

# Nat Geo at 10



## SALUTING A DECADE OF EXPLORING SUCCESS

By Julie Liesse

**A**s in true scientific fashion, it started with a strong hypothesis: that consumers who had loved National Geographic magazine, launched in 1888, and had grown up with the TV specials, also would watch a TV network created around the brand.

The hypothesis was brought to life in January 2001, when the National Geographic Channel was launched.

Now, with a decade of ratings and advertising results in hand, the clear conclusion is that NGC has not only cemented a place in the cable TV universe but has also become a leader in nonfiction programming—while expanding and enriching its parent brand.

As the network celebrates its 10th anniversary, John Fahey, president-CEO of the venerable National Geographic Society, says launching the cable network “clearly has been the most important thing we have done in quite a long time.”

What has NGC accomplished?

- Household penetration has grown from 10 million initially, to about 56 million when the channel turned 5, to more than 70 million currently.

- NGC’s live prime-time ratings grew for more than seven straight years, bolstered both by regular series and by specials such as “Inside 9/11,” its 2005 breakthrough coverage of the tragedy and the network’s highest-rated show ever; the April 2006 blockbuster “Gospel of Judas”; and the January 2009 hit “On Board Air Force One.” Current series, including recent hits “Wild Justice” and “Border Wars” and the ongoing “Explorer” anthology, have continued the ratings momentum.

- Like its partner scientists in the field, the network has continually been exploring—in this case, new programming formats and genres. It has expanded from its classic

anthologies and specials to a portfolio of regular series, miniseries, major events and documentary films, with the November premiere of the Sundance Festival Grand Jury prize-winner “Restrepo,” which was just nominated for an Academy Award.

- The network has secured more Emmy Award nominations in the news and documentary category than any other cable network, including 24 nominations in 2008 and 2009, and 19 Emmy nominations in 2010 alone.

- The success and evolving personality of NGC prompted the channel to create a second network, Nat Geo WILD. Launched last March, the channel has already grown to reach 53 million households.

- The channel has built deep relationships with advertisers, offering rich on-air positioning as well as distinctive multiplatform sponsorships that utilize the National Geographic network of assets.

- All of these accomplishments culminated in NGC’s most expansive project ever, the seven-hour programming event “Great Migrations”—a milestone in terms of programming, ratings, sponsorships and global coverage, with content that encompasses all facets of the National Geographic organization.

But the success of National Geographic Channel began a decade ago with good raw material: the brand.

Says independent producer Thom Beers of Original Productions, who has worked with the network on multiple series, “The gold border is everything. It’s the highest mark of integrity in television. For me, it was kind of like the NFL. ... You always knew that they would have their own network.”

The National Geographic brand, and the famed yellow border that for 100 years has graced the cover of the mag-





*"Shark Men," set to debut this spring, follows scientists and anglers who study great white sharks in the wild.*

azine and now appears as the network's signature "bug," stand for "powerful storytelling and unrivaled imagery," says Kiera Hynninen, exec VP-marketing for the network. "This brand is about being smart, relevant, trusted, thought-provoking and entertaining. Those are all really important qualities we want to live up to every day."

One of the critical points of difference for NGC has been its scientific credentials—going back more than 120 years to the creation of the National Geographic Society. "We are the home to passionate explorers, scientists and filmmakers," Ms. Hynninen says. "We don't just cover or produce stories; we also are out there funding and exploring [for] ourselves in creating these programs. We think that's a huge distinction for this network."

Those kinds of scientific credentials give the network's programming team, producers and filmmakers the ability to cover material from the inside. For instance, it was NGC that secured the opportunity to film President-elect Barack Obama on his inaugural flight on Air Force One, for "On Board Air Force One." A Nat Geo team also accompanied U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on 20,000 miles of diplomatic travel around the globe for "Inside the State Department," a one-hour special that ran in November.

Despite the raw power of its brand, the network needed a catalyst to establish a foothold in what a decade ago was "a pretty mature cable TV landscape," says Rich Goldfarb, senior VP-media sales, who was part of the launch team.

The catalyst was the Society's partnership with Fox. "The reality of the cable TV business is that although there might have been a great deal of interest in a National Geographic channel, to be able to gain the distribution in the U.S. and the rest of the world at the time we came in would have been im-

possible without our partnership with Fox," Mr. Fahey says.

