

MTV launches production unit

Eyes theatrical, network, syndication marketplaces

By Rich Brown

MTV is looking to expand on its success as a music video network with a new unit, MTV Productions, that will produce projects for theatrical release, broadcast and cable networks, syndication and the international marketplace.

The new unit plans to work on "just a handful" of projects each year, according to Doug Herzog, newly named president of MTV Productions. (Herzog, a nine-year MTV veteran, will also continue in his role as senior vice president of programming for the MTV network.)

"We are going to choose things carefully," said Herzog. "We don't want to take our eye off the ball in terms of MTV."

Programming and talent from the MTV network are expected to find their way into several MTV Productions projects. One project already in the works is an as-yet-unnamed collaboration between the MTV News department and Viacom Entertainment. MTV Productions, a division of Viacom International, will work with Viacom Entertainment on a number of projects. In return, Viacom Entertainment will have a first look at programming for the broadcast networks, first-run syndication and cable networks other than MTV.

MTV Productions will also look to the MTV network for ideas for theatrical releases that will be produced by the division and financed and distributed by motion picture companies. One project already in development is a feature-length film based on *Joe's Apartment*, an animated live action short that has aired on MTV.

"MTV Productions will provide our people with a place to spread their wings and grow creatively while remaining with the MTV family," said Judy McGrath, executive vice president and creative director, MTV.

The new unit plans to develop and produce a variety of genres, including films, music specials, variety specials and commercials. ■



Broadcasting & Cable

Top Cable Programs

April 26-May 2

The following are the top 40 basic cable programs, ranked by total number of households tuning in. Ratings are based on each network's total coverage households at the time of the program. Data are supplied by outside sources based on Nielsen Media Research.

	HHs. (000)	Rtg.	Program	Time (ET)	Network
1.	2,327	3.8	NASCAR Racing	Sun. 2-5:40p	ESPN
2.	2,031	3.4	MLB (Pirates vs. Braves)	Mon. 7:30-11:15p	TBS
3.	2,011	3.4	NBA Bonus Coverage	Fri. 10:15-10:45p	TNT
4.	1,974	3.3	Pro Boxing	Tue. 9-11p	USA
5.	1,926	3.2	Monday Night Raw	Mon. 9-10p	USA
6.	1,922	3.3	NBA Playoffs	Fri. 10:45p-1:15a	TNT
7.	1,921	3.2	Murder, She Wrote	Mon. 8-9p	USA
8.	1,901	3.1	Murder, She Wrote	Tue. 8-9p	USA
9.	1,877	3.1	MLB (Pirates vs. Braves)	Tue. 7:30-10:45p	TBS
10.	1,804	3.0	Murder, She Wrote	Wed. 8-9p	USA
11.	1,783	3.0	Ren & Stimpy	Sun. 11-11:30a	NICK
12.	1,711	2.8	Murder, She Wrote	Fri. 8-9p	USA
13.	1,677	2.8	Uncle Buck (movie)	Sat. 8-10p	USA
14.	1,648	2.7	Thunderball (movie)	Wed. 8-10:45p	TBS
15.	1,604	2.7	Ren & Stimpy	Sat. 9-9:30p	NICK
16.	1,555	2.6	NBA Playoffs	Sun. 9-11:45p	TNT
17.	1,535	2.5	Earthquake (movie)	Sun. 10:30a-1p	TBS
18.	1,524	2.6	Rugrats	Sun.10:30-11a	NICK
19.	1,514	2.6	Clarissa Explains It All	Sun. 12-12:30p	NICK
20.	1,502	2.4	MLB (Rockies vs. Marlins)	Sun. 8-11:06p	ESPN
21.	1,495	2.5	Maximum Overdrive (movie)	Sun. 7-9p	TBS
22.	1,481	2.5	Salute Shorts	Sun. 11:30-12n	NICK
23.	1,478	2.5	NBA Playoffs	Fri. 8-10:15p	TNT
24.	1,467	2.4	The Finest Hour (movie)	Sun. 8-10p	USA
25.	1,461	2.5	NBA Playoffs	Thu. 8-10:30p	TNT
26.	1,428	2.4	Clarissa Explains It All	Sat. 8-8:30p	NICK
27.	1,411	2.4	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	Sat. 9:30-10p	NICK
28.	1,400	2.4	Statler Brothers	Sat. 9-10p	TNN
29.	1,388	2.4	Rugrats	Sat. 7:30-8p	NICK
30.	1,368	2.3	NBA Playoffs	Sat. 9:45p-12:15a	TNT
31.	1,362	2.3	You Only Live Twice	Wed. 10:45p-1:15a	TBS
31.	1,362	2.3	Roundhouse	Sat. 8:30-9p	NICK
33.	1,357	2.2	Iron Eagle II (movie)	Fri. 9-11p	USA
34.	1,343	2.2	MLB (Cardinals vs. Braves)	Sun.1-4p	TBS
35.	1,322	2.2	MLB (Marlins vs. Braves)	Thu. 7:30-11p	TBS
36.	1,293	2.1	MLB (Cardinals vs. Braves)	Fri. 7:30-10:30p	TBS
37.	1,286	2.1	The Finest Hour (movie)	Wed. 9-11p	USA
38.	1,277	2.1	Summer Job (movie)	Fri. 11p-1a	USA
39.	1,270	2.1	World Wrestling Federation	Sun. 12-1p	USA
40.	1,259	2.1	Boxing/MacGyver	Tue. 11-11:15p	USA
40.	1,259	2.1	NBA Bonus Coverage	Sat. 9:30-9:45p	TNT