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INHERITANCE EFFECTS IN LAUNCHING NEW SITCOMS

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Abstract

Commercial television networks have long relied on the inheritance effect of successful programs to launch new shows. An extended case study was undertaken to determine the effects of lead-in launching, based on historical data from published Nielsen program ratings. The findings suggest that content compatibility and inheritance effects help explain program success.

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NBC Entertainment President Warren Littlefield has compared his network's use of "Must See TV" shows on Thursday nights (e.g., Seinfeld and Friends) to the launching of successful payloads at Cape Canaveral (Lesly, 1997). Although the Cape has a lower failure rate, the networks continue to rely on present success to launch future success.

Audience flow strategies (lead-in, hammocking, transition effects) are well-documented in television research. Eastman, Newton and Riggs (1997) provide a useful history of scholarly and industry studies on the effectiveness of placing a weaker show immediately after a stronger program. With very few exceptions, however, research has focused on the entire population of prime-time programs, frequently over an extended period of time. While attention to the global aspects of program lead-in has laid the foundation for structural theories (e.g., Webster & Phalen, 1997, p. 45), a less "macro" approach that examines the launching process for new prime-time shows should tease out additional subtleties of a time-honored practice by the commercial networks. To that end, this article seeks to uncover the predictors of launching a new network sitcom, identifying the variables for success.

Advertising economics provides an important justification for more accurately predicting the success or failure of television programs. Sitcoms generate huge revenues for their networks. By

1994, upfront sales of advertising time in prime time surpassed the \$4 billion mark (Robins, 1994). In recent years, broadcast networks have been able to take advantage of the repeal of financial interest regulations to increase their share of profits in successful shows. Since 1995, production studios and broadcast networks have moved into closer alliances, with networks finding studio owners (e.g., ABC in Disney) and studios starting networks (e.g., the WB by Warner Brothers). In the 1996-1997 season, for example, NBC owned 4 of its own series. The following season found NBC with twice that number, many in choice timeslots, and the total time of network-owned prime-time rose to 29 hours (Schneider, 1997). By the 1998-1999 season, the percentage of in-house or co-productions among the six television networks had risen from 39 in the previous season to 42 percent (Stroud, 1998).

Situation comedies, or sitcoms, were chosen for this study because these half-hour programs are frequently the target of flow strategies. Sitcoms are often the most costly programs to produce (per prime-time minute) because of their audience popularity. Networks nearly always protect new sitcoms by scheduling them at the bottom of the hour in timeslots that follow established comedies, taking advantage of the inheritance effect of the stronger show (Webster, 1985). Hour-long dramas and news programs, on the other hand, rely more heavily on counterprogramming strategies or on promotion and advertising, especially when an hour-long program leads off the prime time evening opposite sitcoms on competing networks, or when it appears

during the final hour of prime time after earlier sitcoms (e.g., ER and NYPD Blue).

Most previous studies on inheritance effects depend heavily on correlational evidence (Boemer, 1987; Cooper, 1993; Tiedge & Ksobiech, 1986; Walker, 1988; Webster, 1985) while others use statistical modeling (e.g., Rust & Albert, 1984; Rust, Kamakura & Albert, 1992). One study (Ferguson, 1992) devised an inheritance score to measure the impact of a single pair of programs. Specifically, the audience share of the lead-out program is divided by the share delivered to it by the lead-in show, and then multiplied times 100. For example, if Seinfeld garners a 22 share and Veronica's Closet drops down to an 18 share, the result (indicating the proportionate drop) would be $18/22$ or 0.818. After moving the decimal point and rounding, the inheritance score is 82. Ferguson reported that typical surviving shows scored higher than 80, but did not explore other scheduling variables.

NBC researcher Horace Stipp (personal conversation, 1997) corroborated the idea of "dropping share" and identified several other considerations used by NBC. Stipp listed (1) original episode (versus repeat telecast), (2) program-type compatibility of lead-in to lead-out, (3) seamless transitions, (4) audience composition, and (5) negotiated deals with the producers of existing hit shows. Eastman et al. (1994, 1995, 1996, 1997) have also studied the influence of program compatibility and seamless transitions. Henry and Rinne (1984) also studied compatibility

but only with regard to format similarity. Likewise, Webster (1985) demonstrated the influence of program type similarity.

For this study, compatibility is defined as a measure of how closely two shows resemble one another in terms of program (format) type, target audience demographics, specific genre type, content type, subtlety of approach, and character casting. Classifying two shows as compatible is too vague if the format (e.g., comedy) is identical, because comedies come in many different flavors (e.g., ethnic, farce, situation, fantasy, ensemble, star-driven, urban, family, occupational, etc.). To the degree that two shows are a close fit on two or more of these characteristics, the pairing can be described as compatible.