Tony Vinciguerra, outgoing chairman-CEO of Fox Networks Group, says, "Nat Geo was one of the biggest cable TV launches ever, getting to 50 million households pretty quickly. But we knew it would be a success because of the brand and its strength around the world.

"We at Fox add the business side to the equation, but we have trusted the Nat Geo team as the moral compass. It's remarkable how well this partnership has worked."

Another part of what has made the channel stand out in the marketplace is its connection with advertisers. "What I think we do as well as anyone is create very, very strong customized solutions for advertisers," says channel President Steve Schiffman. "By doing that, we're able to allow the advertiser to leverage the equity of the National Geographic brand in a way they might not have even realized when they had an initial conversation with us."

Brad Dancer, senior VP-research & digital media and one of the original staff for the network launch, says he knew Nat Geo had officially become a big deal in August 2005, when the "Inside 9/11" special ran. "We were the No. 1 nonfiction network of the night—our ratings were 700 percent above average," he says. "It struck me then that there were a lot of people watching this network, and I realized how relevant and important we had become."

Nat Geo followed up with other big event specials, including "Gospel of Judas" and "Into the Lost Crystal Caves." As the channel has grown, however, it has broadened its focus to include new weekly series. Steve Burns, exec VP-content, says over the last three years the network has

tripled the number of series it runs, and will have 27 series in the coming year. Recent hit series include "Border Wars" and "Wild Justice," the highest-rated series premiere in the network's history, reaching 3.2 million people with back-to-back telecasts of the show.

An important component of the network's programming evolution has been a closer working relationship with other parts of the National Geographic family, particularly the parent magazine. Big stories and projects, including "Great Migrations," "Gospel of Judas" and "Waking the Baby Mammoth," are regularly featured as cover stories in the magazine to complement on-air specials—and vice versa.

NGC has also pushed to make its content available on other platforms. The network, for example, was an early proponent of video on demand. Each month Nat Geo offers 30 hours of programming on its video-on-demand network and 10 hours for Nat Geo WILD.

Likewise, a complementary website, [www.natgeotv.com](http://www.natgeotv.com), was created at the debut of the network 10 years ago. But it has grown dramatically over the years and now is hosting 4,000 pieces of video. The website was redesigned in 2007 to offer expanded opportunities for advertisers as well as an enhanced TV schedule, blogs, games and webisodes. Other digital platforms include minisites, mobile content and an active presence on Facebook and Twitter.

Says Mr. Schiffman, "The National Geographic brand has been around for more than 120 years. We have been the window on the world for people for a long, long time on a worldwide basis. Our mission is to inspire people to care about the planet, and the National Geographic Channel has provided a tremendous amount of reach to satisfy that curiosity people have about the planet." □



**CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY**



2001      2002      2003      2004

**JANUARY**  
National Geographic Channel launches with 10 million subscribers.

**SEPTEMBER**  
"Into the Forbidden Zone," with best-selling author Sebastian Junger, runs. Show features rare interview with anti-Taliban guerilla leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was assassinated on the eve of 9/11.

**JULY**  
"Inside the Pentagon" runs, offering a historical look at the institution, including the 9/11 attack aftermath.



**SEPTEMBER**  
NGC receives its first National Emmy Award for "Inside Base Camp."

**JANUARY**  
NGC launches in New York on Time Warner's analog cable service.  
  
NGC VOD becomes available.

**APRIL**  
"Surviving Everest" runs, documenting the 50th anniversary of the Everest expedition, which includes the sons of Everest pioneers.

**NOVEMBER**  
Cox becomes final MSO to carry the network.

**JUNE**  
"Return to the Titanic" runs with Titanic discoverer Robert Ballard; includes live broadcast from 12,000 feet below sea level.



**JULY**  
NGC surpasses 50 million households, fourth-fastest

network to reach this milestone.

**OCTOBER**  
First 1.0 household rating with "Inside the U.S. Secret Service."

**DECEMBER**  
NGC closes the year with fastest-growing ratings of all networks, broadcast and cable, according to Nielsen—four consecutive quarters of record ratings.

