

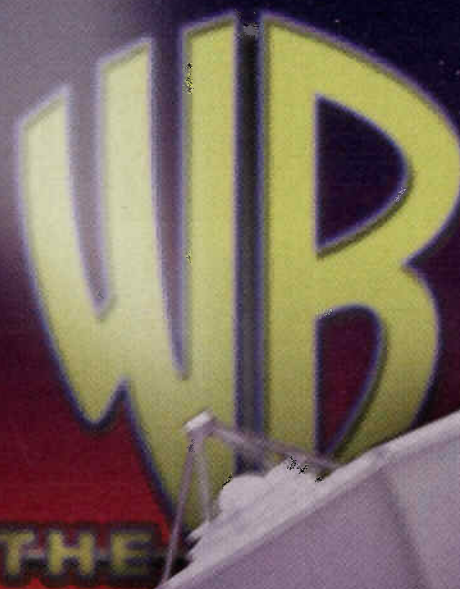
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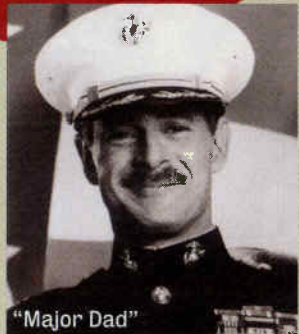


**A Salute to The WB 100+
Station Group on its
Fifth Anniversary, Page 13**



Illustration by Andy Crittenden

THE WB 100+



"Major Dad"

SMALL MARKETS ADD UP

WB 100+ a Force in Programming

By Chris Pursell

When a potential buyer can offer more households than the nation's top market, syndicators are going to pay attention.

The formation of The WB 100+ Station Group, has made one-stop station shopping a reality for syndicators in 109 of the nation's 111 smallest markets, reaching more than 9.18 million households (vs. more than 7 million in New York). It has also meant the stations have been able to tailor a full-day programming lineup of young-skewing syndicated shows group-wide that are



"QUINCY, M.E." Off-net fare was an early hallmark of The WB 100+.

consistent with The WB Network's image.

Of course, it took five years to get there.

In September 1998, when the group debuted, blocks of time were filled with off-net syndie fare such as "Quincy, M.E." and "Major Dad." However, Lynn Stephanian, senior VP of programming and production for the outlet, said the mantra from the start was to fill time slots with as much first-run product as possible.

"We acquire what fits
continued on page 22



Forging an Identity

Innovative Strategy by The WB Helps Build a National Footprint

By Kathleen O'Steen

Special to TelevisionWeek

Five years ago, a group of executives at Warner Bros. made television history.

With fledgling network The WB in hand and a lack of Federal Communications Commission licenses to take it nationwide, they chose to do the near impossible: create a new television station group via a complex and nearly unheard-of arrangement between cable operators and over-the-air station affiliates. The result was The WB 100+ Station Group, which launched in September 1998 with 80 stations and 2.8 million households—all in small and midsize TV markets—marking the largest station launch ever.

The challenges the WB 100+ Station Group now faces, such as competition from satellite and finding ways to customize local lineups, pale in comparison with the hurdles it already has cleared. The group hasn't had time to look back on its first

five years, when it grew to 109 stations reaching more than 9 million households. It has taken off in large part due to a successful lineup of programming that includes The WB's "Angel," "Charmed," "Gilmore Girls" and "Everwood" in prime time and syndicated fare such as "Friends," "Will & Grace" and

Consultancy. "But those skeptics are now eating their words. The WB has really managed to do what networks need to do—have a clear idea of who their audience is, then come up with a lot of high-quality shows aimed at that audience, in this case the audience being Generation X." The WB 100+ Station Group

“There were a lot of skeptics when The WB was introduced. But those skeptics are now eating their words.”

Peter Kreisky, president, Kreisky Media Consultancy

lately "The King of Queens." The station group also carries Kids' WB, which boasts such hot tot cartoons as "Yu-Gi-Oh!" "Jackie Chan Adventures" and "What's New Scooby-Doo?"

"I think there were a lot of skeptics when The WB was introduced," said Peter Kreisky, president of New York-based Kreisky Media

made it possible for The WB to have a national identity, which is crucial to an advertiser-supported network. With some 60 employees and a host of hard-won agreements with cable operators and broadcast affiliates to partner in the endeavor, the group has been nothing short of a surprising upstart.

continued on page 14

TIMELINE

Sept. 21, 1998: The WB 100+ Station Group, a division of The WB Network, launches its first broadcast, making television history with 80 stations signed on. The initial reach is into 2.8 million homes. Prior to its launch, it has struck long-term agreements with TCI and Time Warner Cable for carriage.

June 2001: All the major cable MSOs now carry the 100+ Station Group.

September 2001: The 100+ is available in 7.4 million homes.

May 2003: "7th Heaven" finishes sweeps as the No. 1 show in its time period among women 18 to 34 in



Corpus Christi, Texas, and several other markets. "Reba" is No. 1 in the demo in Springfield, Mass., and other markets.

September 2003: The 100+ celebrates its fifth anniversary with a reach of more than 9.2 million homes. It's available in 43 states via 109 stations. It has 51 broadcast partners, three radio partners and nine sales agencies. Many of the partners cover more than one market.

—KATHLEEN O'STEEN