This study is not concerned directly with transition effects but with the underlying reasons why some shows fail and others succeed when given a fail-safe time slot following a very popular program that even "television avoiders" find time to watch. The method used is a secondary analysis of ratings data, plus a simple inventory of exemplar programs and the shows that they help launch. The primary independent variables that gauge success are the inheritance scores and content compatibility. The dependent variable is eventual multi-season renewal or transplantation of the launched program.

Although the macro-level effect of the lead-in ratings or shares of all shows on each and every subsequent lead-out program represents the aggregate success of lead-in strategies in a changing media environment, a micro-level examination of high-

profile "launched" shows should answer some smaller questions about why some shows succeed and other fail when protected by a strong lead-in.

Method

Procedure and sample. The sampling frame encompassed the fall network schedules for a seven-year period, 1991 to 1997. Although cable networks also launch new shows each year, this study focused on broadcast networks because scheduling and promotional strategies for their programs receive the most attention and largest budgets. An additional \$100 million (per network) was spent on network promotion for prime time in fall 1996 alone (Elliott, 1996).

Programs examined were limited to new situation comedies scheduled immediately following established programs. Although networks also launch many one-hour dramas and information-based programs, these shows begin at breakpoints (9 p.m. and 10 p.m. Eastern time) when many more (and often more established) shows are beginning, thus rendering the lead-in effect weaker.

Shows were measured for no more than eight weeks, depending on the debut date and interruptions by post-season baseball championship series. The intent was to avoid measurement during the November sweeps period when new struggling shows are frequently put on hiatus. The launch is most volatile during the initial few weeks; at the point where additional time is needed for the show to grow (or die) the launch analogy recedes but

measurement becomes more reliable. All episodes were originals; none were repeats in order to control one of Stipp's variables.

Raw inheritance scores are reported in Table 1. Special average scores reducing each set of inheritance scores to a single number are reported in Table 2. If the show never made it to a fifth telecast, the existing scores from Table 1 were simply averaged. If the show went five or more shows before the start of the November sweeps, only the shows after the first three heavily-promoted shows were included. Other predictors are also shown in Table 2.

Programs were grouped by five types based on three variables: the strength of the lead-in show, the viability of the network, and the time period. For example, viewing levels (measured by Homes Using Television, or HUT) are much lower Friday and Saturday nights than Sunday through Thursday. The big-three networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) attract larger potential audiences by virtue of stronger affiliates and somewhat higher audience expectations than at Fox. This study did not examine new shows on UPN or the WB networks. The five situation types were the following:

- A big-three, high-HUT, highly-ranked lead-in
- B big-three, high-HUT, lower-ranked lead-in
- C big-three, low-HUT
- D Fox Network, high-HUT
- E Fox Network, low-HUT

Friday and Saturday nights traditionally have low-viewing so "low-HUT" was the designation exclusively for those nights.

Data were collected from the full weekly Nielsen reports as published in Broadcasting & Cable magazine or newspapers like USA Today. Inheritance scores were computed using Ferguson's (1992) method of dividing the share of the launched program by the share of the lead-in show, and then multiplying times 100. Shares are generally used by programmers instead of ratings because shares are less dependent on the size of the potential audience. A share at 8:30 is thus comparable to a share at 8:00 even though the total available audience may grow considerably between early and later parts of prime time.

Other variables included the compatibility of a program pair, ranked into three levels: clearly similar, somewhat similar, and clearly dissimilar. Although each program studied here is a situation comedy, the particular genre varied by target audience (narrow versus broad appeal), comedic approach (subtle versus broad), and casting (similar versus dissimilar). Pairs which scored similar on all of these variable were coded 1 and those which scored on one or none were coded 3 in the tables. Unclear comparisons, either mildly similar or mildly dissimilar, were coded 2. Intercoder reliability was higher than .85 for all coding.

Program ownership was tracked to check for the influence of network ownership or network bias toward a particular program producer. This variable, though influential on occasion, was not expected to explain much of the variance; it was included to address industry concerns.

For analysis purposes, the success of shows was grouped into six categories: hit (top-10 weekly ranking), strategic winner (leading to future use as a breakpoint show), winner (running two full seasons), loser (running less than two seasons), weak loser (cancelled before sweeps and only being brought back, maybe, during the summer) and failure (a "bomb" that quickly vanishing and never returning). Previous studies have used new season renewal as a measure of success, but because networks in the 1990s are more likely to stay with a marginal show into a second season than they were in the 1980s, completion of the second season is now key. In economic terms, shows are successful only upon reaching the fifth season when the number of episodes permits five-per-week scheduling (stripping) in syndication.

