



TV COMMERCIALS

Chevrolet Assn. Humanizes Service

By FLORENCE SMALL

BY YEAR END local Chevrolet Dealers Assn. in the seven cities linked by the NBC East Coast video network had spent a \$500,000 plus budget on television, making it one of the largest of the video spenders.

Acknowledging the firm's complete satisfaction with the program's sales impact, principals of the Campbell-Ewald Co., agency for Chevrolet, attributed the record in great part to its carefully patterned philosophy of commercial presentation.

When the agency's video section, headed by vice president Winslow H. Case and producer Leo Langlois, blocked out the first dealers' commercials, they found that actually the story they were interested in getting across was a public relations message: The best place to go for Chevvie service is the Chevrolet dealer in your community.

After deciding on general approach, Mr. Case and Mr. Langlois and copy writer Ray Mauer sought the formula for humanizing the grease-and-oil service routine in the Chevrolet *Tele-Theatre*. The answer is the career of Bebe, The Dog. High in entertainment value, Bebe carries the service message to her Chevrolet-owning, service-spurning master in a minute-long film. She will return in two more commercials currently in production.

Mirth With Message

Other commercials have hewn as closely to the narrative, humorous line as Bebe. They are expertly conceived and carried through in conjunction with major studios.

Filmed weather spots sponsored by the dealers have integrated the car into the report, using the top of a Chevrolet convertible to indicate changes in the weather. Good weather sends the top down; storm warning sends it up.

Now readied are a series of pantomime weather spots. Tying in with warmer, rain, snow and sleet, a facile-faced comedian runs through "Hellzapoppin" antics while forecasting the next day's climate.

This swing away from what one Campbell-Ewald executive called "radio's insistent clamor" has marked all of the agency's telecommercial ventures.

"The television commercial can be less strident, more enjoyable because of the addition of eye to ear," Mr. Case maintains. "Radio had

to pound on deaf ears. Now in TV, 85% of the impulse can be channeled through the eye. You can afford to move at a more leisurely pace. In fact, if you go too fast and heavy, you sacrifice effectiveness."

High Points

In the commercials, the agency has purposely avoided dependence on the single unexpected climax. To mold its film commercials for multiple showings, the agency has integrated two or three high points into each one. These nuances will be included in future commercials with modifications shown by audience reactions whenever possible.

Both the films and audio messages have stressed "preventive service." Two projects scheduled for early '49 are emphasis on intelligent car maintenance and familiarization of the public with the men and method hitherto obscured under the term of "service."

The dealers will emphasize that every day a car spends in the shop adds a day of cost and inconvenience. Their remedy: When the Chevrolet goes into the shop, have the mechanic give it a thorough checkup to catch any points of possible trouble, and eliminate them while they are still minor. This preventive care will be linked with economy in dollars, cents and time.

First operation to undergo humanizing via the entertainment route will be the motor tune-up. Shown the process from bumper to fan belt, car owners will be able to evaluate and buy service intelligently, just as they do other commodities.

Both these phases of dealer sales

technique will also buttress their public relations objective, since knowledge will replace misapprehensions with friendly understanding.

With Chevrolet Central Office covering magazine, newspaper and billboard advertising, the dealers feel that television is "their baby." Through their commercials and programming, they will plug the owner-dealer relationship to maintain and expand current good will.

When production of new cars meets demand, they will have strengthened the ties between themselves and Chevrolet owners and the habit of buying service where the car was bought.

The dealers have shown a willingness to pay top money for talent and production. The show moved into the Hooper top ten a month after its premiere, and was among the top three on The Pulse survey two weeks later.

A recent check of Chevrolet dealers in the metropolitan areas shows a definite up-swing in car owners returning to their local Chevrolet dealers for service.

During '48 the New York Chevrolet dealers sponsored a series of

stake races, televised the New York Yankee home football games and then joined with the associations in Boston, Schenectady, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington and Richmond to present the weekly Chevrolet *Tele-Theatre* dramatic show on NBC-TV.

Effective Jan. 4, *Tele-Theatre* will be sponsored by Chevrolet Central Office, General Motors, Detroit. The shift from the dealers' groups to the central office is expected to bring greater emphasis on the car itself, the agency says.

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A scene from a Chevrolet TV film, with the salesman closing the door to the accompaniment of a good, solid sound which emphasizes the sturdy construction.

KTTV OPENS

SEVEN program sponsors and five spot buyers helped to launch the commercial television debut of KTTV Los Angeles on New Years Day.

The station, which is owned and operated by the *Los Angeles Times* and CBS, kicked off with telecast of the Rose Bowl parade sponsored by the Bekins Van & Storage Co. Following the parade Gough Industries (Philco distributor) and the May Co. co-sponsored *Collier's All-American* film.

Rose Bowl Events Mark Debut

On its heels came the television debut of MacMillan Petroleum with presentation of *Football Highlights* film. Standard Federal & Savings Loan came next with action shots of players on both California and Northwestern teams. Packard-Bell paid for *Sports Roundup* following the game, with Bill Henry, *Los Angeles Times* columnist and commentator, plus Paul Zimmerman, sports editor of the *Times*.

The game itself, which was commercially sponsored via AM and television for the first time in its history, was paid for by Gillette. Spot buyers on opening day were Bulova, Barker Bros., Coast Federal Savings & Loan, General Electric Supply Corp. and Central Chevrolet.

That evening the station also showcased two hours of sustaining programs to give listeners an idea of programs which were to come.

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