Getty Images/Stockphoto



# Q&A

## NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL'S STEVE SCHIFFMAN

**As National Geographic Channel** celebrates its 10th anniversary, Steve Schiffman, who has been general manager and president of the network for the past four years, talked to writer Julie Liesse about the channel's growth in the past decade and what the future holds. An edited transcript of their conversation follows.

**Advertising Age:** What are the key factors that have made NGC such a success over the past decade?

**Steve Schiffman:** Like any consumer-oriented business, it's about the brand. The National Geographic brand is trusted, it's respected, it is authoritative; and most consumers have had some affiliation with this media brand in some platform. But 10 years ago, the TV exposure was through individual shows, on other cable channels, branded "National Geographic."

In January 2001, consumers for the first time had a channel dedicated to National Geographic that they could see virtually every hour of the day in the United States and turn to quality programming—programming that finds a balance between knowledge and entertainment. In a time when there's a lot of content that is not as quality-oriented, National Geographic Channel answers to a higher authority through very strict standards and practices, which authenticate factual accuracy, the appropriateness and its linkage to various scientific discoveries. I believe that there is a strong core audience around the world, but particularly in the United States, looking for content like that. National Geographic has been able to connect with those consumers in a very positive way.

**Ad Age:** How important is this validation—the National Geographic Society's seal of approval, so to speak?

**Mr. Schiffman:** We've done a lot of research over the last 10 years to help everyone in this campus understand how consumers view the National Geographic brand. The things we hear, regardless of which city we are in, are "trusted," "authoritative," "authentic," "an absolute commitment to quality," "spectacular visuals," "compelling" and "great storytelling." National Geographic Channel is part of the living, breathing institution here at 17th and M streets in Washington. This institution involves real, modern-day explorers—as we're having this conversation, there are about 300 teams in the field, around the world, funded through National Geographic mission programs. It's very symbiotic, because some of those expeditions actually become programs on our channel. We're the only cable entity that has a scientific institution at its core; it's part of our DNA.

**Ad Age:** Looking at all of the incarnations of National Geographic available now, how do they work together to provide content—whether that's cable, print, online, DVDs, video on demand or everything else?

**Mr. Schiffman:** The one thing that races into my mind is "Great Migrations," one of the most ambitious undertakings for this entire institution. This was unprecedented: It was the cover of the magazine; it was a landmark show on the National Geographic Channel; it had numerous online articles that went more in-depth. There were books for all demographic groups, maps, online games, a custom iPad application. So it was available across every medium where an individual could consume content.

**Ad Age:** With all these cross-platform offerings, there are a lot of opportunities for sponsors as well as for the content you're offering. How do you integrate your sponsors and advertisers into all the content that's available?

**Mr. Schiffman:** We have a dedicated ad sales marketing team that works closely with our sales organization and with marketing. They work with advertisers and our individual shows to find the right fit in terms of what the advertiser's positioning might be—it may tie to a particular air positioning, to a particular show or talent. We create very, very strong, customized solutions for advertisers; and by doing that, we're able to allow the advertiser to leverage the equity of the Nat Geo brand in ways they might not have even realized when they initially had that conversation with us.

**Ad Age:** What has your partnership with Fox meant to your growth?

**Mr. Schiffman:** Each partner brings complementary skills to the joint venture, and for Fox, they have an exceptional track record launching and running effective, competitive and, ultimately, successful networks. They have leverage in the landscape, which helped make NGC one of the fastest cable launches ever. Our ad sales team has consistently exceeded its business plan and outpaced the market. And our network operations are exceptionally tight and effective. Combining those strong business aspects with one of the most respected content brands in the world has been a highly successful formula that has helped fuel NGC's growth across all metrics.

**Ad Age:** The cable television landscape has changed dramatically over the past decade. As you look down the road, what do you see in terms of growth for NGC?

**Mr. Schiffman:** Our channel currently is in 71 million homes. There's room to grow the number of homes we're in, to be able to expose National Geographic to a larger audience. As we grow, I see us being able to increase our budget, to invest more in the channel and grow our ratings, and ultimately increase the impressions we're able to deliver to advertisers. That will make our channel even more of a relevant media buy—bringing an audience that is special and unique to a media buyer and to an advertiser wanting to touch and reach a quality audience.

When I take a look at all the various media choices out there, the National Geographic Channel really is a quality destination. Advertisers, viewers, affiliates all understand that our content is quality content.