Results

The number of shows correctly predicted by inheritance scores and other measures are expressed as percentage explained in Table 3. Because this study sought only an exploratory model of launching new sitcoms, interactions were not tested.

Some unusual circumstances affected the average inheritance scores. For example, Martin Short ran only three times but its initial telecast was on a different night than usual following an extraordinary hit (Seinfeld), but sank quickly with a Wings lead-in. Other times a show (e.g., All-American Girl) benefitted not only from a moderate lead-in (Thunder Alley) but also a lead-out that was a former top-ten show (Roseanne).

Different seasons reflected different realities. The 1995 season saw several shows produced by one network for another: Caroline in the City on NBC but owned by CBS, If Not for You on CBS but owned by ABC (Disney), and Misery Loves Company on Fox but owned by ABC (Disney). Though largely unintended, this situation has grown with the establishment of new fledgling networks (UPN and the WB) by major studios (Paramount and Warner).

The 1996 season witnessed two defections from 1995: In the House from NBC to UPN and Naked Truth from ABC to NBC. The former sitcom is still owned by NBC but the latter show is independently produced. An inspection of the seven-year list of program owners (see Table 2) further shows that 9 of 13 sitcoms (69.2%) produced by networks were scheduled after highly-rated sitcoms (e.g., The Single Guy after Friends).

The Bombs. Only 8 of the 12 failures (66.7%) were predicted solely by average inheritance scores, indicating perhaps that true disasters have multiple causes. Martin Short and If Not For You self-destructed with less than 80% on one of the final two telecasts despite higher-than-normal averages (probably boosted by heavier sampling early on). Thus, extremely short-lived programs are more skewed and escape the special averaging used in this study. The remaining two bombs (Common Law and Over the Top) were anomalies, both victims of very low shares and, in the case of the latter, a failed romance between the producer and a network executive.

Using compatibility as a measure, 9 of the 12 (75%) failures were predicted solely by dissimilarity. For failures, an either/or combination of inheritance scores and compatibility served as substitutable predictors.

The Losers. Only 9 of 26 (35.0%) of the eventual losers were predicted by inheritance scores, suggesting that some shows take longer to die. Networks have become more patient because of the high cost of replacing shows (Lowry & Robins, 1993) or because of the ownership (Stroud, 1998). Of the 17 shows whose average inheritance score failed to predict loser status, 8 scored at least one sub-85 score in the measured weeks. With these additional shows, the utility of inheritance scores for losers rose to 65%. Maintaining the 80 cutoff, however, only yielded 5 additional shows, or 54%. Of the 12 more resilient shows, half of them were owned by the network that clung to them, indicating that extra on-air promotion may have delayed their demise.

Again, the same number of losers (35.0%) was predicted by a very weak compatibility score. Moreover, not having a high or moderate compatibility score increased the prediction of unsuccessful pairs by another 8 shows (as with the 85 cutoff for inheritance scores) to 65%.

The Winners. Of the 21 winners, 19 shows (90.5%) had scores above 80. (The two holdouts were Fox shows from 1991, at a time when that network rarely cancelled a show unless it had season-long losses, a practice that allowed some struggling sitcoms to survive.) There were 8 shows (38.1%) with inheritance scores

higher than 90, and 3 shows with perfect (or better than perfect) scores.

Compatibility was somewhat less successful for predicting winners, with 17 of 21 shows (81.0%). None of the pairs was a total mismatch, so including moderate compatibility increased the prediction of success to 100%.

The Hits. There were only 5 hit sitcoms: Frasier, Home Improvement, Friends, Mad About You, and Sabrina the Teenage Witch.¹ All but two of the five hits registered an inheritance score of 94 or higher. Frasier seemed only moderately incompatible with its Seinfeld lead-in, which may explain its 92 inheritance score. A moderate incompatibility with the launch of Friends (after Mad About You) may also explain its 89 score. Had the two new shows occurred in opposite seasons on NBC, they could have been launched with greater compatibility (Friends behind Seinfeld and Frasier after Mad About You).

Situation type. Pairings in strong time periods (type A) did not ensure success: 15 of the 29 cases (51.7%) were losers or bombs. Low viewing levels (types C and E) did not influence failure: 5 of the 12 cases (46.0%) were hits or winner. New sitcoms on Fox (types D and E) were, however, more likely to fail than new sitcoms on the Big 3 networks (types A, B, C): 10 failures of 14 shows (71.4%) versus 27 failures of 49 shows (55.1%).

