

THE ADVERTISING CHALLENGE



Let's get to the point.

The Home ShowS challenges any home show promoter to match up. Let's go *mano y mano* (obviously, women are included too). Let's do the duel – step into the square circle – go face-to-face, head-to-head, numbers-to-numbers. Whatever you want to call it . . .

LET'S POST 'EM & ROAST 'EM!

Most people hear the blabber jabber about who does what in **advertising** their home shows. I say (and I've said ad nauseam) most of it's crap. What it is, is misstatements mixed with once-in-a-while *Hail Mary* passes that occasionally prove . . . NOTHING. Why nothing? Because even when they pump one show up (and neglect others), for exhibitors, inconsistent promotion is like playing *Russian Roulette* with 5 of 6 chambers loaded. Do you feel lucky?

The day to day reality of all the sales puffery I and exhibitors hear from the *Other Guys* is so-o-o far from the truth it is little more than a big scam. They claim whatever they want regarding their **advertising** prowess, and the *doofuses* acting as their show biz "references" will have YOU believe these mis-beliefs as long as they get their personal, special booth space deals.

It's time we – The Home ShowS – called their bluff. Here's how:

It's all about **advertising**! Everyone knows you can't hold a party without sending invitations. **Advertising** is a show producer's invitation to the public to *Come On Out To The Home Show*. Without **advertising**, there's no reason for exhibitors to send their marketing bucks to any guy/gal that says,

"... our events...are heavily **advertised** ... to ensure mass amounts of qualified attendees..." – *Brilliant*

"... an exceptional marketing opportunity... a well **advertised**, established event" – *Kennedy*

"Print **Advertising** that blankets the (market) -- Extensive Radio promotion – Television commercials coverage in local and national stations – direct mail ... to over 100,000 homes ... nearby" – *Ryan*

"A massive **advertising** and promotional campaign..." – *Tower*

"When it comes to strength in **advertising** ... our multi-faceted **advertising** package ... will be the strongest of any home improvement shows in Chicago." – *Showcase*

It's all there, peoples. All on the Net. The variations in language are insignificant from one promoter to the next. Their message is the same. Every one of the *Other Guys* says they're the best **advertiser** ever. Now, let's put that to the test.

The Test

How can **advertising** be compared – one company to the next?

There's fluctuation in numbers of shows annually, size of halls, barter vs. cash, and a host of styles of **advertising** plans. So, what's a fair method of matching up? I've pondered this for years and the only conclusion I have is the PERCENTAGE CONTRIBUTION TO **ADVERTISING** FROM REVENUE. It's an fact you ought to know – derived from your payment: *How much of YOUR booth goes to advertising?*

Who will do the audit? This is also troublesome in that **advertising** plans are trade secrets. So, all it needs to be tabulated by an individual(s) that can keep a secret – except for the final fact: "the percentage."

That's the goal here. That "percentage" must be made public or the point is moot. The 'who' must

be an exhibitor(s). (Hiring an auditor would be cost prohibitive.) Someone with the basic math skills to divide the small number by the big number (Ad Exp. / Revenue = %) – to keep it simple.

When? There's two issues of "when." Historical data from the promoter, and when will this task be done? I say, take the last 6 shows (maybe Brilliant is short, I dunno) and take gross **advertising** spent from those shows and divide it by gross revenue. The result is the same: percentage contribution towards **advertising**.

Where? Start here with The Home ShowS – Oswego/Yorkville. After that, it's Lisle, Lisle, Lake Zurich, Glen Ellyn, Lombard - respectively by company.

Expenses covered? Here, I begin with *the pitch*: Isn't it a burning question in YOUR mind what YOU'RE paying for? What's the value of that knowledge in terms of YOUR marketing and **advertising** expenditures? How can YOU neglect this opportunity to actually delve into the great divide between *hyperbole* and *reality* and come up 'in the know' about home show **advertising**? You owe it to YOURSELF.

Did that work?

Okay, then I'll split gas and toll expenses with any promoter that's got the 'brass' to take **The Advertising Challenge**. (I wanted to say b@!!s, but that would be chauvinistic.) Time is your contribution.

The Results

I call this the "Come to Jesus meeting." Now that the information is in hand, what should be done with the results. I say, distribute the results to every exhibitor in Chicagoland. A sheet with the company names and the percentage is all that's required – nothing more. Anyone with bb's for brains can figure it out from there. If not, I'm sure the *Exhibitor Wire* will buzz out an answer.

Some Afterthoughts

1st: There's always an 'unintended consequence' to every action. Exhibitors have too long cried, "There's too many home shows in the home show industry!" Well, the 'unintended consequence' to **The Advertising Challenge** may be a reduction of shows – the losers disappear: becoming "part of the solution" instead of "the problem," as one of the *Other Guys* said. This is 'Consolidation' in the fairest way possible, unless those who run 'Flea Markets' continue to do so. (Check the Lil' J Papers for those topics.)

2nd: I realized, at The Home ShowS we don't pitch the depth and breadth of **advertising** on our web site (www.ChicagoHomeShow.Net). How can we? Compared to some of the wild ass claims of our competitors, anything we say would seem diminutive.

Instead, we fax our **advertising performance** to exhibitors after each show, emailing sample TV and Radio spots. Evidently, that's not enough to some of the *Other Guys* who say we exaggerate and lie.

3rd: We didn't create this challenge. The gauntlet was originally thrown down by Showcase:
"You can try to find an **advertising** plan for home improvement shows in Chicagoland that comes close to the strength of ours, but don't be surprised if you come up completely empty handed."

Challenging words due a terse response. Mine...

PUT UP OR SHUT UP, SCOOTER !

Finally: Will it happen? Probably not. [In my mind, I hear "Not a freakin' chance."] Yet, as long as the *Other Guys'* prevarications continue with the pomposity of carnival barkers, without restraint, their **advertising** claims remain UNCHALLENGED. That's a crime upon YOU, the exhibitor.

And you ... ? You'll be paying for something above 'nothing' . . . and less than what you need.

What can I do beyond this? What can YOU do? What can anyone do to end the "false advertising about advertising" fraud, and hold the unaccountable accountable? I don't know. Maybe you've got an idea. I listen to any legitimate suggestions.



Since 1986 . . .

From the desk of Lil' Johnny
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. . . winning losing battles.