

Multichannel marketing fuels DRTV growth: study

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By adapting interactive media and using direct response television for nontraditional purposes, multichannel marketers are growing the DRTV industry as a marketing medium, according to a new study from the Electronic Retailing Association, called *The Evolving Role of Direct Response Television in Multichannel Marketing Execution*.

The report, conducted by the Winterberry Group, attributes the growth largely to DRTV marketers who are accelerating their adoption and customization of emerging technologies, especially in the interactive sphere of the Web.

"The consumer is in charge — that is the big message here," said Sieglinde Friedman, vice president of board and strategy at the ERA. "It used to be all about the call to action call, right then and there: 'Call this number: We're having a 75 percent sale.' That's an old model in a way, because the consumer is finding its product in many different ways and DRTV recognizes that. [Marketers] are much busier now ... than [when consumers were just driven] from an 800 number."

The report shows that the DRTV industry is being reshaped by the increasing number of brand marketers in the DRTV space, the growing use of DRTV to develop and nurture customer relationships rather than merely sell individual products and the increasing use of DRTV to drive Web and retail traffic.

"This study helps to reinforce that direct response is really coming to prominence and more and more marketers — larger marketers, brand marketers, marketers looking to drive retail and looking to drive their Web traffic and sales — are going to be adopting and considering direct response," said Peter Koeppel, president and founder of Koeppel Direct, a direct response media-buying agency in Dallas.

"It also helps to reinforce what we've been trying to sell to marketers — Fortune 1000 marketers — who haven't maybe entered the space yet: that DRTV does really have value," Koeppel added. "In today's more fragmented media environment you have to understand different media channels and how they are going to impact on your sales and work together to build sales or build brand or drive retail."

The study aimed to understand the rationale behind the perpetual success of DRTV and involved interviews and surveys with about 100 senior industry executives in North America. According to Friedman, DRTV has evolved and emerged into a new entity. "It isn't the infomercial any more: It is a much more sophisticated model because it's quantifiable and it still has the same attraction it's always had, but now it's going out on a number of channels and meeting the consumer's need. The fact that branded and traditional advertisers are utilizing it, and seeing the value and power of it is new."

She said the DRTV has succeeded in part because the industry grasps the rules of the new consumer-controlled environment and has quickly moved to adopt multichannel strategies. Koeppel has also seen the industry evolve.

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"I've been in this industry since 1993 and at the time direct response was kind of looked down upon by traditional ad agencies and marketers," Koeppel continued. "They considered it selling and it was kind of an ugly stepchild of the advertising agency.

"With the development of the Internet — and marketers seeing the type of ROI and that they can measure things on the Internet now — they're looking for that same sort of measurement from their offline advertising," he said.

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