

Advertising Age[®]

Carat's Pat Jones Is Part Producer, Part Agency Exec

Brings Her Dual Expertise to Agency's One-Stop-Shopping Arm for Branded Entertainment

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NEW YORK -- Earlier this week, Carat Entertainment/MY Entertainment Co. promoted Pat Jones from VP-director of account services to senior VP-account services. While with the branded-entertainment arm of Carat USA, Ms. Jones has worked on TV series involving sponsors such as Schick, Jenny Craig and Stolichnaya. However, her experience also includes a sojourn at General Motors EventWorks, where she developed and managed the 1999 Hard Rock RockFest project. She has paid her dues in TV production. Ms. Jones took the time as she adjusts to her new role to chat with Madison & Vine via e-mail about her life in branded entertainment.



Photo: John Filo

Carat Entertainment/MY Entertainment Co.'s Pat

Jones: 'When a client calls me, they're calling someone who already knows and cares about their brand -- I'm going to protect it while making a good show.'

Madison & Vine: What difference does this promotion make in your day-to-day work and career objectives? **Ms. Jones:** More of the same (and I mean that in a good way!). My job is happily, yet insanely, busy, as I'm involved in everything from new-business pitches with Carat USA to developing programs for clients working with our development and production arm -- MY Entertainment Co. -- to getting to know our clients and their brands inside and out and then overseeing and being one of the executive producers on shows we have with clients. **M&V:** You were also recently named chair of the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Branded Entertainment Committee. Does this mean we should expect to see more branded-entertainment sessions at future conferences or do you have something else in mind? **Ms. Jones:** Absolutely -- but as part of the whole. Branded entertainment is part of the marketing/advertising mix, so it's important to properly present it within the right context. **M&V:** What do you see as some of the smartest approaches to branded entertainment out there today? **Ms. Jones:** Anything that is truly "seamless and organic" -- the buzz words that we all use. One good example is our show "Tease," a hair competition show on Oxygen and hosted by Lisa Rinna in which we integrated Jenny Craig. What better way to get the message out that Jenny Craig is a successful way to lose weight than by showcasing success stories? We used these success stories as "mane-event models," and in a section of the show called "The Jenny Craig Hair Hunt," tips were given to these models on what to do with their hair now that they've lost the weight. The theme was "With a new body you need new hair," and the before-and-after pictures spoke for themselves. A quick and seamless way to share Jenny Craig's message. **M&V:** When a marketer is looking at hiring a branded-entertainment company, how does Carat Entertainment/MY Entertainment differentiate itself? **Ms. Jones:** We're real TV producers. So it's one-stop shopping: You're not calling the agency to call the producers, you're calling the agency and the producers. Part of my job (as I have a marketing background as well as production) is to really know the brands. So, when a client calls me, they're calling someone who already knows and cares about their brand -- I'm going to protect it while making a good show. **M&V:** You've worked in live event and TV production as well as marketing and managed 1999 Hard Rock Fest, and Olympic entertainment events. Do you have a favorite? **Ms. Jones:** That's tough! The Olympics were cool because we hired Ben Taylor (James Taylor and Carly Simon's son) and we had to shoot a promo. So we sat in this little room with just me, a camera guy, a sound guy and Ben Taylor singing -- goosebumps! And AutoRox on Spike TV was amazing because I'm originally from Detroit and a car nut, and when we wrote the pitch for the show I wrote this whole thing about Kid Rock performing and he did. I think I cried. **M&V:** These days everybody talks about creating office cultures where it is OK to fail because that's how you take risks that could pay off. Do you have a tremendous failure that you learned from or a breath-taking risk you are really glad you took? **Ms. Jones:**

How much space do we have? I'll give you three to choose from: 1.) I ran development for a year for MY Entertainment and never got a show on the air; I got close, very close ... but no deals actually closed. I learned that my strength is in working with someone to improve on their ideas. 2.) I was a partner in a digital company that started three months before 9/11 ... I left the business after nine months and then went on to work for Michael Yudin, president of MY Entertainment, and my former partner has gone on to create a great advergaming company called Smerc. I've learned that everything happens for a reason. I've learned so much from Michael, and am where I am today because of that experience. 3.) I'm an (aspiring) author, and trying to get a novel published. I've had a short story published on AOL Black Voices, but so far (though I've gotten lovely rejection letters) I haven't managed to get an agent yet. Lesson: Never give up!