Discussion

This study demonstrates the relative merits of using inheritance scores and compatibility factors in explaining and/or predicting the success of new sitcoms. Compatibility has been previously limited to program type (e.g., drama versus news versus sitcom) but the data presented here shows that content compatibility is nearly as useful as measuring program share declines.

The key problem with judging compatibility is that it is less exact, and subject to greater interpretation, than inheritance scores. Tracking program shares in the early weeks following the launch of a new show is more systematic. Conversely, the benefit of estimating compatibility lies in its prospective, rather than retroactive, predictive power. Inheritance scores help diagnose the ailing show after it develops symptoms of failure.

One of the benefits of inspecting a narrow range of program pairs is that the character of the cases is not dissolved by a statistical equation. Despite weaker generalizability, it is possible to answer questions that dispute presumed predictors in individual cases, leading to alternate explanations.

For example, why did The Single Guy remain on the air for two seasons despite increasingly lackluster inheritance scores? Most likely the reason is tied to NBC's ownership of the show (which has been replaced by another still-weaker NBC-owned entry, Union Square). Many shows survive because of deals with stars and

producers (e.g., Hearts Afire outlived its initial success because it was produced by Linda Bloodworth-Thomason).

Another question might focus on losing shows with high scores, like the show Me and the Boys (which followed the hit Full House): Why did it fold? The answer is unclear from the variables examined in this study, but one can easily imagine that behind-the-scenes machinations won out over logic.

One additional explanation for anomalies, and a potential weakness of the inheritance score method, is related to the contagion effect. That is, the launched show may gradually pull down the share of the lead-in show. The inheritance score remains in the safe range because both shows wither at roughly the same rate, especially when the lead-in show is aging or experiencing other problems. Many shows in this study that failed despite high inheritance scores were victims of falling shares in both the lead-in and the launched sitcom.

How successful has been the NBC launching pad on Thursday nights? Since 1993, the record has been mixed. For nearly every Frasier, Mad About You, Suddenly Susan, Veronica's Closet, or Caroline in the City, there's a Madman of the People, Union Square, and a Single Guy. Cape Canaveral thankfully has a better than 62.5% average success rate.

One weakness of this study was the exclusion of programs launched outside the fall premiere season. Networks often hold back sitcoms (and dramas) that have the most potential until the second season (January-February) when viewing levels are higher,

because of weather, and when fewer shows are debuting. This study also ignores summer series launched by fledgling networks against the reruns of the big-three.

This study was also subject to methodological limitations. Thorough case-by-case comparison is difficult to achieve without multivariate analysis. This weakness is justifiable in exploratory studies where new models are sought. Unfortunately, no clear models were suggested by the descriptive data. The main contribution here is to confirm influences identified by industry practitioners and suggest future avenues of research.

In particular, future research needs to examine the influence of producer deals, which is scarcely noted here but listed by Stipp. Trade sources like Variety cite anecdotes about networks giving desirable timeslots to homegrown shows or programs produced by the networks stars (e.g., Everybody Loves Raymond produced by David Letterman's company). Networks court top producers, but even Steven Bochco (NYPD Blue, Hill Street Blues, Doogie Howser) can produce duds like Cop Rock and, as studied here, Public Morals.

Media economics may hold the clearest potential for studying the behavior of network programmers who increasingly favor homegrown productions and financial considerations. For example, Union Square performed poorly in the 1997 season to date but the program made the top-6 new shows in terms of advertising rate effectiveness. Sponsors who paid \$310,00 for a 30-second commercial (between September 22 and November 7) to reach a

projected 23 share actually received a 23 share (Wells, 1997). If the advertisers remain satisfied, NBC can temporarily justify holding onto a show that squanders its lead-in, especially if the audience returns for the Seinfeld lead-out. Future research should examine projected/actual shares in terms of financial efficiency.

As it turned out, NBC cancelled Union Square in 1998 because of dismal program shares. Perhaps the decision by Jerry Seinfeld to stop making more episodes of Seinfeld influenced the cancellation. The Thursday "launchpad" is no doubt important to NBC: In 1998 the network successfully bid \$13 million per episode of ER, even though it does not precede launchable shows. Future research should also examine this move toward expensive renewal of hit shows that "anchor" an evening's lineup.

