

THE NATURE OF MARKETING

Marketing to the Swarm as well as the Herd



Clorox: Dame Chocolate

The link between traditional advertising and community influence

Why do we call daytime television dramas “soap operas”?

The answer, of course, is that they were historically sponsored by household cleaning products. These shows represent one of the classic examples of herd advertising, dating back to the early days of television; for example, the American show *As the World Turns* has been continually in production since 1956.

Today, more than half a century later, how we look at media like these makes an interesting case study of influencing people, and in my view form a nexus between traditional advertising and the kinds of social community marketing that we need to be doing in the future.

Among Spanish-speaking viewers in the US and Latin America, daytime soap operas are an important moment of respite, and a time to feel and express emotions. We know a typical viewer watches her favorite “telenovela” for a full hour each day during the week, often with her family. Moreover, unlike typical US “soaps,” a “telenovela” will only last for six months, and its audience is devotedly loyal while it is on air.

It was within this context that we and others worked with The Clorox Company to turn its latest sponsored soap opera *Dame Chocolate* into a social marketing event. A bittersweet story of love, betrayal, and chocolate; its storyline involves a young naïve Mexican heiress who is stripped of the secret recipe to a chocolate fortune after being betrayed by her first love, an American relative living in Miami, and comes back with a vengeance.



CLOROX® cleaning products integrated into the plot line of the telenovela *Dame Chocolate*
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A collaborative effort between DDB, Clorox, and concept developers FiRe Advertainment, together with production partner Telemundo/NBC, *Dame Chocolate* helped define a new relationship between branding and entertainment. It went far beyond the bounds of a traditional sponsored show, to become a unique event where Clorox products became part of both the story and the lives of its viewers.

Given the bond between the show and its audience, we knew that an effective connection with our brands had to be organic and nonintrusive. The opportunity was for the Clorox brands to become characters in the story with an emotional connection, not mere “product placement,” and so we built these relationships at several levels:

- Clorox products became an integral part of the plot, in keeping with its brand theme of health and wellness. For example, Clorox laundry products are used to clean blood evidence from clothes to save an innocent person from going to jail, and storylines are created around using other products to protect a sickly baby, a hospital, and the chocolate factory.
- Clorox products are present as part of the daily lives of the characters. Maids use CLOROX® cleaners around the house, the secret ingredient for the pivotal chocolate recipe is transported from Mexico to Miami in a GLAD® food bag, and the leading man races in a KINGSFORD®-branded car similar to the one sponsored by Clorox in NASCAR.
- Show tie-ins linked products in stores to the show and its plot. For example, Clorox’s POETT® floor cleaner was produced in a limited edition “Love Secrets” package that allowed consumers to experience the scent of the secret flower ingredient in the main plot.¹
- Perhaps most important, real-life events brought the show and its sponsorship to life for people. Branded calling cards were distributed to consumers, a limited edition DVD and cast bus tour were launched, and point-of-purchase displays were created in major stores.

The result was a show that helped Clorox products build a more personal relationship with Spanish-speaking consumers. *Dame Chocolate* eventually became the number one show in Puerto Rico, Panamá, Costa Rica and Ecuador, as well as a success in US Hispanic prime time, and the show was extended for 30 extra episodes.

Above all, this very creative and multifaceted campaign represents an outreach to an untapped market that wants to make a connection with these brands. Giving people something important, while sharing a brand that revolves around freshness, cleanliness, and health, takes the classic rationale for the soap opera in a fresh new direction for the twenty-first century.

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