



RICHFIELD'S OWN "SUCCESS STORY"

"Institutional" show called "Success Story" turns out to be highly effective in delivering business for West Coast oil company which spends million on air annually



Broadcast planning is supervised by Dorr Walsh (l), v.p., Hixson & Jorgensen agency, L.A., and Kai Jorgensen, exec. v.p., (r) in Union Pacific yards for tv remote

LOS ANGELES

If an oil company's advertising can sell both the bulk buyer of gasoline—a giant airplane manufacturer, for example—and the small consumer who operates a '52 Dodge, it's achieved the best of all possible worlds.

Such is the case with the Richfield Oil Corp. in Los Angeles which has developed its own petroleum heaven. It reaches its three prime buying targets with three variations of the air media, but each variation has a special target group.

Richfield reaches blue-chip prospects, the major industrialists on the West Coast, with a unique live television program series. It sells the consumer with a continuing series of animated tv announcements. It backs its 4,500 gasoline stations with a 26-year-old radio show.

All this broadcast effort adds up to about \$1 million annually, somewhat less than 50% of the total ad budget and a gain from 30% of the budget just a year ago. Tv and radio, with heavy outdoor, lighter newspaper and still lighter magazines, combine to position Richfield as No. 1 in terms of gallonage in many areas, No. 4 or 5 in the greater Los Angeles market. Its competition is seven major oil companies, most of which are national in terms of dealership, distribution and advertising.

Richfield, at one time a relatively small regional producer, now saturates six West Coast states: California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada and Arizona. It produces, refines and



Plant sites are featured in weekly *Success Story* documentary produced live in three coast cities by different local crews. One in four shows is a non-commercial public service report.

sells some 300 petroleum products through these 4,500 leased gasoline stations—not one of which is company operated. (It's no relation now to Richfield of New York although the two companies were once linked.)

The gasoline stations in effect become another type of "customer" for Richfield. So all advertising is interwoven to establish a Richfield personality and concept with its three customer groups: the bulk buyer, the individual consumer, the franchised gasoline station.

Kai Jorgensen, executive v.p. of Hixson & Jorgensen advertising agency in Los Angeles, says Richfield's advertising objective has always been to establish a distinct company personality first and to sell gasoline second. (The same basic agency group has serviced the account for 20 years, but the present agency is an outgrowth of the former Hixson-O'Donnell.)

Much of Richfield's own company personality has developed through use of the broadcast media. A corporate image of warmth, reliability and quality has evolved from sponsorship during the past 26 years, explains Leon H. Thamer, agency account executive.

The agency, Thamer says, works under this type of directive from Richfield: "We want complete identification with all our advertising, so that we never co-sponsor a program series. We try to establish our own radio and tv personalities and programs so that they—and what they represent—are ours exclusively. We always soft sell.

We've always had the green light from the client in exploring new advertising possibilities."

Today's radio and tv schedules reflect this exploration. They were new in concept and technique when they originated and they remain new and fresh today because of continuous changes in content and copy to match the changing times.

The *Richfield Reporter*, aired on an NBC Radio regional network of 24 stations, has been on the air six days a week, 52 weeks a year for 26 years. This show, believed by the agency to be the oldest continuously sponsored newscast in the country, is Richfield's basic broadcast buy. It reaches throughout the entire six-state area, in rural as well as urban centers. It flings out a wide coverage net into which, sooner or later, the agency believes everyone is drawn to the 10 to 10:15 nightly time slot.

Richfield Reporter is designed to reach two of Richfield's consuming units—the gasoline retailer and the automobile driver.

But the dollar emphasis is on television—both spot and local programming. Some \$300,000 worth of announcements last year was divided among about 19 stations in 14 markets. Firm 52-week schedules provide for animated film commercials 10 and 20 seconds long in prime time periods. This tv coverage encompasses metropolitan area populations, with copy following the lead set for all Richfield



Production crew of 25 checks plant site, script, rehearsal for half-hour remote, Richfield's entry to its prime prospects.

Public service *Success Story* program visit such places as Jenell opening of charity flower show and Bradle Institute.



RICHFIELD SUCCESS *continued*

consumer advertising. This plugs gasoline almost exclusively, and its premium grade of gas (the other grade is regular).

But the biggest broadcast venture for Richfield is an ambitious project which began seven years ago. It's a half-hour television program called *Success Story*, and it's lived up to its name every week of the seven years, says Jorgensen. It was conceived as a documentary of the success shown by large local companies in the Los Angeles area.

