

Mini Live Infomercial

As an introduction to live video broadcast, I have come up with an idea for a short but interesting project, a mini live infomercial. One of my secret shames is infomercials. I once ordered a Craftmatic 2 Adjustable Bed from an Infomercial to get a free TV. I was eight years old. You've seen the blatant exaggeration, the tasteless tactics, and the pure hokey products displayed by all those infomercials that clog up the late night airwaves, and you love them too. Now is your chance to be: Miss Chloe, Ron Popeil, Tony Little, Tom Vu, The Juiceman, Richard Simmons, Cher, George Foreman or even Tony Robbins.

Infomercials often make use of flashy catchphrases, they repeat basic ideas, and they use scientist-like characters or even celebrities to sell their product. A surprising characteristic of nearly all infomercials in North America that demonstrate a product is that they usually feature a man (who often has a British accent) and an extraordinarily stupid person who asks unintelligent questions ecstatically.

Step 1. Each person in the group has to write a one-minute infomercial to sell a real or fictitious product. Make sure the commercial is cheesy, outrageous or crazy. This is your time to be silly, yet appropriate. Timing is critical. It must be exactly 1 minute, 1:30 or 2 minutes. See the how to write a script sheet on my site.

(1-2 Days)

Step 2. Using 2-3 DV video cameras, a mini to RCA cable, RCA Cables, adapters, a few mics, an audio mixer, XLR cables, a Mac, a monitor and a video switcher you are going to take turns recording 5 of your infomercials. Each person will try a variety of jobs including a camera-person, a video switcher and director. Since you will have about 9 scripts in your group, pick 5 to videotape.

(4-6 Days)

Step 3. You will take the footage that you have mixed onto the mac and edit it. You will have 5 finished commercials in one iMovie file. You will quickly add an introduction to each infomercial, titles, audience sounds and music. Since the whole idea of this project is to create a live atmosphere, please do not edit areas of the video where talent has messed up or where the video switcher has messed up. It is suppose to be live. (1 Day)

Make sure you put all cables, cameras and equipment away at the end of each class.