

DIGITAL TV TAKES OFF

in convenience with Star Mart rollout

By Warren Beaumont

Caltex Australia has undertaken a major initiative by introducing Directtv in-store media systems for the Heathcote store and planning rollouts at another four new Star Marts.

Recent research from Australian and US groups such as POPAI, McNair Ingenuity (Big W rollout) and TNS Retail Forward shows shoppers can be highly influenced by in-store promotion.

At Caltex Heathcote, three Directtv's (NEC) LCD screens are positioned in the store above the bakery and ATM/telephone areas.

The media content is made up of internal promotions such as a current Caltex promotion and some supplier advertisements.

During *Convenience World's* visit, promotions running on the screens included: Mizone Rapid energy drink; Mars confectionery; Cadbury's 'Win a \$1000 Flight Centre Voucher'; a '2 for \$5.00 Coca-Cola' offer; and a Havoline engine oil promotion.

A 'Welcome to our store' message starts the promotional program. Customers only hear background music being played and see on-screen visuals and words, based on Caltex's research.

Brisbane software company Directtv launched its new automated technology into retail channels through its Australian agent P.O.S.M. The technology is designed to target potential customers in-store that Directtv director Bill Horton refers to as video-on-demand-technology.

Mr Horton said Directtv offered retailers a suite of software programs designed to deliver direct messages to consumers when they are in buying mode.

"Directtv's suite of software programs can be easily linked to the store's point-of-sale system which ensures content is easily maintained by the retailer and always 100 per cent relevant," he said.

"It is compiled from video, audio, images and text that are then individually tailored to our viewers demographics."

"It is the real-time video production process taking place in the store that ensures the information is unique and always relevant."

Mr Horton said consumers receive information about products or services that are of interest, while the advertiser can target their messages and offers directly to the customer.

Mr Horton said Directtv in-store media had proven its value with



Directtv makes shoppers immediately aware of promotions.



Mars promotion on a Directtv screen at Caltex Heathcote.

Caltex and Super Cheap Auto taking the technology on as a concept that works.

"You can automatically select which product to promote based on availability or out-of-stocks," he said. "It makes people instantly aware of the promotion and it changes the pace they walk at, like being on an escalator."

"The sound can be controlled to use screen sound or background music from the POS system. Promotion can be randomly generated and you can allocate screening time of promotions by category or at certain times each day."

Caltex's promotions at the Heathcote store run on a four-week cycle. Directtv puts the content together based on Caltex instructions and, when it is approved by Caltex, it is uploaded to the store.

Mr Horton said that the cost of production and advertising, such as multiple screens that were being used at a Cornett Supa IGA store in Queensland, would be around \$1200 a week across eight suppliers or messages.

At a smaller store, such as a convenience store with three screens, the cost would be around \$40-\$50 a week per supplier.

The Australian agent for Directtv, Mike James of P.O.S.M., said his company would provide marketing and continued support for retail channels and become involved in media production and content at its Bombaderry, NSW premises. It has other offices or representation in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne.

P.O.S.M. currently uses hardware and software supplied by Directtv. Mr James said Directtv is a computer-based system that builds an image 40 times a second.

"Music and images can be in synchronisation or be random," he said.

"We are looking to provide the most effective media and technology."

"We have no preference for particular hardware, [and we] do not recommend that an LCD screen has to be a particular size."

The average length of a TV commercial or promotion is around 20 seconds per advertisement. A program of advertising and information can also be tailored to a local community, such as supporting a local soccer team or community event. **CW**