Since then, after a long history of live remotes from plant and industrial sites, the client has expanded the format to two other areas, San Francisco and (next month) Seattle. The scope of this production effort is king-size: 52 half-hour live remotes every year in each of three cities, all under direct supervision of the agency staff. Each program in each market, however, has its own local production, research, writing and camera crew in addition to Richfield assigned representatives.

They scout each market for *Success Story* possibilities, arrange for future reportage via four on-the-spot cameras, stake out their shots and the sequence, write a script, rehearse the show and put it on the air during a top tune-in nighttime period. KTTV set the pattern seven years ago in Los Angeles. In San Francisco, KGO-TV started the program four years ago.

Seattle, the third in what may prove to be an even lengthier city list, will see its first show on KING-TV 7 May.

Both the viewing audience and the company like the series, says Thamer. "In Los Angeles we have, for example, an audience of some 400,000 persons. In San Francisco, we've hit as high as an 18 or 20 ARB rating, and the average is probably 11. In all cases, our audiences are steady and loyal."

But the big bonanza for Richfield is its own success story with these manu-

ARTICLE IN BRIEF

Richfield Oil Corp., Los Angeles, spends \$1 million a year on regional network radio, local tv, spot. Its goal: pre-sell bulk buying prospects, the car driver, its 4,500 affiliated gas stations. Original broadcast patterns have shaped its present personality.

facturing companies and in the reaction of their management groups. The oil company has signed many new accounts on the basis of this initial tv contact. Every big industrialist is a prime prospect for gasoline and oil products, and the Kaiser Steels, Douglas Aircrafts and Superior Honeys in many cases become close friends with Richfield through tv. And, later, many buy Richfield products—in bulk.

One in every four such *Success Story* documentaries, however, is of a public service character. Richfield commercials are minimized, and institutional, in the other three *Success Story* shows. But on this fourth public service program, they are eliminated altogether. For the public service shows the 25 people in the remote crew travel to the Braille Institute for the blind, a Red Cross hospital ship in the San Francisco harbor, the opening of a flower show benefiting charity.

This public service effort in the three *Success Story* cities is an extension of an active community service program which started 10 years ago, long before the network cables were installed and before national programing on peak-interest news events was available.

Richfield set up its own 11-station California network when MacArthur returned from the Philippines, picking up scenes from 10 different remote sites as the general arrived at the San Francisco airport and moved into the center of town for a huge welcoming parade. The sponsor spent \$35,000 for this pickup, an unheard of cost in

those days and one which actually "probably covered only a tenth of total expenses," says Dorr Walsh, v.p. in charge of radio and tv.

"People thought that was the worst buy we ever made and in terms of tv set circulation it probably was," he says. "But it was the greatest buy of all time in terms of results and traceable sales. We had to put on four new girls to take applications for credit cards the very next day."

Richfield covered the Japanese Peace Treaty meetings, aired the Salk polio vaccine report direct from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, sent its tv producers to the national political conventions in '52 for live shows.

Today, the pattern is programing and spot. By far the largest portion of the spot budget goes to tv, although occasionally a radio push will be used for a new product. In spot tv, the client prefers high-rated position to frequency and buys perhaps four announcements per market per week. Three commercials are circulated to a station at the same time to allow for rotation and most of these are animated.

All of the advertising money comes from Richfield's own budget. The only co-op allowance is for heating oil in the Northwest. (This is a pattern quite different from that of the Richfield Oil Corp. of New York, which stresses heavy tv and radio co-op advertising. The two Richfield concerns are in no way connected as each is owned and operated by a different management and stockholder group. Many years ago, however, they were associated as divisions of a single company. See SPONSOR, 29 November 1954, "Richfield co-op plan: 90% goes to radio-tv.")

Fred M. Jordan, advertising manager of Richfield, also directs all sales promotion activities in cooperation with W. G. King Jr., vice president in charge of sales.

Jordan, in commenting recently on his use of television advertising, said: "At its very earliest emergence as an advertising medium, television commanded the attention of Richfield's marketing group. We were among the first to sponsor tv programs here in the West. As the value of the medium has increased, so has its share of our advertising budget. We shall continue to study the most effective methods of getting results from it."



Ad manager of Richfield is Fred M. Jordan, who likes soft-sell approach

Richfield Reporter, on radio 26 years, has featured John Wald for 19

