

PROMO

August 2007

Actor Jon Hamm
(center) flanked by
Vincent Kartheiser
and Elisabeth Moss

ALL THE MAD MEN

THE NEW TV SHOW IS AFFECTING
MARKETERS IN DIFFERENT WAYS.
SOME DISLIKE THE PORTRAYAL OF
1960 AGENCY LIFE. OTHERS ARE
IMPRESSED BY THE PRODUCT
PLACEMENTS. AND A FEW WISH
THEY'D BEEN THERE. P.28

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New TV show explores how Madison Avenue used to be

By Larry Jaffee

"MAD MEN," A NEW weekly television series, opens in a loud, swanky restaurant. Reveling men and women are enjoying a night out on the town in 1960. A well-dressed man sitting alone, lit cigarette in hand, jots down some ideas on a pad and then starts to chat with a waiter about the pleasures of smoking.

We find out that our protagonist, Don Draper, is struggling to come up with an ad campaign for Lucky Strike cigarettes amid the first government reports that cigarettes can cause cancer. Draper later quips to an agency crony, "The question isn't why people should smoke; it's why they should smoke Lucky Strike."

The 13-episode period piece, which debuted July 19 on cable network AMC, depicts Madison Avenue as a depraved, arrogant, sexist, racist boys' club whose members spent more time drinking, smoking and chasing loose women than actually working. It also shows the anxiety that creative types endure when trying to come up with that elusive "big idea." Surely promotions marketers can relate. True to life even today, the execs wine and dine clients, often catering to their every wish in order to keep the account.

Many of the same moral issues that crop up in fictional New York advertising agency Sterling Cooper remain relevant 47 years later. Marketers still struggle with how to promote goods that play on people's vices. And it's not only cigarettes that figure prominently in the show's story lines; alcohol does as well. Product placement abounds in those categories and in others.

Jack Daniel's whiskey is the lead

sponsor of the series, which airs Thursday nights at 10 p.m. The brand is featured in three episodes of the hour-long drama as part of a branded entertainment deal brokered by Universal McCann.

"To be honest with you, I probably would have put Jack Daniel's in the show anyway," says "Mad Men" creator/executive producer Matthew Weiner. "That really is the truth. Jack Daniel's was a very easy integration to create for a certain world."

REAL MAD MEN (AND WOMEN)

So who were these young advertising mavericks that changed the face of Madison Avenue in the 1960s?

AMC rounded up a bunch of the profession's true legends for a series of 30-second image spots. They include:

- George Lois
- Jerry Della Femina
- Martin Puris
- John Bernbach
- Bob Jefferies
- Charlie Hughes
- Joy Golden
- Evan Stark
- Toni Pagano
- Jerry Gerber
- Dr. Lois Geraci Ernst

Some real brands become Sterling Cooper accounts, such as Right Guard, introduced as the world's first aerosol deodorant. But that was not a paid placement.

When done wrong, Weiner says product integration is "an insult to my intelligence." He adds that AMC has been sensitive to his concerns that the show's integrity must not be compromised by advertising.

"I'm in entertainment, not advertising," he says. "The show I write is based on the presence of things like Jack Daniel's and a big bottle of Clorox bleach. These kinds of things are not about advertising; they're about providing a texture."

Weiner is against blatant insertion, and would not make Jack Daniel's a client of Sterling Cooper. In his mind the show's principal, the dashing 30-something Draper, is a rye drinker—probably Canadian Club or Seagram's Crown Royal. But it's plausible that one of the older agency executives would favor Jack Daniel's.

However, Weiner has no problem with the unobtrusive introductions that are planned for Jack Daniel's. The brand's entrance is set for Aug. 23—six episodes into the series—when a whiskey is ordered in a bar. In the second placement, a bottle is visible in the office of one of the agency execs. And in the third, a secretary informs her boss that he received a gift bottle.

"Of course, there are all these stipulations," Weiner says. "I'm doing a period piece where people have consequences for their alcohol consumption. People drink in this show, they have sex afterward. They fight, they drive and they talk to their kids. They have two or three [drinks] in a sitting. As far as I know, it's completely historically

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accurate. With all the bad behavior you have to be very careful how you represent drinking.”