In a fragmented universe, where people are watching a lot of different content choices across lots of different platforms, trusted and valued brands win. We have a brand that's going to win. □



Steve Schiffman  
President, National  
Geographic Networks

2005

### JANUARY

Highly acclaimed, award-winning signature series "Explorer" moves to NGC.

### AUGUST

NGC breaks ratings record with "Inside 9/11," which remains the channel's highest-rated program ever.



2006

### JANUARY

NGC-HD launches as a hi-def simulcast of the linear network.

### APRIL

The National Geographic Society publicly reveals the only known surviving copy of the Gospel of Judas; 7 million people tune in for the TV special "The Gospel of Judas."



2007

### MARCH

Steve Schiffman is named general manager of NGC.

### DECEMBER

NGC achieves its highest-rated year in prime time among households and target demos, continuing the trend of improved year-over-year ratings gains across all metrics since its launch.

2008

### APRIL

Website [www.natgeotv.com](http://www.natgeotv.com) adds a fully interactive TV schedule with more than 800 hours of video and 2,000 photos.

### AUGUST

The pop culture phenomenon "Dog Whisperer With Cesar Millan" celebrates 100 episodes.

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Board of Governors bestows its prestigious Governors Award on

NGC's "Preserve Our Planet" campaign.

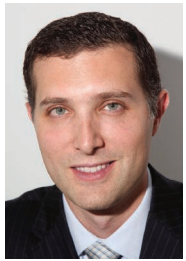
### NOVEMBER

The first Expedition Week is launched.



# Ad Partners Speak Out

**DAVID CAMPANELLI**  
VP-Director, National TV  
Horizon Media, New York



We've purchased the network for Geico since it launched, so we were an early advertiser.

It began in 2009 with "minisodes" about how geckos are unlike humans,

spots that highlighted geckos' broad attributes and wove Geico into the message. They starred Brady Barr, the host of National Geographic Channel's "Dangerous Encounters," and had a Nat Geo feel and a Geico sense of humor. The minisodes were featured in Geico's run of schedule across the network. Geico was also the title sponsor of "Dangerous Encounters" and "Wild." Our partnership was extended with a gecko game on natgeo.com, a map of the U.S. in the magazine that highlighted zoos with gecko exhibits and Mr. Brady hosting an employee event at Geico headquarters.

This year we did another series of minisodes with him, and Geico sponsored the exhibit "Geckos: Tails to Toepads" at National Geographic headquarters.

The partnership gets easier and better every year as we learn more about each other. National Geographic Channel has been able to take the value that Geico brings to the table and marry it with what National Geographic has to offer. Their smart creativity has made for a really good partnership fit.

National Geographic is a really strong brand with a lot of history. We recognized the value in being associated with a brand like that—it's why we jumped on the network from the start and have grown together.

It's been nothing but a positive working relationship, and one we absolutely look to continue as we move forward.

**MIKE DAVIS**  
Executive Producer  
Brand Arc, West Los Angeles, Calif.



We've done branded integration for Toyota with National Geographic Channel for three years. You'll see branded vignettes—which are thematic in nature toward the tone of the network

and the brand—running across the network and not just in particular programs.

Nat Geo is a highly targeted type of network, and that helps with our strategy. It allows us to fine-tune our content and fine-tune the way we market.

An example of integration across the network involved the launch of the Toyota Sienna. The tonality and messaging about the vehicle was consistent with the tone of the network with outdoors, nature and family themes. We ran those vignettes a couple hundred times over a six-month period.

The tone at Toyota is innovation and technology, and that's what we think National Geographic Channel is: very innovative and educational in tone.

What we enjoy about working with Nat Geo is that it's a very, very communicative network. There are very few surprises. We prepare a lot before the vignettes are produced. When a brand has multiple agencies involved, Nat Geo is very good about marrying all the factors and making sure everyone's on board. Nat Geo is highly collaborative in the production of the vignettes; lots of group decisions are made. Right now we're working on some new things on the media side for this broadcast year. We're talking about creating more specific vignettes down the road. National Geographic Channel is a pretty unique network. There aren't a lot of networks like them, and if you're looking for that demo like Toyota is, it's a good place to go.

