

SBC CONSOLIDATION AFFECTS GSD&M

Ad assignment shifts at SBC Communications, San Antonio, netted GSD&M more work for Southwestern Bell, but cost the Austin, Texas, shop its Pacific Bell Mobile Services duties. That will lead GSD&M to close its San Francisco office. See page 2.

DART REVIEW PUT IN MOTION

Dallas Area Rapid Transit is passing up two renewable option years with Dallas agency Knappe and putting its advertising contract up for review. The incumbent has not decided if it will defend. The client plans to bring some marketing duties in-house. See page 4.

LITTLEFIELD ADDS EXECUTIVE TEAM

Littlefield Marketing & Advertising has recruited two agency veterans to head its creative and media departments. Neil Scanlan and Tom McAlevey will also participate in new business activities for the Tulsa, Okla., shop. See page 5.

BATES DIVERSIFIES



Bates SW chairman Jerry Kerr (l.) gets a deputy with business-to-business expertise in Kephart.

Bates USA is acquiring Houston's Churchill Group to fold into Bates Southwest. Churchill chief executive Mirrel Kephart will become vice chairman at Bates SW. See page 3.

Labor of Love Lost

Popeyes Chicken, Houston Shop Split Up

Popeyes Chicken & Biscuits of Atlanta has launched a search for an agency to handle its ad account for restaurants in Houston and East Texas. Incumbent Love Advertising in Houston, which won the fast-food chain's business last year, will not participate in the review. See page 2.

BERNERT LEAVES BAM! BEHIND

Austin, Texas, agency Bam! lost one of its two principals last month, as co-founder David Bernert resigned his position to pursue other opportunities. See page 8.

SPECIAL REPORT

PART OF THE PLAN

The 10 finalists for this year's APG-U.S. Account Planning Awards describe how planning and research helped them create memorable ads. Campaigns from Arnold Communications, Deutsch, Fallon McElligott, Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, Kirshenbaum Bond & Partners, Mullen and TBWA Chiat/Day are featured. See page 19.



Gamesmanship: Goodby for Nike



APG-U.S. ACCOUNT PLANNING AWARDS

Science Fact

Mullen • The Sci-Fi Channel



With detailed research, the Sci-Fi Channel visits the theater of your mind.

If technology is the dynamo of modern society and science fiction is its herald, then how come everybody is not watching the Sci-Fi Channel?

Yes, science-fiction devotees watch it. They love the fact that it opens them to a world of endless possibilities: storylines unbound by gravity; out-of-this-world characters; gee-whiz weaponry and thrilling special effects. When the agency was awarded the assignment, however, it was clear that the network was missing the broader audience.

In research, we found that the mainstream audience will catch the latest blockbuster movie or "must see" show, but the Sci-Fi Channel was not a regular part of their entertainment diet. Outer space was described as "too distant," the aliens "too foreign," the technical marvels "too mechanical." The underlying problem was that mainstream viewers regard sci-fi fans as nerdy. Sci-Fi's heritage of 1950s B movies and lurid comic books made fans look like "people who have never grown up." Worse, it was not only viewers who felt this way, but also

potential advertisers.

Our challenge? To understand the appeal of sci-fi from as many perspectives as possible, to find an intersection between the avid enthusiast and the casual viewer.

We started with a wide-ranging investigation of sci-fi fans from all walks of life, discovering them to be an enormously diverse group. We learned that the appeal is as much existential as extraterrestrial. A crucial insight was that sci-fi is not only an escape from reality, it allows people to question the illusion of "reality." Children do this through play: Their world is alive with meaning and things are not always what they seem. Make-believe is not only tolerated, it is sanctioned. But where do grown-ups go to exercise their sense of fantasy? Outer space and other worlds offer plenty of room for the imagination. Nothing nerdy about that.

To corroborate this notion, we interviewed more than a dozen sci-fi writers, producers and critics. What we repeatedly heard

can be summarized in one sentence: "Sci-fi offers a larger, more colorful and ambitious stage on which people can explore the world and their lives."

A New York cab driver said it more pungently: "Sci-fi is a goddamn playground for the mind."

As the culmination of a multi-layered process, agency and client agreed that the concept of the channel as a jungle gym for the imagination was a unique way to justify it to fans and nonfans alike. To bring out the intrigue and playfulness inherent in the brand, the team figured that the work should offer more questions than answers: This was encapsulated as "Ever wonder?" The aim: to drop-kick viewers into the middle of a sci-fi moment. David Lynch was the perfect choice to direct these artfully cryptic spots.

The advertising ran for only three months, but it has helped sustain the Sci-Fi Channel as one of America's fastest-growing networks despite heavy spending from rivals. ■

CLIENT: Andrew Besch, SVP, Marketing; Harry Mosher, VP, Brand Man.; Lisa Preston, Dir., Advertising; Catherine Moran, Advertising Man.; Alan Browdy, Dir., Primary Research AGENCY: Paul Silverman, Chief Creative Dir.; Chris Naulton, VP, Assoc. Planning Dir.; Bob Pagano, SVP, Group Account Dir.; Jim Elliot, Sr. Copywriter; Dan O'Donnell, Sr. Art Dir.; Jonathan Field, Cultural Strategist; Chris Leonard, Sr. Account Planner; Ethan Gussow, Brand Video Producer