

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Sci Fi Channel Tin Man Mini-Series

Business Situation and Campaign Objectives

Every winter since 1998, the Sci Fi Channel premieres a new mini-series, such as Stephen Spielberg's Taken. Tin Man, the 2007 mini-series, was created as a re-imagination of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, offering viewers a familiar story with a modern twist. The goal of the Tin Man marketing campaign was to successfully launch the series to achieve ratings success for both the event itself as well as the network overall. The objectives were to 1) create awareness of the series among both viewers of the Sci Fi Channel and among those who do not typically watch the channel, but would be interested in the series and 2) generate interest in the series among consumers that would motivate them to tune in for the premiere and subsequent episodes.

With the mini-series, we also wanted to bring new viewers to the Sci Fi Channel, and offer a program that would be equally appealing to both men and women. It was particularly important that Tin Man perform well because one of the channel's goals for 2007 was to improve our competitive ranking from #7 in 2006 to #6 in 2007.

In order to have a singular perspective for marketing that would deliver a broad, network growing audience, we thought about our target simply as anyone who has ever loved The Wonderful Wizard of Oz. Based on this, our strategy was to create a cool, imaginative marketing campaign in order to promise a cool, imaginative mini-series about a familiar story. Every interaction would be an experience – making consumers feel like they had entered into a world that was simultaneously familiar (The Wonderful Wizard of Oz) and unusual (the Sci Fi twist). We sought opportunities to re-create the modern, sci fi world of *Tin Man* by surrounding consumers with the sights and sounds of the Outer Zone (our version of Oz).

Research Story

The Sci Fi Channel Marketing and Research groups worked together throughout the campaign on a variety of research projects which helped 1) identify/confirm the main appeal of the series in order to highlight them in marketing materials, 2) ensure that messages were working among the target demographic groups and identify which of a variety of executions should be used in certain environments, 3) regularly track awareness of the campaign so that changes could be made to address any areas of concern. The goals and findings of each of the projects are detailed below.

Night 1 Test

Goal: To get consumer reactions to the entire first episode to understand strengths and weaknesses, determine what drives interest in the series, and identify differences in intent to view based on age or gender.

Methodology: Respondents were recruited via intercept in Las Vegas and Orlando and were asked to watch the episode and answer an online quantitative survey.

Research Findings & Recommendations

With our first look at Tin Man, we learned that respondents were open to and positive about the idea of a re-imagination of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and thought it made sense as a mini-series for Sci Fi. They described Tin Man as a "modern" or "futuristic" "twist" on the story that they know. The cues that let them know that Tin Man was based on The Wonderful Wizard of Oz were the characters, the storm, the brick road & references to Kansas.

In addition to the basic premise and idea of Tin Man, the other strengths were the visual images and appearance of the show, the themes centered around the search for truth and identity, the conflict and drama between main characters DG and Azkadelia and Cain and Zero, and the action.

Recommendations to Marketing included:

- For promos and print, keep in mind that DG (Dorothy) and Cain (Tin Man) received the highest positive evaluations among the main characters. The Mystic Man also received fairly positive scores, and many commented that they enjoyed the character because he was portrayed by Richard Dreyfuss.
- In addition to highlighting the idea of a new version of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, emphasize the ideas of good vs. evil and the journey to uncover your true identity, which also resonated with viewers.
- Consider separate spots that focus on each of the characters to help viewers understand the background of the characters and how they relate to each other. This would allow viewers a chance to start a relationship with them before the series started, allowing for easier access to the storyline.

Marketing Communications Check

Goal: To expose potential viewers to several ideas and directions around the potential marketing campaign in order to identify the most compelling elements.