**ETHAN HEFTMAN**  
Senior VP-Director, National Broadcast Initiative, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta



Our relationship with National Geographic Channel started at the beginning of 2009, as our Home Depot client is very mindful of its media partners and the business impact each idea or

campaign must have—Nat Geo had matured to the point where we felt they could deliver this type of performance for Home Depot.

We're very careful about network and program selection. It's not just about the demographics. For Home Depot, it's about home ownership, and National Geographic has done a great job delivering home owners. We're in our second season partnering on "World's Toughest Fixes," running vignettes about the world's simplest fixes within the show—host Sean Riley goes into a Home Depot store and talks about something you can do this weekend.

It's working very well for us. The partnership is about driving sales. We discuss how to match what we're pushing in commercials, online, in our circulars; and a custom vignette series is a very good way to make it happen. Production and placement flexibility are what we value.

The vignettes are shot at Home Depot stores. Whatever store we choose to shoot in still has to deliver its numbers for that day or week—the shoot can't interrupt them. National Geographic is very sensitive to that.

I like National Geographic's willingness to come up with good ideas. They may be a mature network now, but they haven't lost their hunger to figure out what works for advertisers. I've worked with them for other clients, and they're always looking for ways to integrate those clients as appropriate, to tell stories that benefit them and their clients.

**BARBARA PONCE**  
Manager-Corporate & Diversity Advertising  
American Honda Motor Co., Torrance, Calif.



Honda and Acura have been working with National Geographic Channel for about 10 years, but recently we marked our first time partnering with the channel on a presenting-sponsor level with "Great Migrations," which debuted Nov. 7.

We felt "Great Migrations" reflected the brand philosophy of both Honda and National Geographic Channel regarding environmental sensitivity, awareness and responsibility. The theme of mobility made perfect sense for us because, first and foremost, Honda is a mobility company.

We've had a very robust, integrated, 360° marketing partnership with "Great Migrations": TV, online, print, radio, out of home and special events. We're included in the DVD release and video on demand; we've seen "Great Migrations" incorporated into educational materials for schools and an exhibit for commuters at [New York's] Grand Central Station—the epitome of mobility, a place where people could pause and reflect on mobility, both human and animal, and be reminded that we share the planet. Honda had been organically integrated into all materials.

We're ecstatic about future opportunities on relevant topics. What I've enjoyed most about working with National Geographic Channel is the true feeling of partnership. I never once felt like an advertiser writing a check. It's important for me to look at sponsorships that align the brand with uplifting programming, programming in line with our philosophy as a company. Contextually, where our brand appears is increasingly important, and that's certainly represented with our "Great Migrations" sponsorship.

## 2009

### JANUARY

"On Board Air Force One," with exclusive access to President-elect Obama boarding his first official flight, is NGC's highest-rated one-hour premiere.

January '09 is NGC's highest-rated month ever in prime time.

### APRIL

"Waking the Baby Mammoth" premieres, studying the best-preserved baby mammoth ever discovered, reaches 5.2 million viewers.



"Explorer: Inside Guantanamo" offers in-depth portrait of the detention center, with access inside the prison for nearly three weeks.

### JUNE

NGC receives highest score for quality and is ranked No. 1 for trust among all cable net-

works in Harris Interactive Equitrend study.

### JULY

NGC receives 19 Emmy nominations for news and documentaries and a total of 24 Emmy nominations in 2008 and 2009—the most award nominations of any cable network.

### OCTOBER

The first-ever global tagline and branding campaign, "live curious," is rolled out.

## 2010

### MARCH

Nat Geo WILD debuts.

### APRIL

NGC signature series "Explorer" celebrates a quarter century on the air. For the sixth consecutive year, viewers rank NGC as the No. 1 network to see in high definition.

### NOVEMBER

"Inside the State Department" special provides a behind-the-scenes perspective

on the mission of the U.S. Department of State, including Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Largest cross-platform initiative in National Geographic history, "Great Migrations," is rolled out.

"Wild Justice" becomes the highest-rated series premiere in the network's history.

## 2011

### JANUARY

"Alaska State Troopers" is NGC's highest rated returning series ever.



NGC announces it will feature two Expedition Weeks in 2011, with double the premieres for the spring event.



# Building Opportunities

**In its first decade**, National Geographic Channel opened a world of opportunities to advertisers—and the network is mapping new sponsorship ideas every year.

