



Really Swinging



John Huston, left, takes direction from Script to Screen's Ken Kerry, seated.

DW Golf, McHenry Roll Out Infomercial Campaigns

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Seeing Green

DW Golf, McHenry Join in DRTV Fray

By Rob Williams

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Last month's PGA International Golf Show in Las Vegas demonstrated how quickly golf equipment manufacturers have embraced infomercial marketing in the course of a year. Last year, only a handful of companies aired infomercials. This year, DRTV marketing is an absolute requirement to generate sales, publicity and earn the favor of retailers.

During the last two months, two new companies have joined the infomercial fray: DW Golf, Oswego, IL and McHenry Metals Golf Corp., Carlsbad, CA. Both companies began airing half hour programs produced by Script to Screen, an infomercial production company in Santa Ana, CA.

DW Golf's program promotes its Pure Spin Diamond Face Scoring Wedge, a pitching wedge with a club face coated with a diamond surface that allows for more controlled hitting. The club was developed by engineers at U.S. Diamond Wheel Corp., a privately held concern that specializes in making diamond-coated surfaces for industrial use.

"We have the technology for putting a diamond coating on anything" said Peter Mertens, president of the company. "We originally made golf clubs for ourselves, just as something to talk about on the golf course, but we noticed a distinct performance advantage."

Word spread about the diamond-faced golf clubs and the company began to market them in local retail stores after modifying the design to meet standards set by the United States Golf Association.

"We sold about 3,000 units in a local retail store and decided there might be a business opportunity here," he said. "We researched the golf club industry and infomercial industry and determined we needed to produce an infomercial because it was nearly impossible to gain entry through traditional marketing methods."

He declined to disclose the company's media budget for the program, but said it was considered "very significant" for a golf product startup.

It hired Script to Screen to produce the \$325,000 infomercial for this golf season, but hit a snag in its negotiations to hire Gary Player as an on-camera expert. It struck a deal instead with John Huston, a four-time PGA tour winner who is joined in the infomercial by ESPN golf anchor Jim Kelly and CBS golf analyst and PGA professional Jerry Pate.

Maximum Coverage Media in Carlsbad, CA, is the media buyer for the infomercial campaign, while inbound telemarketing is handled by The AfterMarket Co., Phoenix, and fulfillment is managed by Universal Distribution Service, Sparks, NV. The program airs on the Golf Channel and various local sports networks throughout the country. DW Golf sells the Pure Spin wedge for \$119.95 and has plans to roll out a second infomercial for another club in February.

Also launching an infomercial is McHenry Metals, a publicly traded equipment manufacturer that was founded by Gary V. Adams, founder of Taylor Made Inc. and Founders Club Inc. Founders was sold to Asics six years ago.

In its infomercial, McHenry markets the TourPure titanium driver for a suggested retail price of \$399, which includes a free club head cover and an instructional video. Through its telemarketer, AfterMarket Co., the company also offers an expanded line of fairway woods that use the same technology that was used to develop the driver. "We decided to produce an infomercial because we have a very sophisticated product — it's the most engineered product ever made — and we needed the opportunity to explain the sophisticated nature of the club," said Sal Lupo, executive vice president of McHenry. "We also find that infomercials drive retail sales. For every unit we sell on a direct basis, four to five customers are sold through retail."

Its campaign will be supported by print advertising and 30- and 60-second commercials. ■