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# NL Firm Makes National Splash Producing TV Infomercials

By [Lee Howard](#) Published on 9/7/2008

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*Matt Goldreich*

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**Waterford** - It's about two hours past start time for the infomercial shoot at Sonalyst Studios and things have just started rolling when Janet Peckinpough, former Connecticut news anchor for Channels 3, 8 and 30, stops everyone and wonders about a line.

"Can I say 'hi' instead of 'hello'? I'm more of a 'hi' kind of person," she says.

As the audio expert, teleprompter operator, cameraman, stage manager, makeup artist, editor and graphic artist come to a stop, the infomercial producer, marketing director and director look at one another, speechless. They're all set up in various spots around cavernous Studio 15, assembled for the shoot by National Media Connection, a New London firm that has become a powerful force nationwide in the infomercial industry.

Finally, director Susan Conover shrugs her shoulders, leans forward and says, "Let's hear it and see if it floats."

Peckinpough tries it, and it floats.

Finding its niche

The same could be said for National Media Connection, a 6-year-old New London company with four employees owned by Matt Goldreich of Waterford. The company has tried everything on its way to finding a niche in the little-understood world of infomercials, otherwise known as paid programming.

"It's the little production company that could," says Paul Santamaria, a senior editor at Sonalyst.

Goldreich's company started as National Mortgage Connection, with the intention of shooting infomercials for the mortgage industry, and he originally had two partners, both of whom are now gone. One left in the early stages when the company was generating little income, Goldreich said, and another, the financial backer and owner of a mortgage firm, was eventually bought out.

Previously, Goldreich had worked at Channel 26 in New London, a PAX-TV station eventually bought out by NBC, and that's where he cut his teeth on producing infomercials.

But infomercials are expensive to produce, and not everyone has deep enough pockets to afford the initial costs, not to mention the payments required to air the spots. So Goldreich, when he started his own company, developed a different idea, producing the infomercials cheaply, perhaps for as little as \$2,000, and then making his money off the purchase of air time.

"Some companies only produce; they have nothing to do with buying," Goldreich says. "But we

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brought both buying and producing under one roof.”

”It’s a turnkey system for us,” says Mary McPhail, chief marketing officer for a financial-services firm that has been one of National Media Connection’s leading clients over the past two years. “We get fantastic results linked to the quality of the show. ... Matt does the production, media buying and he finds the right air time according to our demographics.”

**Publications**

- Body & More
- Bridal Guide
- Enterprise Magazine
- Grace Magazine
- Spaces
- Menu Guide
- Mystic Country

Buying air time is key, Goldreich says.

Being an experienced media buyer with inside connections, he can find air time in key major-market slots that others would not be able to acquire. And he can bargain for better rates than individual customers would get, he says, thanks to the millions of dollars in buying power his company has acquired over the years.

Media buyers receive a 15 percent fee for buying air time, which turns into a tidy profit for National Media Connection, says Goldreich. He estimates revenues were up 500 percent last year from the year before and are up an additional 200 percent so far in 2008.

”It’s a win-win for everyone,” he says of his company’s way of doing business. “We’re invested with the client. I don’t make money unless their show is successful.”

- Day Saver
- Sound & Country
- Go Westerly

Finding the talent

The paid-programming show’s success depends partly on the type of talent Goldreich is able to attract on a show.

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On this particular infomercial, Peckinpugh is a last-minute substitute, brought in after a shooting-schedule change conflicted with an obligation of the original on-air personality. The shoot also includes Mark Oliver, an actor seen in the 2006 movie “We Are Marshall,” among others.

In the past, Goldreich has hired former TV star Gary Coleman for an infomercial. He once offered Ed McMahon \$75,000 for a one-day shoot, but the former “Late Night with Johnny Carson” star, ironically now in the center of a controversy over potentially having his home taken in a foreclosure, turned him down.

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Goldreich also once tried to sign on Sherman Hemsley, former star of “The Jeffersons” show, but Hemsley insisted on \$200,000.

”We have this Hollywood thing here that nobody knows about,” Goldreich says.

Goldreich is low-key and likes it that way. Many of the infomercials he shoots include local talent, or even family. He expects to hire two more people before year’s end, but Goldreich struggles with how big he wants the company to grow and how much control he wants to give up if National Media Connection gets much bigger.

**Affiliates**

- News Channel 8
- Parade Magazine
- Shore Publishing

”We all wear multiple hats,” says Hank Tenney, vice president of sales for the company. “It’s an exciting thing to come to work every day.”

The company has its own small studio as well as film-editing facilities where it does some closed-captioning work. In addition to producing infomercials and infomercial-type promos for inventors, National Media Connection also deals with scripting the shows and running advertising campaigns.

Goldreich, leaning back in his office chair at 2 Union Plaza wearing jeans and sneakers, gauges the success of a show by accessing a Web site that tracks the number of responses to a particular infomercial.

He can see on the site when the calls start coming in and chart the responses against certain segments of the show to determine which of the pitches has been most successful. And, if a certain show does not elicit many responses, he can go back and tinker with the script, edit the show, and try a slightly different spot next time.

Message is key

”Our objective is not to brand the name of the company; our job is simply to get people to react

to the message and call," Goldreich says.

The ability of National Media Connection to alter shows after production is complete has been helped along by Goldreich's innovative concept of modular infomercials. The concept allows for basic information on such issues as reverse mortgages - a hot topic today for older homeowners - to be reused in various infomercials, with perhaps only four minutes devoted to a specific pitch for a certain company.

One of the keys to his company's success has been scrupulous attention to the facts when scripting infomercials. Facts are double- and triple-checked, Goldreich says.

National Media Connection's infomercials are geared to look like news shows, similar to CBS's "60 Minutes" program. The idea carries through in the selection of on-camera talent, such as Peckinpugh, who have backgrounds in news.

"A lot of other companies are like snake-oil salesmen," Goldreich says. "People are much more receptive to being sold when they don't know they're being sold." ■

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