Rich Goldfarb, senior VP-media sales, says the network always has benefited from the brand equity inherent in the National Geographic brand halo. “The brand has a lot of core attributes that advertisers want to be associated with. It is a beacon of trust and quality.”

As a result, from the very beginning 10 years ago, Mr. Goldfarb says, the National Geographic Channel “started to develop relationships with advertisers that still last today.”

Companies can choose from a wide, intriguing menu of advertising and sponsorship opportunities at Nat Geo TV:

## Pillars

A few years ago the network’s sales team developed the concept of programming “pillars.” Says Mr. Goldfarb, “The channel has an overarching tonality and a demographic characteristic that tends to be very upscale and more heavily male. But within that we have incredible diversity of programming—so that on any given evening or particular series the programming environment can feel very different.”

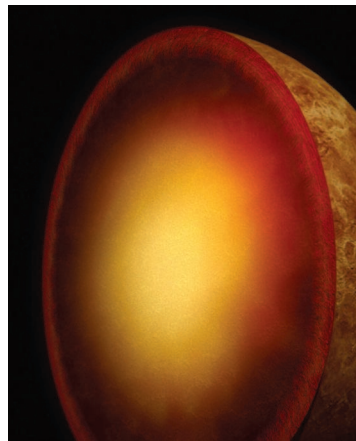
The pillars offer companies a chance to advertise on groups of programs with similar topics and flavors as well as “precision-targeted” audience characteristics. For instance, the Great Quest pillar includes the network’s signature event, Expedition Week.

During last year’s TV upfront market, NGC offered advertisers buys in eight different pillars—ranging from Extreme Engineering to Sci-Tech to Amazing Journeys and Preserve Our Planet. Each pillar offers a different slice of the Nat Geo TV audience.

## Lead sponsorships

In its big programming events, such as November’s “Great Migrations,” NGC offers exclusive partnership levels for advertisers. The goal, Mr. Goldfarb says, is to “meld our advertisers with our content so that they feel like a seam-

*Upcoming programs:  
“Known Universe,”  
“Last Land of the Tiger”  
(Expedition Week) and  
“The Egyptian Job.”*



Congratulations on your first decade of runaway success.

# 10



From your friends at National Geographic Television, the documentary production arm of National Geographic.





*Rich Goldfarb  
Senior VP-media sales,  
National Geographic  
Networks*

less fit with the event. In ‘Great Migrations,’ we took our lead sponsors—Honda and UPS—to a new level of impact and richness with contextual relevance.”

He says the network purposefully had only four advertisers in the seven-hour “Great Migrations” event to reduce clutter and focus on the lead sponsors.

**Nat Geo WILD**

Last year, the company launched a second cable TV network, Nat Geo WILD, which already is in 53 million homes. Focusing on “getting closer” to wildlife, Nat Geo WILD offers advertisers programming that is more family-focused.

**International, pan-regional or global opportunities**

The National Geographic Channel is available in 166 countries and 34 languages, representing more than 330 million homes.

The channel can offer pan-regional or global sponsorships to meet an advertiser’s needs; UPS, for instance, was a pan-regional advertiser with the “Great Migrations” series.

“We take a look at their goals, what consumers or markets they want to reach,” says Kiera Hynninen, exec VP-marketing. “Then we look at whether that message is best on TV only or should include other National Geographic assets, like the magazine, or digital opportunities. We will make sure we find a solution for them.”

**Cross-platform opportunities**

In addition to the cable networks, the National Geographic family includes many layers of media properties, such as the venerable magazine and its offshoots, National Geographic Traveler, Kids and Explorer; video on demand; the “überwebsite” nationalgeographic.com and individual show mi-

crosites; applications for the iPhone and iPad; online games; and other resources—for example a live lecture series or opportunities to sponsor a scientific mission.

“There is a treasure trove of National Geographic assets we work with,” Mr. Goldfarb says. “We make them modular and scalable so that every advertiser can find an ownership opportunity that is appropriate, with a presence at multiple touch points. But what makes our 360° marketing opportunities unique is that they are linked under a single, powerful brand,” he says.