Methodology: Focus groups

Research Findings & Recommendations

Of the print executions presented, we learned that an ad with the Yellow Brick Road (YBR) and the witch's hat was overwhelmingly the favorite among women and one of the stronger ads among men as well. Based on the strengths of the YBR execution and respondents' reactions to the other print ads, it was recommended that the final print ad incorporate the guidelines outlined below:

- Prominently feature familiar icons from The Wonderful Wizard of Oz in order to capture viewers' attention and make a clear connection to the classic story. – The YBR and the witch's hat were eye-catching, engaging, and generated nostalgic feelings for the original movie. This helped to build interest in the mini-series.
- Avoid close-up images of the characters. – Executions that presented close-up images of the characters were less appealing to many respondents. Research participants seemed to find a greater connection to the familiar icons (e.g. YBR, the witch's hat, and the story itself).
- Communicate a dark, mysterious adventure – The imagery of the forest, the weathered YBR and the witch's hat suggested that this story would be a mysterious, dark adventure without being too spooky or creepy.
- Make the tagline more prominent – In the favored print ad, and in others, the tagline was very small and somewhat lost in the background images.
- Include cast member names only if it will not make the final execution too crowded or busy – Many respondents were not familiar with most of the actors. Only those few who were familiar with the actors' names found value in having the names included. Once again, for this particular program, it seems The Wonderful Wizard of Oz story and its related icons will be the primary attraction to the print ads.

As with the print, research participants responded best to the darker, more action-oriented TV spots. In editing the final TV spot, the following should be considered:

- Pace and plotline – The pace was exciting but not too fast to follow. They also thought the spot gave a good description of the storyline. It was intriguing without giving too much information. The lines "welcome back little sister" and "you help that girl at all costs, she's the key" piqued respondents' curiosity and made them more interested in the story.

- Reference to the book – This was appealing because it set the stage for the story. It also reiterated the classic status of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and drew respondents into the new story being told.
- Action and adventure – Clips with fight scenes, guns, villains and profanity engaged viewers and differentiated Tin Man from the original film.
- Special effects and fantasy images – Respondents appreciated seeing various special effects and images such as the winged monkeys. They also referred to the spinning fairy, which was featured in other executions. These elements help satisfy their need for fantasy and fit with their expectations for Sci Fi.
- Variety of characters – Respondents favored TV executions that focused on many characters. They made the show more interesting and offered more opportunities for the action and adventure clips that were so appealing.

Title Test

Goal: Determine the equity of the title alone and how it impacts intent to view among Sci Fi Channel viewers, potential viewers and different demographics.

Methodology: Online survey

Research Findings & Recommendations

The title “Tin Man” was significantly more appealing to men than women. In order to appeal to women, we knew we needed to include other elements and ideas in the marketing campaign to pique their interest.

Promo Test

Goal: To understand the strengths and weaknesses of the TV promotions overall and also of specific spots individually. Determine which spots worked best among particular demographic groups and competitive channel viewers to move forward with the most efficient and effective media buy.

Methodology: Online survey using a monadic design

Research Findings & Recommendations

Overall, the intent to view scores and evaluations of the promos for Tin Man were positive. Consistent with Night 1 testing, respondents reported that they liked the idea of mini-series that re-imagined the classic Wonderful Wizard of Oz story and most of the spots successfully communicated that Tin Man would be a sci fi version with a modern look and feel.

Intent to view Tin Man and evaluations of the promos were higher among men than women, which was likely being driven by the perception that Tin Man was going to be a dark action show that was potentially violent and scary (women were significantly more likely than men to say they expected the series to be action-filled, suspenseful, original, edgy, scary, confusing, outrageous, and depressing). The % of respondents who said that they thought Tin Man would be appropriate for families was also relatively low. Men were more likely than women to agree that Tin Man looked family-friendly, but they were less likely than women to agree that they “enjoy watching shows that they can watch with the whole family.”

Based on the promo test, men were more likely than women to say they would make a “special effort” to watch Tin Man. However, we knew from the Night 1 research that the program was equally appealing to both men and women.

- To generate greater interest among women, Research recommended that Marketing consider spots:
 - With a slower pace
 - That highlight Kathleen Robertson, who was familiar to many and received higher scores from women than men
 - That use a familiar song

- That focus on the lighter side of DG's journey – making friends, the importance of family, what it means to go home, etc, so that it didn't come across as so dark, scary, violent, depressing.
- The "family-friendly" scores were relatively low and some respondents specifically commented that they were not sure if Tin Man would be appropriate for children. In order to communicate the family appeal of the series, Research recommended:
 - Clips with the young DG and Azkadellia to help communicate that the series would be appropriate for family-viewing.
 - Scenes where DG was with her parents (nurturing units) in Kansas as they might come across as more relatable and familiar.

