



## Lee Hunt Says Stay Sharp with App Navigation, Brand Integrations

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Last year, during his New Best Practices presentation at the PromaxBDA Conference, strategist Lee Hunt told attendees that 82 percent of the top 50 rated networks were controlled by eight media companies.

Since then, it looks like that number will likely drop to six in light of Scripps merging with Discovery, Disney and Comcast fighting to buy Fox, Viacom trying to make a deal with CBS, and the federal court giving its okay for AT&T to acquire Time Warner.

These moves would certainly shift which company is on top, but the key is that each company should be concentrating on promoting the channels in its vertical portfolio, while at the same time driving viewers to digital content on its in-house app, said Hunt.

### Cross-Platform Navigation Done Right

That's something Disney has been doing well with its OTT service Disney Now, which brings Disney Junior, Disney Channel and Disney XD under one roof, and removes age and gender barriers in the process.

"So if I'm a Marvel or Star Wars fanboy, but still love Puppy Dog Pals or have a secret crush on Andi Mack, Disney Now is a kind of white-labeled personal Disney Network just for me," Hunt said.

More channels are pushing viewers to non-linear platforms, and the smartest place to send them is to an app, where the network has full control over how the content appears, as opposed to a VOD library where they have to compete against every other network and piece of content.

Hunt describes it like being in a food court.

"You've decided you want Chipotle but as you walk through the stalls the smells of all the different vendors capture your attention and you end up eating at Panda Express."

This cross-platform navigation should also be tailored to whatever platform the viewer is on at the time, Hunt said.

"A commercial wants you to leave the house and buy something. We want you to stay right where you are-watching TV on whatever platform you're on," he said. "Inertia has always been our best friend."

#### Promo Time Matters

The amount of promo time also has a direct impact, Hunt said, and incrementally repeating a consistent message, with great frequency over long periods of time is effective.

"We build a wall of awareness brick by brick," Hunt said.

More networks are pushing their own content through program app spots for individual series, but are selling the inventory to competitors.

"We think it's imperative for networks to understand who is buying your airtime to steal your audience for their shows, and potentially limit that," Hunt said.

Promo time is also coming up against new models and buzzwords as networks vow to reduce commercial loads and create breaks in specific spots, such as the JAZZ model with longer breaks in just the beginning A and ending Z positions of a program.

"For me this is all dÃ©jÃ vu," said Hunt, recalling break retention tactics from the late 2000s that were often abandoned, while commercial time has steadily increased over the past few years.

"We already have to fight so hard for our promo time," Hunt said, and worries these formats may reduce what is essentially a tried and true tactic.

## Brand Integrations Work

One method is to weave the message of a show or network with the sales message of an advertising, bringing promos and commercials together for the best of both worlds.

"Over the years, I've only seen one idea that seems to deliver pretty consistently," said Hunt, referencing brand integrations. While that type of content still results in a drop off of viewership, the it's not as steep compared to that of a typical commercial, and it also levels out, meaning it's keeping some audience.

Over the last year Bravo has had the highest percentage of bran integrations at 9 percent, with the overall average of all 24 general entertainment networks Lee Hunt LCC audits around 4 percent.

"That may not sound like a lot but it adds up to more than 3000 integrations a year," Hunt said. "And based on the trends we've seen, that number will likely rise."