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How ABC Family Plans to Roll Out â€˜Becomersâ€™ Branding

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ABC Family announced at its upfront presentation this April that it will soon become the network for Becomers.

This target audience is new to TV, largely because the network coined the term itself.

Known for shows like Pretty Little Liars and The Fosters, ABC Family had previously been known as the millennial network, but those millennials who helped ABC Family earn its current success are aging up and out of the network's programming sphere.

So ABC Family is turning to Becomers - a life stage, rather than a generation - someone "between first kiss to first kids," according to Nigel Cox-Hagan, SVP of marketing, creative and branding at ABC Family.

Generally, this means ABC Family's new target audience is roughly between 14 and 34 years old. According to Cox-Hagan, the life stage is particular special to ABC Family because "there is so much excitement to it, you're on the brink of so many possibilities."

Becomers are ahead of the curve socially and technologically, media-savvy, optimistic and amidst a series of firsts - first car, first job, first place of their own, first income, first children. A majority of this group are unmarried students. ABC Family estimates this group to be almost 70 million people in the U.S.

At its April upfront presentation, ABC Family President Tom Ascheim added: "Becomers are exploring and establishing who they are becoming - personally, professionally and romantically."

Cox-Hagan stresses that this is really nothing new for ABC Family: "It's always been in the DNA in the company." The network has always been successful with the group, it just had never defined them.

Historically, shows like Secret Life of the American Teenager, Greek, Kyle XY and Pretty Little Liars have all done well in the ratings as well as in social media with this life stage. ABC Family aimed to further hone its audience to be able to speak to them more effectively.

So now that the channel has introduced the group, how exactly is it going to target them?

First, by some visual changes. The signature orange of the ABC Family logo is slowly being removed from the network's platforms, in favor of a look imbued with more urgency, diversity, energy and informality of the Becomer, according to Cox-Hagan. This part of the project was created with the help of ABC Family's agency partner, Loyalkaspar.Â

"ABC Family has a very strong, distinct graphic slate that has been in existence for a number of years," he said. "So what better way to signal that there's been evolution than by evolving and moving away from that look?"

Graphic elements will be added throughout the summer, with its WATCH ABC Family app following suit, re-launching this summer with a new look.

Next, the network wanted to recognize that not only is its key audience is made up of Becomers, so is a large portion of its talent base.

ABC Family features stars of the network in videos and key art (below) to introduce this idea. These stars (Pretty Little Liars' Ashley Benson and Shay Mitchell, for example) appear in spots as themselves, not their characters, to add to the genuine nature of the Becomers branding.

"The video was an anthem, a way of manifesting our relationship with Becomers by showing them that our key talent and stories are about Becomers," said Cox-Hagan. "It's really about having our actors speak for

themselves."

Videos like these purposefully show the stars of the network in natural settings - nothing too staged or artificial, sending the message that ABC Family is there with Becomers, not speaking down to them.

The style is meant to be more selfie, less photoshoot. Cox-Hagen refers to these spots and videos as "informal, relatable but with a certain glamour to them."

Another part of the network's upfront pitch was a ramped-up originals strategy meant to effectively target the Becomers group, including new series Becoming Us (above), Shadowhunters, Kevin at Work and this summer's Stitchers.

Stitchers and Becoming Us will debut this June, with the comedy Kevin at Work to follow soon after. Stitchers (below) is ABC Family's first procedural drama, telling the story of a young woman who, after working for a government agency, can "stitch" into the minds of the dead in order to find out what happened to them.

The new unscripted series Becoming Us follows Ben, a teenager, who is learning to accept his father's transition from Charlie to Carly. Kevin at Work is a half-hour comedy about Kevin's declaration of love for a coworker as he plans a big move - until his plans fall through and he ends up having to figure out how to work with her again.

The Mortal Instruments fantasy series Shadowhunters- based on Cassandra Clare's bestselling YA novels and complete with fairies, warlocks, vampires and werewolves-is slated to debut early 2016 along with scripted drama Recovery Road, also based on a popular YA novel.

ABC Family will roll out more throughout the summer, but until then, take a look at its personal, natural look at its programming through a Becomer's eyes:

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