

# ELECTRONIC RETAILING®

MAY/JUNE 1996 - \$6.75 / VOLUME 3, NUMBER 3

## Lubricator 2001: Street Fight for #1

BY MARK NARDONE

When it came to producing an infomercial for the new Turtle Wax engine oil additive, Lubricator 2001, Ken Kerry of Script to Screen Productions knew what the show needed to prove: "The Duralube [oil additive] infomercial was good, and the product sold well. But we asked, 'What can an oil additive do for your car *on the road*, where it's hot and challenging?'"

Using their past experience in covering live sports events, Anaheim, California-based Script to Screen Productions framed the Lubricator 2001 infomercial around a road race survival test in which a car using the Lubricator 2001 goes head-to-head against a car using Duralube. Dubbed "Street Fight For #1," the race takes place in the scorching Mojave Desert. In addition to action-packed racing scenes, the Lubricator 2001 infomercial injects a new angle to prove how effectively the treatment protects the car's engine: Before the race begins, both vehicles—identical Chevy Corsicas—are completely drained of their engine lubricants. Each car must perform with little or no oil in its engine, relying on the protection of the oil additives.

### TAKING THE HIGH ROAD

As the 142-mile race progresses, the show intercuts

controlled lab tests (in which the oil additive Slick 50 is also part of the competition), graphs and animation, as well as testimonials by experts and enthusiastic spectators at the race. According to Kerry, Script to Screen avoided what he calls "all the bogus carnival techniques." Instead, he says, "We took the high road. We had an independent company monitor every test we made, and—very importantly—when the oil was drained from the engines, we emptied the oil filters as well."

Kerry warns that producing this kind of "event" infomercial is like carrying out a military operation. "Every possibility has to be planned for, down to the minute," he says. "Many things are happening once and only once, so you have to be there to capture them. It's a risky way to work, but it was a calculated risk." The infomercial's production budget was "medium-high," according to Kerry. "It's a little more expensive to do this kind of show," he notes.

In the desert race, the Lubricator 2001 car crossed the Las Vegas finish line first without difficulty. In addition, Lubricator 2001 is shown performing impressively in sub-freezing temperatures.

Script to Screen enlisted former car racing champions

Ned Jarrett and Buddy Baker as co-spokesmen to appeal to racing fans, but the show also emphasizes how easy the product is to use because, according to Kerry, "Less car-knowledgeable consumers want to do something good for their cars too."

### DRIVING RETAIL SALES

But why make an infomercial for a product consumers can easily purchase at an auto parts store?

"This infomercial was designed to drive retail," says Kerry. "The 2001 company and Turtle Wax were previously known only for car polishes. But their feeling was, 'We already have a lot of retail space, let's use the infomercial to create an awareness about our new product so it performs well at retail later.'" Kerry expects the infomercial to run until the retail sales become strong.

The Lubricator 2001 infomercial is airing nationally and offers the product for \$29.95, which includes the lubricant, a car polish, protectant, and auto and travel coupons. A second bottle of Lubricator 2001 is offered as part of a bonus package that includes Tire Foam and Shine and Finish 2001 for an additional \$19.95. A Shiwala auto scrubber is sent free with the bonus package.

Guthy-Renker distributes the Lubricator 2001 infomercial and handles media and management in partnership with Turtle Wax.

