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## Sponsorships Made to Engage

Tessa Wegert | March 24, 2011 | 0 comments

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Brands want women consumers, and there are countless properties out there claiming to offer access to them. As is the case with most coveted demographic groups, it isn't an issue of quantity – it's *quality* that more frequently eludes us. So how does one determine which sites are most likely to deliver the desired results? How do you gauge both the value of a property and the potential worth of its users?

These days, one helpful criterion is consumer engagement. In last week's [column](#), I profiled one media company that's doing a great job of helping advertisers engage their target audience through the creation of invitation-only, custom branded sites. This week's contender has its own approach to inciting user participation and brand affinity. Its secret weapon? Sponsorships.

With its focus on lifestyle content, community, and original video series, [SheKnows.com](#) is a major industry player. In January, comScore put its unique U.S. monthly user count at 23.6 million. The site offers a wide range of content relating to the common interests of modern women, from love and living to parenting and pets. But among marketers it has made a name for itself with its advertising programs.

"The key to engaging females is providing the information and entertainment they are looking for, in a community they can trust," says Kyle Cox, vice president and general manager of SheKnows. Among other core features this engagement comes in the form of branded programming, photo galleries, mobile media, quizzes, and polls. The concept, Cox says, is to create an immersive brand experience that leaves users with a good impression of SheKnows advertisers.

In the SheKnows "Delicious Life Challenge," an original video series about four real women making major life changes with the help of a nutritionist, stylist, life coach, and trainer, sponsor Lean Cuisine keeps its presence relevant to viewers with the tag line, "Keep life delicious." From the start, SheKnows worked with Lean Cuisine to create a campaign that would "resonate and speak with viewers while reflecting the value of the brand." The series is one of a dozen shows offered on SheKnows TV, each ready to provide a sponsorship opportunity to a brand that can deliver that immersive result.



The SheKnows Corner Kitchen, meanwhile, has been [sponsored](#) by advertisers like Kraft Singles, which put its product in close proximity to video recipes and cooking tips. The [SheKnows CityGuide](#) (mobile app integration is available) is currently sponsored by Cesar pet food. In this case, the brand's associated banners too reflect the page content, which centers on pet-friendly outings; ads invite consumers to watch a "Homecoming Moment" and offer some ideas on how to pamper your pet post-adventure.



A close look at SheKnows campaigns reveals that most placements are, in fact, nearly seamless in their juxtaposition of content and advertising (what better sponsor for SheKnows TV "Daily Delights" than Extra "Dessert Delights" gum?). Social initiatives are no different; according to Cox, SheKnows recently launched its first Facebook-based tool, called [SheKnows Dares](#). Using Facebook Connect, it allows women to challenge each other to improve their lives and offers branded contests from advertisers like Kraft and Electrolux, with calls to action along the lines of, "We dare you to win \$1,000."

It's long been apparent to media buyers that consumers have a more favorable view of advertisers that blend into the content experience, rather than force an unrelated interaction. In this way sponsorships have a built-in advantage: they are, by nature, supportive of site content, and therefore more likely to be well-received. Consumers know that sponsors facilitate the information and entertainment they so enjoy. More often than not, that leaves them with a positive perception of those brands that can build into lasting loyalty and advocacy – and as SheKnows knows, that's exactly what we're looking for.

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