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Curves Shapes Largest Ad Campaign

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-By Elaine Wong



Weight loss season typically isn't until January, but this weekend, Curves is debuting a new campaign that attempts to give women the motivation they need to work out until it is time for New Year's resolutions.

Publicis, Dallas, has created three new commercials debuting tomorrow (Sept. 27) to promote the fitness chain's new CurvesSmart technology, which provides up-to-the-minute feedback for gym members. Tag: "I Am Curves Smart."

The advertising campaign is the chain's biggest since it went national in 2003. Curves, which first launched in 1992, has more than 4 million women members and 10,000 locations worldwide.

Although the ads spotlight the CurvesSmart technology, it isn't until the latter half of the spot that the Curves logo appears.

This was a deliberate move by the brand. The purpose of the ads was to market the motivation factor and not the gym itself.

Denise Lee Yohn, a brand consultant specializing in health and fitness, said the new CurvesSmart ads help update the brand. "A technology-based system like this makes the brand seem more contemporary and credible," she said. At the same time, however, the ad doesn't seem consistent with the brand's history. "This ad doesn't reinforce any of those dimensions," Yohn added. Instead, the ad's "serious" and "generic" tone may "alienate the Curves core target."

"One of the barriers women have to joining a fitness club is that they won't stay motivated," said Mike Raymond, president of Curves International. "They may be fired up when they join, but they know, often

from experience, that it becomes easy to lose that motivation over time."

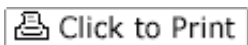
A multifaceted effort, the campaign also includes radio, print and online support. TV ads will run on Lifetime, Oxygen, HGTV and other channels.

Curves spent \$19 million on U.S. measured media in 2007 and \$9 million through July of this year, excluding online, per Nielsen Monitor-Plus.

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