

HSN - SHOPPING FROM HOME

Little did anyone know in 1982 how the ideas of a sell-by-air radio station in Clearwater, Florida would develop on TV. Today, using every television technique in the book, Home Shopping Network has become as much a part of the American way of life as Mom, apple-pie and the 11 o'clock news.

The broadcasting complex, in St Petersburg, Florida, is a modern electronic marvel. In fact it seems likely that the only non-automated things moving are the alligators. They have taken up residence in the swamp, by the satellite dishes. They seem to like it there, and American viewers seem to like Home Shopping Network. In 1993, five million people spent well in excess of \$1 billion on a wide range of products, from King James' Bibles, to cuff-links, camcorders and feather dusters.

STRAND LIGHTS HSN STUDIO

Three program services broadcast 24-hours a day, utilising seven studios equipped with CD80™ AE dimming, either Lightpalette™ 90, mini Lightpalette 90, or Mantrix™ MX control, and studio luminaires from Strand Lighting, supplied by Murphy Lighting Systems.

A team of presenters, with the looks and aplomb of their network counterparts, "host" 3-hour "shows". Except that the show is an on-going commercial, a sales pitch for all kinds of products. Standing by in support of the host are 2000 operators and a telephone system that could handle a city of 35,000 people. A nation-wide network of warehouses stands ready to ship orders. Sometimes a warehouse will handle over 30,000 packages a day.

HSN recognised and blended two popular American pastimes, shopping, and watching TV. It is a very high dollar-volume merger. In an average three hour stint a host will sell at a rate of several thousand dollars per minute. Monitors show the host how many calls are stacked up, and how many items have been sold. If the totals do not look encouraging the host will move on to another item. Many of the callers get to talk to the host. In this way interest can also be measured. But most of the broadcasters have that "sixth sense" that recognizes the product's viewer appeal.

Because of the vast purchasing power of HSN some products are price reduced on-screen. This whips up enthusiasm among viewers. Shoppers telephone their friends urging them to switch on so as not to miss a bargain.

STARS SELL THE GOODS

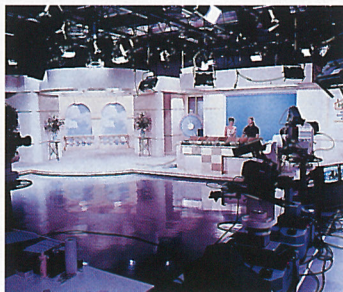
These buyers get involved with the presenters and their "shows" rather like the fans of soap operas. Some watchers admit to feeling that they are watching "family" when they switch on. Often stars of TV as well as show business personalities join HSN hosts to praise the merits



Shari Belafonte with Show Host Mindy McCortney in the HSN set and Arturo Softlight.



Just one of the order department areas at Clearwater.



An HSN Production Studio generously rigged with Quartzcolor fixtures.



Satellite dishes that beam the network nation-wide on a twenty-four hour basis.

of the product. Omar Sharif, Shari Belafonte, and Ivana Trump, to name a few.

Branded and private label products are featured, with new product constantly introduced. All will have been carefully tested before they are offered for sale. Occasionally "close-out" bargains are featured. But one thing is very certain, they will sell, or be replaced by those that do. The networks, one for cable, one direct, and one low power/overnight, that conventional TV stations can opt into, will make sure of that. In millions of homes the audience is captivated, and 82% of them are women. Many will have stumbled on the channel by accident. They see a series of products paraded by a host, and a toll-free number. It is impulse-driven television that goes on and on, and it can be very strange. A jewellery item is moving slowly so the host switches to the King James Bible. In a style reminiscent of old time preaching, he proceeds to sell 1,700 copies at \$7.75 each, in just 11 minutes. Including shipping and handling charges that is just over \$20,000.

To help the viewer HSN issues its own credit cards, as well as accepting major credit cards. The network modestly claims to be a marriage broker. One lady bought so much that she ended up marrying her UPS delivery man. "He delivered so many packages that I guess they got to know each other rather well!" said an HSN spokesperson.

STRAND SELECTED FOR RELIABILITY

An elaborate power back-up system ensures that HSN does not go off the air. Even a few minutes stoppage would prove very costly. But that will not happen. Home Shopping Network, lit by Strand Lighting, is striding confidently towards the 21st Century. At St Petersburg the pace is fast and furious. No-one is slumbering, except maybe the alligators that live in the swamp by the satellite dish!

MURPHY LIGHTING SYSTEMS

Murphy Lighting Systems has been responsible for equipping the studios of the giant Home Shopping Network at Clearwater, Florida.

With offices located in Atlanta, Georgia, and Gainesville and Orlando, Florida, Murphy Lighting Systems have been associated with Strand Lighting for over fifteen years. During that time they have grown to become the Strand specialists for the South-Eastern United States.