**On-air personalities**

NGC uses its TV personalities in special vignettes that add punch to an advertiser’s presence on the channel. For instance, the network created special short pieces for Home Depot featuring Sean Riley of the series “World’s Toughest Fixes.” “We showed Sean at a Home Depot,” recalls Mr. Goldfarb. “In the series he works on crazy big projects like nuclear reactors. ... It was a great touch to place him at a Home Depot talking about a homeowner’s own toughest fixes.”

Similarly, herpetologist Brady Barr of “Dangerous Encounters” was featured in specially created vignettes discussing geckos—sponsored, of course, by insurance company Geico. An online How to Be Like a Gecko game also is sponsored by Geico. “We view these as high-impact partnership opportunities,” Ms. Hynninen says. “It’s all about how we integrate our brand and the advertiser’s brand.”

When an advertiser chooses National Geographic Channel, Mr. Goldfarb says, “You know the audience you are getting and the program environment. As an advertiser you can have an ownership position on this channel for a much lower investment level than many other networks.

“A growing number of advertisers are looking for substance in their media partners,” he says. “This is a brand that provides substance and an audience with purchasing power and influence.” □

# THANK YOU

TO THE AD COMMUNITY FOR 10 GREAT YEARS OF VALUED SUPPORT,  
ENABLING OUR VIEWERS TO LIVE CURIOUS.



TENTH ANNIVERSARY





# A Channel With a Mission

By Linda Moss

**A baby woolly mammoth**, 40,000 years old and almost perfectly preserved, is discovered in Siberia. The only known copy of an ancient gospel, which paints apostle Judas Iscariot as a hero rather than a villain, is conserved and authenticated. The purpose of mysterious Stonehenge is explained.

The science that the National Geographic Society finances can be sexy: It makes headlines, and is intriguing and alluring enough to draw TV viewers. That's why the National Geographic Society was true to its mission 10 years ago when it formed a joint venture with the Fox Cable Networks, part of News Corp., to launch the National Geographic Channel in the U.S.

Since its inception more than 100 years ago, the National Geographic Society's goal has been to not only make scientific breakthroughs and groundbreaking discoveries about the geography of the world but to educate the public about the findings of its bold explorers and their field expeditions.

"From the moment we were founded in 1888, part of the mission was to disseminate information, to communicate information," says Terry Garcia, exec VP-mission programs at National Geographic Society.

"And basically back then the way it worked was we would fund an explorer, they would go out and then would return to Washington headquarters and report their findings," he says. "Initially they did it by lectures but then we used the [National Geographic] magazine because that was the technology of the day. So now we use television and other electronic means to disseminate the information from our researchers and explorers.

"A lot of our grants had supported the basic research and findings that went into our show," Mr. Garcia says. "It was a collaboration that drew on work of scientists, explorers and filmmakers whom we had supported over the years. ... It allowed us to tell what we thought was a great story, and it also allowed us to highlight biodiversity, an aspect of nature that many people aren't aware of."

NGC U.S. and the Nat Geo networks internationally contribute 30 percent of their profits toward financing the society's ongoing scientific explorations.

The National Geographic Society hands out 300 to 400 grants a year, totaling \$10 million to \$15 million, to pay for everything from very esoteric research to field expeditions whose discoveries make news around the globe, Mr. Garcia says.

## Funding science and programming

These missions have generated compelling TV programming for NGC, such as the authentication and analysis of the only surviving copy of the Gospel of Judas.

In "The Gospel of Judas," a writer came across a tip that eventually led the society to the controversial ancient document, the only known surviving copy, Mr. Garcia says. With funding from the society, and using state-of-the-art technology, the priceless manuscript was scientifically authenticated and preserved over a year.

"As a result of our intervention, we were able to conserve a document that was in danger of disappearing forever," Mr. Garcia says. "And as a result of that project, we told an amazing story."

"The hallmarks of our great brand [National Geographic] are beautiful imagery, compelling storytelling, definitive reporting," says Steve Burns, exec VP-content for NGC and Nat Geo WILD.

"[The society funds] actual science with hardcore research and new discoveries," Mr. Burns says. "We often piggyback on their great resources because, at any one time, they will have several hundred explorers, researchers [and] biologists out in the field working. So we are able to pick the best projects that are the most relevant and entertaining to a TV audience."

Juliet Blake, NGC's senior VP-production & development, says she delights in having access to explorers and scientists who are making breakthrough findings all over the world.

