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It's the marketers' 'Apprentice'

P&G, Pepsi, others pay \$1 mil each for roles in season two

By CLAIRE ATKINSON

THE CATCHY THEME tune to "The Apprentice" says "money, money, money." That couldn't be more appropriate, with a host of major marketers ponying up around \$1 million each to take a co-starring role in the new season of the NBC reality show.

In a raft of classic branded-entertainment deals that will give them prime-time exposure beyond the 30-spot, Toys 'R' Us, Mattel, Procter & Gamble Co., PepsiCo, Levi Strauss & Co., Cunard Line and Masterfoods USA will all provide a backdrop for a variety of business problems to be tackled on the show, said NBC executives. Delta Air Lines and Dunkin' Donuts may also be featured.

Two executives claim the price of the product integration in season two is around \$1 million—it came free in season one. Producers are already in negotiations with marketers for season three, which begins shooting in November. Product integration fees for that season are said to have doubled to \$2 million.

Executives claim those are fees

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BURNETT: Producer rakes it in.

'Apprentice'

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charged by the show's production company, Mark Burnett Productions, though other executives claim NBC negotiated some of the integration deals. The integration fee, however, is understood to cover production costs.

"Our task partners are imbedded in the show for up to 45 minutes in an organic and meaningful manner. This is more substantial and interesting than passive signage. In fact, the actual story line and format of the episode often centers around the company," said Mark Burnett's production partner, Conrad Riggs. He declined to comment on the financial details of the deals.

NBC, however, has yet to replace DaimlerChrysler, which balked at the reputed \$50 million price of sponsoring the second season of the hit show.

For marketers, the chance to be front and center on NBC's most highly rated show is priceless. The first season of "The Apprentice" was the fourth most highly rated show of the broadcast season. The second season makes its debut on NBC on Thursday September 9.

Ken Austin, exec VP Marquis Jets, based in New York, says his

company was thrilled by its involvement in season one, which cost the company nothing but the price of a flight from New York to Boston, one of the prizes involved. The exposure his private jet company gained is estimated at upward of \$5 million since the company was featured in three episodes and will appear through the life of the show in DVD, home video releases, international sales and syndication.

BIG VALUE

"We were on three episodes and were told the value was in the multi-millions. We're also on [TV] now in Europe," said Mr. Austin.

None of the companies would speak about their involvement in season two, though one executive said five companies would each have major brands featured in the show, one of them being P&G's Crest toothpaste.

The Toys 'R' Us store in New York's Times Square will appear in the first episode as backdrop to the contestants' initial task, to create and market a new toy for Mattel. One TV executive with working knowledge of the show said "marketing, distribution and research" tasks would also be featured. Donny Deutsch, CEO of Interpublic Group of Cos.' Deutsch, is also set to reappear in season two. ■