ENTWINEMENT QUESTIONED

Anti-alcohol advocacy organization Commercial Alert felt not enough care was taken. On June 20 the watchdog group filed a complaint with the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (Discus) contending that Jack Daniel's sponsorship violates numerous provisions of the alcohol industry's own voluntary marketing code. The code doesn't specifically cover branded entertainment or product placement.

Commercial Alert was disturbed by a few clips of the pilot episode available on AMC's Web site (www.amctv.com). It filed the complaint without actually viewing an entire episode.

merit. The context that Jack Daniel's is used [on the show] is consistent with the code. Brown-Forman has its own code of marketing,” he adds, suggesting that the company's guidelines go even further than Discus'.

Hard liquor manufacturers aren't banned from taking advantage of TV product placements. “It's all self-regulation,” Lynch says, adding it's a “myth” that liquor can't be advertised on television.

In 1996 the liquor industry lifted a voluntary 48-year ban. The broadcast networks generally still won't run such commercials, but cable networks like AMC will. According to the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, \$118 million was spent last year on TV spots by liquor brands. Jack Daniel's commercials run on AMC in the 9 p.m.-to-midnight block. Brown-

on making sure “the brand was handled in a responsible way.”

When he caught wind of “Mad Men” last year, O'Sullivan immediately thought it would be “a good fit” for agency client Brown-Forman.

Universal McCann's sister agency Magna Global Trading started working with AMC in 2006, buying commercial airtime on the cable network and other clients. The adult demographic was a good match.

It wasn't lost on O'Sullivan that “Mad Men” was set in the era of “three-martini lunch,” a time when Frank Sinatra still ruled pop culture. (Incidentally, Jack Daniel's was the Rat Pack's whiskey brand of choice.)

A fee wasn't paid specifically to work Jack Daniel's into the show. Most of the parties chose to disclose

‘To be honest with you, I probably would have put Jack Daniel's in the show anyway.’

—Matthew Weiner, “Mad Men” creator

Commercial Alert managing director Robert Weissman points out that the Discus code prohibits alcohol marketing in association with depictions of irresponsible drinking and intoxication, as well as overt sexual activity or sexually lewd images or language.

“Our complaint in this instance,” Weissman contends, “is not with the portrayal of heavy alcohol consumption, or even with the glorification of such heavy consumption; it is specific to industry sponsorship of and entwinement with such portrayals.”

Phil Lynch, vice president of corporate communications at Jack Daniel's parent company Brown-Forman, bristles at the suggestion that the brand's use in “Mad Men” crosses the line. “We believe the complaint has no

Forman also advertises its Southern Comfort brand on the network. “Mad Men” airs at 10 p.m.

Commercial Alert believes “all liquor should be eliminated from television.” Its mission is “to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere... [promoting] the higher values of family, community...”

In any case, Discus wouldn't consider the complaint until after the show's debut. But Lynch says it's a moot point since Jack Daniel's first placement occurs when the series is well under way.

A GOOD FIT

Sean O'Sullivan, vice president/associate media director at Universal McCann, says the agency was focused

deal's financial details. But Universal McCann saw the series as a chance to introduce a different kind of television sponsorship, one that capitalizes on the subject matter.

For example, Jack Daniel's is using a writing interstitial commercial that feature legendary advertising execs who share their stories of how it was like to work in the business that time (see “Real Mad Men: The Women,” page 29).

AMC also contracted with production agency Civic Entertainment to pursue other sponsorship deals for “Mad Men.” A.T. Cross Co.'s products will be shown in at least three episodes and in behind-the-scenes interstitials that the network will air throughout the series.



The marketing campaign promoting AMC's first original series is the largest in the cable network's history. Its posters dominate subway corridors at New York's Grand Central Terminal.

In exchange, Cross will put "Mad Men" posters in the windows of its 210 U.S. stores—106 of them in the top 11 markets—and showcase the tie-in on Cross.com with a link to the "Mad Men" site.

NETWORK'S BIGGEST CAMPAIGN

Early reviews of "Mad Men" suggest that AMC may have a hit on its hands.

Newsweek called it "television's best new drama...so sumptuously filmed, you could turn down the volume and just watch the suits. But then you'd miss series creator Matthew Weiner's crackling dialogue, soaked with casual bigotry and sexism." Time called it "Unmissable...possibly the best new show you'll see this summer."

