, "and a superior form of entertainment." ■ —ALICE Z. CUNEO



Susan ROSENBERG

CLEAR CHANNEL ENTERTAINMENT: Concert executive helps keep the Stones tour fresh, ticket revenue sky high

THE NON-STOP BUZZ sparked by Susan Rosenberg helped the Rolling Stones score the highest average ticket price for the top 100 tours of 2003. Tickets for the Stones' Licks World Tour went for an average of \$158.17 last year, outshining everyone from classic

acts like Simon & Garfunkel to new-time rapper 50 Cent.

"The Stones have a very large vision. They are the best and biggest at doing what they do," says Ms. Rosenberg, VP-tour marketing at Clear Channel Entertainment.



DAVID G. MCINTYRE

"We never stop marketing, from first launch till the tour is done, and we always keep the buzz going."

And, she notes, "With the concert industry, you don't get a second chance. You have to be as big and entertaining as possible to cut through all the clutter out there in the media."

The Stones pulled an overall ranking with Pollstar of No. 14 on the roster of 100 top tours for 2003, with a \$38.5 million gross.

The tour, marking four decades of Stones music, enjoyed a feeling of old-friends-reunited, new-friends-to-be-made camaraderie with fans—and marketing reflected that. "Stones' audiences can be made up of three generations," notes Ms. Rosenberg, a veteran of tour marketing.

"So in big cities, the Stones choose three different venues—an arena, a stadium and a theater," she says. "For the theater's intimate setting, tickets are \$50, although there are \$300 tickets for an arena in New York."

As to her personal marketing wiles, Ms. Rosenberg, 45, prefers to take a modest stance, saying, "The Rolling Stones already have a lot of things in place promotionally."

But part of the marketing sizzle in which Ms. Rosenberg took a personal hand was the use of two airships, festooned with neon-colored lips, that cruised over major markets across the U.S., sparkling in the sunshine and aglow at night. "The colors are always bright," says Ms. Rosenberg. ■

—ANN HELMING



Vivi ZIGLER

BRAVO: Stylish, and with a lighter touch, 'Queer Eye' puts cable network in a whole new league that 'really resonates with audience'

FROM THE OCHER-TINTED silhouettes on outdoor boards to whistles carrying the message "Bad style really blows," Bravo's marketing campaign to introduce "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" struck the right tenor for the program: stylish, but without taking itself too seriously.

The marketing campaign crafted by Vivi Zigler not only gave "Queer Eye" the exposure it needed to become a pop culture touchstone, but her work for it and another Bravo program, "Celebrity Poker," helped the cable network broaden its once arts-heavy audience niche.

"I believed in [Queer Eye] from the get-



CRAIG BLANKENHORN

go," says Ms. Zigler, who holds the title of senior VP-marketing and advertising services at both Bravo and the NBC Agency, the in-house marketing shop of Bravo parent NBC. She says the network levied its highest promotion budget at the time toward "Queer Eye." There was tune-in network radio, spot radio, local cable ads, and distinctive outdoor boards in New York and Los Angeles.

Gays were secondarily targeted with

events such as sponsorship at New York's Gay Pride Parade, where the Fab 5 rode in Gay Pride-colored VWs; ads in *Out* and *The Advocate*; and street teams promoting the show. "It really resonated with the audience," says Ms. Zigler. "It's amazing. Callers talk about how life-affirming it is."

"Queer Eye" also caught the eye of General Electric Co.'s NBC, which had acquired Bravo in December 2003. NBC ran a "Queer Eye" special in prime time. "It was pure sampling," says Ms. Zigler, noting that the move brought more viewers to Bravo.

So, too, has "Celebrity Poker," which pits wits of celebrities in card-playing showdowns. Aware that selling audiences on poker-viewing might be a bit of a trick, Ms. Zigler worked with the producers to enhance the show with a retro Las Vegas "Rat Pack" feel via logo, music and campaign.

Under its new ownership, Bravo doesn't want to be known as the makeover channel or the arts channel. Instead, it wants to be "eclectic," she says, and in tune with popular culture. ■ —JUDANN POLLACK