Awareness Tracking

Goal: To continually monitor and react to changes in the marketplace regarding awareness of the Tin Man mini-series and intent to view.

Methodology: OTX TV Dailies, internal tracking online survey

We started tracking awareness and interest in viewing Tin Man 7 weeks before the premiere, which allowed us to keep an eye on gender and age skew. This data showed us that in week 6, awareness among women was just slightly above the cable norm, but by week 3, awareness among women had increased and settled above the cable norm. Definite interest among women was actually below the norm in week 6 but tweaking the promotions to appeal more to women paid off and by week 4, we achieved an interest score above the norm, which remained until the time of launch. Additional results are covered in the Business Results section below.

Campaign Description

Target audience: New Viewers; Fans of the original tale; A18-54

Media plan: As was stated above, the overall media strategy looked to create cool experiences – making consumers feel like they had entered into a world that was simultaneously familiar (The Wonderful Wizard of Oz) and unusual (the Sci Fi twist). Tactics took into account research findings regarding the use of particular characters/icons, and included:

- The Wonderful Wizard of Oz story time: Kathleen Robertson kicked off the campaign with a reading of the original tale to a crowd at Comic Con in San Diego, evoking memories of the original through the eyes of a *Tin Man* cast member.
- New York Times Yellow Brick Unit: Tin Man creative literally cut through the pages of the Sunday Times – running over archived NYT edit regarding past Oz moments (e.g. the original Judy Garland review, the original review of Wicked on Broadway).
- Witch's Feet: Two familiar feet were placed at the bottom of various buildings throughout LA and NYC, made to appear as though the building had fallen on a witch (creative directly above the installation highlighted the series).
- Infinite OZ: A website allowed consumers to travel down Sci Fi's brick road through an online experience (www.road2oz.com).
- Habitat for Humanity Partnership: Sci Fi Channel partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build homes in Kansas, showing there's "no place like home."
- Traditional elements: The plan extended into national print, cable TV, and online arenas as well as outdoor in major markets. All creative evoked Oz – both the old and new versions.

Creative executions: Creative examples submitted.

Dates in market: August 20 – December 5, 2007

Business Results

The research conducted for the Tin Man mini-series allowed us to:

- ✓ Determine that the main appeal of Tin Man was the idea that it was an updated, “re-imagined” version of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz with a Sci Fi twist, which carried through the marketing campaign.
- ✓ Track awareness and interest in viewing vs. competitive norms to make sure the messages were reaching the target audience.
- ✓ Understand that the title and some of the campaign elements were more appealing to men than women, so that adjustments could be made along the way to achieve a more even gender balance. Both the awareness data and ratings below show that tweaks to the campaign were successful in attracting men and women equally.
- ✓ Identify the scenes and elements that were most family-friendly to be used in materials targeting family audiences (i.e. airings of The Wizard of Oz, Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade).

Consumer awareness:

- ✓ At the time of the premiere, total awareness for Tin Man increased to more than twice the cable norm and was also higher than the broadcast norm. Awareness also rose among Sci Fi viewers and was higher than any prior week.

Consumer Interest:

- ✓ Definite interest among those aware of Tin Man at the premiere reached a high that was well above the cable norm.

Tin Man Nielsen Ratings Success:

- ✓ Tin Man is the most-watched programming event in Sci Fi Channel's history.
- ✓ The audience for Tin Man was evenly divided among men and women. For 2007, the gender split for Sci Fi primetime skewed male.
- ✓ Tin Man Part 1 shattered all existing network records for a single telecast in total viewers and all key demographics.
- ✓ Tin Man Part 1 delivered the highest P25-54 delivery for any entertainment telecast on an ad-supported cable network since 2005.
- ✓ Tin Man drew nearly double the number of new F25-54 viewers.

Channel Success:

- ✓ Tin Man helped Sci Fi reach the goal of ranking as the #6 ad-supported cable network in 2007.
- ✓ Tin Man attracted the most new viewers out of all of Sci Fi's previous mini-series.