"Mad Men" is AMC's first original dramatic series. For more than 20 years it's been a film channel (its initials stand for American Movie Classics). It reaches 92 million homes nationally and is owned by Rainbow Media, a subsidiary of Cablevision Systems Corp. The series is produced by Lionsgate in Los Angeles.

Although declining to reveal the budget, an AMC spokeswoman says the show's marketing campaign is "the

largest consumer expenditure ever for the network."

Since early summer, posters on the sides of New York City buses, as well as in bus depots and phone booths, have hawked the series as "coming in July." For that month, "Mad Men" had a large presence in Grand Central Terminal's subway entrances, passed by some 650,000 people a day.

The Grand Central materials were designed by The Refinery, a Los Angeles creative agency. Dallas agency The Richards Group also worked on copy for the project.

Civic Entertainment engineered a "Mad Men" tie-in with New York City's Grand Central Partnership, a nonprofit neighborhood development group that placed 200 or so lamppost banners around midtown Manhattan.

The marketing blitz is not limited to New York. In Los Angeles there are billboards at such high-visibility corners as Sunset Strip and La Cienega Boulevard, San Vincent and Sunset, and Highland and Santa Monica. Chicago bus shelters are getting plastered with ads, too.

A 30-second "Mad Men" trailer is showing in movie theaters in the 50 largest U.S. cities through early August. A viral element is AMC's outreach to

Web sites and bloggers, offering them video content.

AN AD 'LEGEND' REFLECTS

AMC realized that the audience would want to know who the show's characters were based on. Legendary ad man George Lois is one of the real execs profiled in the 30-second interstitial spots. In fact, in the second episode the Sterling Cooper creative team marvels over the effectiveness of one of Lois' Volkswagen print ads while he was an art director at Doyle Dane Bernbach.

Although Weiner didn't know Lois, he could imagine what he was like. "The ad man was slick. He was handsome, glib, hated authority, was easy-going but tough; and most importantly, he loved women and indulged himself at every turn."

Lois admits the description fits him, except for the last part about indulging in women. Lois says he's been a happily married man since the 1950s. He met his wife in art school.

In one year (1959), Lois' campaigns gained him a reputation at DDB for being uncompromising and brilliant. In 1960 he co-founded agency Papert Koenig Lois.

"No one I worked with took four-

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The executives at the fictional ad agency circa 1960 look at the secretarial pool as sex objects, and most of the women don't seem to mind.

'People drink in this show, they have sex afterwards, they fight, they drive and they talk to their kids. They have two or three [drinks] in a sitting. As far as I know, it's completely historically accurate.'

—Matthew Weiner

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hour lunches," Lois says, in reaction to the "Mad Men" pilot episode. "We worked hard. I'd get to the office by 5:30 in the morning. By lunch time I was already working seven hours."

Lois is also bemused by the notion that the show's fictional agency has a cutting-edge reputation and a client like Lucky Strike. At the time, a brand of that stature would sooner go to an "establishment" agency (like Ogilvy) that specialized in packaged goods. "They would always be careful and play it safe."

In the pilot's opening scene the waiter admits his brand is Old Gold, on which he became hooked during his Army days when each soldier received a free carton of cigarettes. (Promotion marketers, how's that for sampling?) Old Gold was renowned for its commercial breaks of dancing girls adorned in cigarette boxes from the waist up.

Weiner was thinking about TV's golden days when he conceived "Mad Men," which he'd hoped could run commercial-free with a single sponsor. While he enjoys creative control over the content and has

a great relationship with AMC, there will be commercials, unlike Weiner's most recent show "The Sopranos."

The ad campaign makes much of "Mad Men" being created by the executive producer and writer of the HBO show, where he worked for four and a half years. "The Sopranos" is still fresh in fans' minds; the last new episode ran in early June. "Mad Men" is directed by Alan Taylor and shot by cinematographer Phil Abraham, both "Sopranos" alumni.

Yes, Weiner didn't think about product placement for "Mad Men" at first. But he remembers being solely responsible for "The Sopranos" season 6 celebrity swag episode. "[Sopranos' creator] David Chase loved it," he adds. HBO then sought companies to pay to be included in the luxury lounge.

Weiner also wrote Tony Soprano's line that he bought his cousin, just released from jail, a Motorola cell phone "because it's the best."

"All of a sudden there was this uproar about placement. I can tell you that I picked Motorola because that's what I had in my pocket." ☐