"I feel very fortunate to have this rather exciting toy box to play with," she says. "What we try to do is to take those people and to take some of the



scientific discoveries and turn them into really exciting television."

That means NGC has to create programming that's informative but also relevant to today's world.

"Our job is to stand at the front of the society's mission, make sure that we are contemporizing it and keeping it interesting to a wider public," Ms. Blake says. □

*"Waking the Baby Mammoth," was developed after the National Geographic Society was approached about the discovery of a frozen baby mammoth.*

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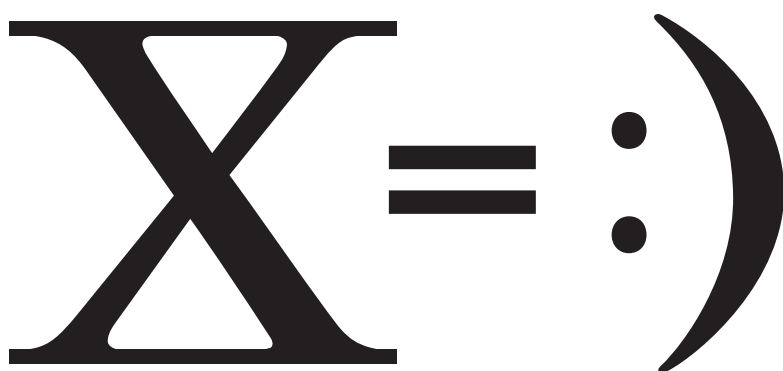


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# Global Reach

By Linda Moss

**With National Geographic's** domestic and international TV networks, as well as the National Geographic Society, the sum truly is greater than its parts. It's a big empire, with NGC available in more than 330 million homes in 166 countries.

There has been no better example of that than the global initiatives that resulted in "Great Migrations," the miniseries shown around the world last November. The miniseries—which tracked the epic migrations of animals large and small, such as elephants in Mali and army ants in Costa Rica—was supported across a multitude of cross-platform initiatives.

Those included a cover story in National Geographic magazine; features in National Geographic Traveler and National Geographic Kids magazines; a 300-page book with more than 200 photos; a kids' book; online content and coverage; iPhone apps; "Great Migrations" maps; and an exhibit at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C.

"'Great Migrations' had everything going for it," says Steve Burns, exec VP-content for NGC and Nat Geo WILD. "It had the biggest promotional effort in the channel's history. It had the great resources of both Fox and the National Geographic Society, with a title in the [main] magazine and support by all the magazines."

The project reflected the strategy of NGC and NGCI under the leadership of David Haslingden, who served as CEO of both National Geographic Channels Worldwide and Fox International Channels until earlier this month when he was promoted to president-chief operating officer of Fox Networks Group.

"Global collaboration makes good, efficient business sense and lays the groundwork for expanding on the tremendous success of the networks of National Geographic, both in the U.S. and international markets," Mr. Haslingden says.

## The benefits of collaboration

During the past few years, NGC and NGCI executed their first global branding campaign and stepped up the cooperation and coordination between the two units to better mobilize and leverage their resources.

This has translated to better programming, and more creative and effective marketing, Mr. Haslingden says.

"We've been able to increase our budgets and the quality of what we've brought to air in the long-form programming," he says. "The on-air spots and promotion and the ancillary pieces—like print ads, rich-media ads, online content, press materials and press junkets—have all been higher quality because we've had more people working on them. And we've been able to apply more money to the specific priority projects."

Among the structural changes was creating a unified development team shepherding programming for the U.S. and international networks.

"By being able to do development globally and commission globally, we can move more quickly and efficiently on projects," Mr. Haslingden says. "And we could bring more money to specific projects that we thought would really resonate with our audience."

National Geographic is also expanding its brand by launching new networks. Nat Geo WILD, dedicated solely to wildlife programming, debuted in the U.S. last spring, and is the first of the global Nat Geo networks to move into the U.S. market. Replacing For Reality, WILD had one of the most successful launches in the history of cable and is earning ratings that are almost 33% higher than Fox Reality's, says Geoffrey Daniels, senior VP of Nat Geo WILD and NGCI.

"We only launch networks where we believe there is a place for them in the market," Mr. Haslingden says. "We felt wildlife was a category that really deserved an entire channel." □