



EMMY

Sure, they sell commercial time, but advertising execs are increasingly seeking revenues through brand extension. At the Travel Channel, a property of Knoxville, Tennessee-based Scripps Networks, branding activities run the gamut from licensing and product development to planning celebrity appearances at client functions.

Overseeing sales strategy and revenue for the network is Greg Regis, senior vice-president of advertising sales, who also oversees advertising for sister network Great American Country. Regis previously held positions at Scripps's Food Network and FLN, recently rebranded as the Cooking Channel. Earlier, he was senior v.p. of national ad sales and sponsorships for NBC Interactive and v.p. of national ad sales for the ESPN and ABC internet groups. Regis recently spoke with *emmy's Dinah Eng*.

What does the future look like for the Travel Channel brand?

It's about becoming more meaningful, with a brand that connects you to the joy of experience. We'd like to get closer to the transactions in travel, to help shape people's decisions. People might see Adam Richman on *Man vs. Food* go to three places—we're looking at the possibility of offering that trip to viewers. So what you see on air is what you'd like to do and experience yourself.

We're also considering working with travel search engines. We could offer video that shows what a traveler might experience at different destinations.

What is currently available to your clients, besides on-air advertising?

With our expertise in travel, we use our branding, talent and sets to hone in on what the advertiser is trying to say. BMW got Tony Bourdain and Eric Ripert driving a BMW through Paris on a high-level cook's tour on an episode of *No 10*. EMMY

Reservations. Samantha Brown [host of the series *Samantha Brown*] was part of an event in San Francisco for Chase's best customers in that market. It goes beyond what happens on television.

We went cross-promotional opportunities. At Food Network, for example, home chefs competed on the *Ultimate Recipe Showdown*, and the winning recipes were featured at T.G.I. Friday's restaurants. We're looking at doing something similar with travel. Maybe we create something around, "Here's all the cool things you can do in Mexico," and partner with a land-based travel agency.

Everyone travels in some form. Wal-Mart wants everyone in their stores, and American Airlines wants everyone to fly in their planes. We're partnership-ready because we know their customers, the trends and what's going on with their brands.

How is selling advertising for the Travel Channel different from selling for other networks?

CSI and shows like that are traded on a public desk like Nielsen, which delivers ratings for the advertiser. With us, viewers have a relationship with the show and host, and wrap themselves in the brand of travel adventures. Humans cook, travel and buy homes. They don't USA, ABC or CBS. We're selling the rating and the connection of the audience to our brand.

What got you into television advertising?

I wanted to get into engineering and took a TV production class in school, which led to an advertising class. I joke that when I was young and single, I worked for ESPN, and now that I'm married and have two young boys, I work at Scripps, which has the Travel Channel, HGTV and Food Network, all the brands that people love to talk about at the dinner table.