

NBC Productions folds into entertainment

Ohlmeyer calls it next phase in team concept

By Steve Coe

In an effort to increase efficiency, and in keeping with the entertainment division's "team concept," NBC is dismantling NBC Productions and folding its units into the entertainment division. The network says the restructuring will occur over a six-month period.

Last July, NBC restructured the entertainment division by combining its programming and development departments, then splitting the combined group into two teams. The structure was designed to allow executives to work on a series from its inception through its network run.

"Last July we implemented the 'team' concept in our entertainment division, and the results have been impressive," says Don Ohlmeyer, president, NBC West Coast. "We are now executing phase two of that restructuring, integrating the NBC programming and NBC Productions creative departments into business units, where each unit is responsible for development, production and perfor-

mance of an entire slate of shows."

John Agoglia, president, NBC Enterprises, and Michael Zinberg, president, creative affairs, NBC Productions, will continue to oversee all production through NBC Productions until the restructuring is complete.

Zinberg, who spent two years at the helm of NBC Productions, will concentrate on late-night programming production and will develop new production through his Zinberg Co., in which NBC has a financial interest.

Under the new design, prime time series executives at NBC Productions will constitute a separate team reporting to Jamie McDermott, senior vice president, prime time series, NBC Entertainment. Producers of prime time series who were working under deals with NBC Productions will become part of McDermott's team.

Long-form programming executives at NBC Productions will become a separate team reporting to Lindy DeKoven, senior vice president, miniseries and motion pictures for television, NBC Entertainment. The miniseries and

motion pictures for television team will now be responsible for development and production and managing in-house series producers and writers as well as existing production companies.

Rick Ludwin, senior vice president, specials variety programs and late night, NBC Entertainment, will continue to oversee all late-night programming and development. Zinberg will supervise the production of late-night programming.

Saturday morning activities at NBC Productions will become a separate unit reporting to John Miller, executive vice president, advertising and promotion and special event programming, NBC Entertainment.

The production and business operations activities at NBC Productions will be integrated into production and business operations, NBC West Coast, under Jerry Petry, senior vice president. NBC Productions executives responsible for post-production, production finance and administration will operate under the new NBC Studio Services division, which will operate under Petry's larger division. ■

SYNDICATION MARKETPLACE

Big Bart

Twentieth Television's *The Simpsons* was the highest-rated new strip of the 1994-95 season, according to Nielsen's metered-market survey. Fox's animation powerhouse averaged a 7.2 rating and 13 share from Sept. 19, 1994, through Sept. 8, 1995, with an average 29% lead-in gain. *The Simpsons'* closest competitor among new strips was *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, which averaged a 5.7/11 and an average 21% lead-in gain.

Simpson special

Dove Audio Inc., publisher of a number of titles on the O.J. Simpson murder case, is working on a TV special with five dismissed Simpson jurors for possible syndication when the Simpson jury goes into deliberations. Tentatively titled *The Verdict: Justice on Trial*, the documentary-style program also will feature commentary on the criminal justice sys-

tem from such notables as CBS newsmen Mike Wallace, Judge Robert Bork and Manson family prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi.

Shaw upped at BVT

Michael E. Shaw, Buena Vista Television's senior vice president of advertising sales, has been named executive vice president of the division he formed in 1991. BVT President Mort Marcus credits Shaw with helping BVT to add family and adult programming to its core children's animation business and expanding BVT's reach by handling ad sales for non-BTV series *Roseanne*, *Matlock* and *In the Heat of the Night*.

Weiss moves to C-W

Dan Weiss has moved across town from Buena Vista Television to Carsey-Werner Distribution. Weiss joins Carsey-Werner as vice president, creative services, where he'll

oversee advertising and promotion of such shows as *Roseanne*, *Cybill* and *Grace Under Fire*. Previously, Weiss handled advertising campaigns for such hits as *Home Improvement*, *Golden Girls*, *Empty Nest* and Disney's syndicated movies.

Olympic effort

San Francisco-based GGP will produce an hour syndicated holiday special with athletes and celebrities competing in a variety of sports to raise money for the U.S. Olympic Team. *Hawaiian Holiday Sports Spectacular* will be shot at a resort on Oahu, Hawaii. Participants include 1995 U.S. Open champ Pete Sampras, track star Carl Lewis, rocker Stephen Stills and actors Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. GGP is offering the special, to air between Nov. 22 and Jan. 1, on an even barter split of 6 1/2 minutes national, 6 1/2 local.