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DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT, MEET MOM



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Fact: moms go online to find information, research products, and shop. Now blogging moms and mom social networks are hotter than ever. (Anyone not sure about the power of mom bloggers should take note of the Motrin mom backlash this past weekend.)

The next natural step from research, blogging, and social networking is to entertainment and fun.

While the kids have been napping, moms have been online posting brag videos of their kids. According to DoubleClick, "This past year, 89% of moms spend more than two hours per day online, with half posting videos on sites like YouTube." So it's not surprising that over the last couple of months new online video shows have emerged, focused exclusively on topics for and star talent of moms.

Last week, I interviewed Michael Wayne, CEO of digital entertainment company Deca. We talked about his company's recent partnership with Target and the launch of its online show Momversation.

Christine Beardsell: Briefly describe Deca and what distinguishes you from other digital studios.

Michael Wayne: Deca is a digital entertainment company that develops, finances, produces, distributes, and monetizes video-centric digital entertainment properties. We focus our efforts on creating properties that target passion groups online: from teens to entrepreneurs to gamers to moms. Our properties consist of high-quality

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video content, usually daily, and social media Web sites. We do not create scripted online Webisodes, comedies, dramas, etcetera.

CB: You recently had your one-year anniversary. How has the space evolved since you launched, and how in turn has Deca evolved?

MW: The first wave of traditional entertainment producers that invested time and money creating online content has subsided. Creating sustainable high-quality content (and profits) was perhaps more complicated than they expected. More experimentation with online content from traditional entertainment producers will continue, for sure, but it may be more modest in scope. Deca has become much more disciplined as a company. The filters we use to decide if we are going to green-light a property are more stringent than a year ago. Also, now that the company has been in business awhile we are working together as a much better team.

CB: You have an interesting mix of talent you have created shows around and supported. How do you look at talent in the digital space?

MW: We look at talent through a very different lens than traditional entertainment. Talent for Deca consists of people who are genuinely passionate about something and who have usually already aggregated an audience online. Online talent in some ways is the opposite of most film and TV talent. We look for people who are not acting but rather are representing themselves genuinely to an audience. Also, they allow online audiences to have real glimpses into their lives and connect with them directly almost on a daily basis.

CB: How do you decide which show ideas deserve to be developed?

MW: We get pitched ideas from everyone: internally, externally, friends, producers, agents, managers, etcetera. We also proactively scour the Web for content brands that we would like to work with. Our best properties target a passion group already organized online that is underserved when it comes to high-quality video and

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community experiences. They also have great talent, targeted distribution partners, and brand advertisers attached to them.

CB: How can brands best partner with you?

MW: Brands work with Deca primarily through sponsorships and media at any stage of a property's development. We have worked with brands at the conception of an idea and we have worked with brands a year after a property has been in the marketplace.

CB: You recently launched Momversation. Can you tell me how that project came to life and how Target got involved?

MW: We officially launched Momversation.com on November 12. We launched a mom-focused property about six months ago called "CoolMom" where Daphne Brogden, who is a talented comedian, TV host, and mother, gives daily humorous insights about motherhood through video and blogging.

CoolMom gave us a great window into the world of mom blogging. We began thinking: why not get a bunch of the more popular mom bloggers together and give them the opportunity to express their opinions and stories with each other through video? We decided it was a great format for us to pursue, and we began developing it. We approached Target a few months ago with the idea. They liked the idea and the rest is history.

CB: Talk about the community and distribution strategy around Momversation.

MW: Momversation.com, like our other properties, is more than video. One of the more exciting parts of the site is that the online audience can continue the conversation through our Momversation Forums. We distribute the Momversation video content through our participating mom bloggers sites, through blog outreach, and through Yahoo Shine. The conversation continues in all of these places, not just on Momversation.

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CB: What's next for Deca?

MW: We have three properties in the queue for early next year: the relaunch of Smosh as well as two original properties. We are exciting about the momentum we've created this year and look forward to continuing it into next year.