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# Commercials another sign 'Baywatch' means business

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I am a firm believer that public attacks must be answered and that assertions unanswered are as good as agreed to. Therefore, I feel the time has come to set the record straight on a few issues, ranging from innocent misunderstandings to blatant misstatements and misleading rhetoric.

To those isolated yet vocal individuals who have taken great liberties in their unabashed criticisms and mean-spirited attacks against "Baywatch Hawaii," its actual value to the state and the worthiness of the enormous unified effort it took to relocate the series, I must commend you on proving the following point: "The most dangerous person in business is the articulate incompetent."

Was "Baywatch Hawaii" worth the investment? The partial answer to this question comes from two very unexpected directions: Mercedes Benz and Dr. Pepper.

Dr. Pepper's 2001 advertising campaign, unveiled at the annual Bottlers Convention held on Maui, features an ad titled "Green Bay Watch." The commercial, a clever spoof, depicts a cadre of Baywatch-type actors in their trademark bathing suits "patrolling" the ice-laden terrain near Green Bay, Wis.

Almost simultaneously, Mercedes was structuring a brand new commercial ad campaign based on the same television series.

While the appearance of two 30-second advertisements may seem to be nothing more than a casual nod toward "Baywatch's intense media visibility, it is important to remember that these particular nods carry with them a huge commercial investment.

The Dr. Pepper ad, which is airing nationally on both network and cable television, was designed by the prestigious Young and Rubicam of New York as one of three commercials with a collective budget of around \$100 million.

What does this mean? It means that at the same time that opponents of the "Baywatch" project were griping about Hawaii's \$2.7 million investment, Dr. Pepper was spending \$33.3 million to attach itself to the "Baywatch" phenomenon for just 30 seconds. Simply using Dr. Pepper as the example, Hawaii received advertising exposure worth in excess of \$66.6 million in the United States alone for \$2.7 million.

John Clark, Dr. Pepper's chief advertising officer, attributes Dr. Pepper's advertising success to two things, "the brand's stand-out messages to its target consumers" and its ability "to anticipate trends and be where its consumers are when they get there." Clearly, Dr. Pepper established that "Baywatch" would serve as a productive tool to reach their target audience. It should be noted that this age group is the same demo targeted by Hawaii's tourism industry.

For those who would like to debate, in any way or for any reason, that Dr. Pepper's target market doesn't match the "big spending tourist population" sought by Hawaii's tourism industry, allow me to now introduce you to the Mercedes Benz consumer and target market. This particular group of consumers is composed of the biggest spenders of any isolated group anywhere.

It is still hard to fathom the motivations of those opposed to "Baywatch Hawaii's" contributions. During its two-year stretch in Hawaii, "Baywatch" was responsible for

reaching approximately 5.7 billion viewers in 100 countries and 41 different languages. It helped to establish a foundation necessary to maintain a thriving TV and film industry, provided constant employment to 125 people and generated \$40 million to \$45 million (25 times what the state invested) in local expenditures.

The program also cast local leads and utilized local editing, writing and musical talents. Was "Baywatch Hawaii" worth the investment? What do you think?