

TV viewing to become fragmented?

By Tim Richard
staff writer

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Pressed by newsmen for a date when advertising would come to cable TV, Ney rolled his eyes and answered, "1986."

THE ADVERTISING executive raised three questions facing marketers watching the growing number of communities with cable TV.

- "Will technology create so many new channels of information and entertainment that the homogeneous mass audience, as we know it, will be significantly fragmented? Yes."
- "Will that same technology force advertisers and agencies to devise new market profiles, media standards, cost measurements and quality evaluations? Yes."
- "Will creative techniques have to be invented to match the new interests of the new customers? Yes."

Asked for examples of these "creative techniques," Ney said cultural and arts programs would be poor vehicles for detergents but better for TV sets and Lincoln autos. Commercials on such programs would be longer, contain more facts and be lower-key.

Y&R already has found that movie house advertising must play to a

younger audience — 18 to 30 — than TV ads. Movie house ads "must be lively, should contain some humor and can't be stuffy," he said.

CABLE TV will bring a whole new market of viewers, Ney said.

"Those (homes) with just basic cable watch 6 percent more (hours) than the average U.S. television home. But those with pay-cable watch 22 percent more."

"And just to stretch credibility, try this statistic: In late-night fringe time, homes with pay cable watch 48 percent more than the average non-cable household."

But if the news was good for viewers, it was bad for advertisers. Ney went on:

"Advertisers may, unfortunately, wind up paying more for less — in copy testing, audience research and product information. But they may wind up trading efficiency for effectiveness."

IF A COMMERCIAL network should

be running scared, ABC's Pierce wasn't admitting it.

"The networks will have a smaller share of a larger viewing pie," he predicted. Thus, if ABC-TV has 10 percent of all households at any hour of the day, that share may shrink to 9 or 8 percent by 1990. But the number of households watching TV will be significantly larger.

Network programming will have to de-emphasize repeats and come up with more original programs. Major offerings such as "Rich Man, Poor Man," "Holocaust" and "Winds of War" (the last scheduled for next season) will lure viewers away from pay-cable to commercial networks, he said.

ABC is hedging its bets, he said, by offering two cable services itself.

One is "Arts," which has three hours an evening of cultural programming. "These audiences may be smaller," Pierce said, but the demographics can be beautiful. Sixty percent of the arts audience are college graduates — four times the national average. Almost half have incomes of more than \$30,000 a year. And one in every six among the arts viewers has published books or articles.

"Cable is clearly a demographic medium and uniquely able to meet specific program and advertiser needs," he said.

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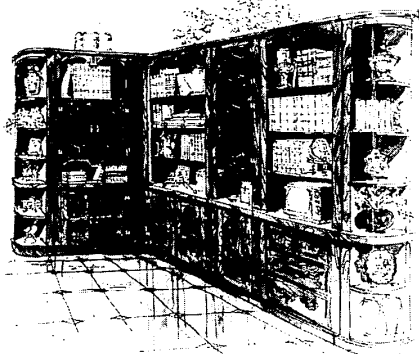
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