



Case Study: Show Branding

CMT Country Music Television
"Eye for Talent"

Brand Identity + Show Titles

Case Study for Country Music Television

Company profile

Country Music Television (CMT), a 24 hour, advertiser-supported music video channel that airs videos exclusively on basic cable systems, has emerged in recent years as one of the fastest growing cable channels in the United States. In a symbiotic relationship with record companies and radio stations, CMT has become the most influential aspect in the introduction and popularity of new artists in the country music entertainment field. CMT is also credited with creating the "young country" format which many radio stations have adopted, and with shaping other new trends in the country music genre.

- Nielsen reports that CMT is the number one choice for cable programming among women aged 18 to 49. Revenues in 2003: \$3.5 million
- According to the A.C. Nielsen ratings service, now reaches almost 30% of all U.S. households and 42% of all cable households, numbers that translate into 25 million television homes.
- The popularity of country music videos may be attributed to a more sensitive music video genre than its rock music counterparts, and therefore more appealing to female audiences.

Business situation

CMT had an early design concept for a new show “Eye for Talent,” a competitive live-event show similar to the style of American Idol. The brand identity needed to be dynamic enough to be utilized for multiple formats and fuse together with production’s sets which were being constructed simultaneously.

“Eye for Talent” (EFT) required a high-quality look in line with CMT’s well-established brand but had a limited budget and a tight deadline which required all graphic assets to be provided for an initial trial run-through within two weeks.

EFT Producers required the animated logo to be created for two scenarios: a large on-stage display, standing nearly twenty-five feet tall, and several high-definition plasma television screens integrated with the set design.



CONCEPT: SET DESIGN (PROVIDED BY SHED MEDIA)

Technical situation

EFT was working with many third-party companies who had never worked together to keep costs down and manage different production needs. Most of the companies had never met each other or visited the sets. Several conference calls allowed each team to understand how assets would be delivered and work with one another.

Sansar films would create HD resolution graphics which would need to play on a loop cycle so that the animation could continue to play seamlessly in the background while contestants competed and entertained audiences with their talent showcase.

It was a relatively simple job: create a custom, high quality animation that could loop and play in the background. Design elements were created and draft animations were provided to the show producers to comment and make changes as we approached the deadline. The goal was to create a large, heavy font face that would touch



on the borders of TV Safe, the SMPTE standard establishing where typeface may be cut off because of various television manufacturers' different specifications.

EFT Producers were very happy with the direction the animation took shape. The size of the order also grew to include additional graphic elements to tie with the animated brand identity. Render times were very long at this point because of HD resolution and the moving 3D parts.

Making a small adjustment was easy to facilitate, but the render times were now reaching over four hours to create another update to the draft. All the graphic elements were built to spec and design standards and were delivered early. The quality was top-notch, and would be very costly at other top-firm post production facilities.

But after running a technical rehearsal, EFT hit a bump in the road.

Because the disparate teams had never worked together, a technical problem arose. Even though the TV screen on set were 16 x 9 HD format, the actual finished show would be filmed in the Standard Definition 4 x 3 format. The graphics which were created strictly for on-set use, now had to be converted for the edit bay so that a live playback switcher could cut from the set to an actual full size animation wipe, or dissolve, or transition (additional package elements created) so they could cut from one side of the set to another.

Solution

Only 48 hours remained until the graphic assets needed to be delivered for an actual live filming event and each graphic asset needed to be repurposed for Standard Definition. If the elements were simply scaled down, then the clips would have the dreaded vertical black bars on the left and right of an HD frame size. Not to mention the text information was now being cut off since it was created for the HD standard.



Sansar Films first tried to remove the 3D foreground element from the background to reduce the render times to just less than two hours. But the animation was created such that the glints and lighting effects which affected the text also interacted with the background elements. The result created a much higher quality finish, but now the look was locked in and we couldn't go back to a simpler animated version. The only solution was to work around the clock, non-stop, to ensure the animations were delivered on time and to spec.

In the end Country Music Television's "Eye for Talent" had both HD and Standard definition graphic assets delivered in time for the show which resulted in a dramatic increase in the

production value of the show, a strong brand identity which all CMT shows have established and their audiences have come to expect.

Benefits

Sansar Films has the post experience to make smart, quick, informed decisions which ensures that your marketing and production departments have the deliverables needed to make sure your project is a success without sacrificing quality.

The additional render times and solutions did not add additional cost to CMT's project, nor did Sansar Films have to outsource the project or drive up costs by utilizing a render farm. Using proxies and nested compositions, the project files remained with one post production house and was immediately available via an FTP server so that many departments had access to necessary art work without having to wait for messenger services to send DVDs or pick up the phone and chase various departments with the production. ENG was able to upload the HD versions and feed them into the HD screens on set, loopable, and built to spec. Post production department was able to download Standard Definition version with variations built with mattes so they could fly in through the 3D letters and cut to a commercial or utilize the graphic to cut between another part of the set, and the branding created a unique look and feel to the show.

We love creating content and will go the extra mile to make sure your project has a competitive edge in the visual marketplace.

Products and services used

List of products and services used for the solution.

- Adobe After Effects
- Adobe Photoshop
- Trapcode Plug-in Filters
- Sapphire Plug-in Filters
- Dreamweaver

Services provided by other groups or companies

Shed Media, Burbank, CA

Shed Media US launched in February 2009, bringing together Shed Media's five successful television production and distribution companies: Ricochet Television, Wall to Wall, Twenty Twenty, Shed Productions and Outright Distribution. Noted for its strong characters and memorable casting, Shed Media US productions include *The Real Housewives of New York City*, *World's Strictest Parents*, *Supernanny* and *It's Me or the Dog*. Upcoming productions include *The Marriage Ref* and a US version of the celebrity-led genealogy format *Who Do You Think You Are* for NBC, *Super-Manny* for ABC and *NYC: Inside Out* for Discovery.

Based in Los Angeles with more than 200 employees, Shed Media US is a significant supplier of television programming to the American marketplace. Buyers of Shed Media US product include ABC, NBC, Bravo, Discovery, Animal Planet, CMT, MTV, Oxygen and Spike. In 2008, the company produced more than 60 hours of television.