Notes

1. A low number of hits is not unexpected for a seven-year period, in that there were only 9 instant hits for the entire 1980s decade: A-Team, Cosby, The Golden Girls, Different World, Empty Nest (all NBC), Roseanne, America's Funniest Home Videos, Wonder Years (all ABC), and one lone drama Murder She Wrote (CBS). Other sitcoms like Cheers and Seinfeld were slow to build an audience until after their first years.

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Table 1

Raw Inheritance Scores by Season

1991	Lead-In	Net	Debut	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	Last Show
Drexell's Class	The Simpsons	F	73.9	72.7	69.6	68.2	59.1	65.0	75.0	66.7		Jun-92
Herman's Head	Married w Child	F	69.0	65.2	70.8	68.2	76.5	80.0	75.0	76.5	73.7	Jun-94
Home Improvement	Full House	A	96.4	96.6	93.1	103.7	96.3	85.7	100.0	92.3		
Nurses	Empty Nest	N	111.1	96.6	88.9	89.3	92.3	91.3	90.5	88.5	91.2	Jul-94
Roc	In Living Color	F	93.8	94.1	88.2	71.4	77.3	77.8	76.5	66.7	72.2	Aug-94
Sibs	Doogie Howser	A	76.9	65.2	70.8	66.7	63.6	72.7	HIATUS			Apr-92
Step By Step	Family Matters	A	100.0	104.2	96.0	100.0	100.0	92.6	88.0	88.9	92.3	
Torkelsons	The Golden Girls	N	89.7	90.5	83.3	72.0	85.0	68.4	81.8	HIATUS		Jun-92
1992												
Bob	Designing Women	C	95.8	105.3	90.0	95.0	88.2	94.1	85.0			May-93
Camp Wilder	Dinosaurs	A	85.0	89.5	84.2	83.3	94.7	84.2	88.9	89.5	88.9	Feb-93
Hangin with Mr. C	Full House	A	88.9	96.2	96.3	88.0	92.3	84.0				Aug-96
Hearts Afire	Evening Shade	C	111.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	95.7				Feb-95
Laurie Hill	Home Improvement	A	65.4	71.4	60.7	PULLED						Oct-92
Love & War	Murphy Brown	C	68.3	83.9	79.3	82.1	92.3	78.6	90.5	79.3		Feb-95
Mad About You	Seinfeld	F	95.0	94.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	77.8			
Martin	The Simpsons	F	85.0	94.7	84.2	88.2	78.3	85.0	90.0	84.2	84.2	Aug-97
Rhythm & Blues	Different World	N	105.3	88.2	88.2	76.5	81.3	PULLED				Oct-92
1993												
Bakersfield, P.D.	Roc	F	100.0	88.9	114.3	88.9	87.5	100.0	HIATUS			Jan-97
Boy Meets World	Family Matters	A	86.4	95.7	88.0	90.9	96.0	96.0	82.1			
Daddy Dearest	Married w Child	F	76.5	87.5	66.7	76.5	82.4	68.8	75.0	71.4	PULLED	Dec-93
Dave's World	Evening Shade	C	95.8	109.1	110.0	105.0	104.8	104.8	100.0	100.0		Sep-97
Frasier	Seinfeld	N	103.4	93.3	90.0	89.7	96.0	93.5	93.5	90.3	86.2	
Living Single	Martin	F	100.0	100.0	100.0	106.7	107.1	107.1	93.8	107.7	100.0	
Phenom	Full House	C	85.7	90.5	95.5	92.3	91.3	88.0	88.0	81.0	91.7	Aug-94
Sinbad Show	The Simpsons	F	94.4	83.3	81.0	80.0	84.2	71.4	72.2			Jul-94
1994												
All-American Girl	Thunder Alley	A	113.3	112.5	106.3	94.7	100.0	100.0	94.1	HIATUS		Mar-95
Blue Skies	Coach	A	77.8	70.6	58.8	70.6	75.0	66.7	70.6	73.3	PULLED	Oct-94
Friends	Mad About You	N	88.5	88.0	91.7	91.7	87.0	87.0	92.3	88.0		
Hardball	The Simpsons	F	82.4	81.3	78.6	78.6	78.6	73.3	78.6	PULLED		Oct-94
Madman of People	Seinfeld	N	72.7	78.1	78.1	76.7	76.9	72.4	74.2	HIATUS		Jan-95
Martin Short	Wings	N	100.0	95.0	77.3	PULLED						Oct-94
Me and the Boys	Full House	A	89.7	104.5	100.0	95.2	100.0	95.2	100.0			Feb-95
On Our Own	Funniest Videos	A	92.9	82.4	80.0	86.7	80.0	93.8	91.7	87.5		Dec-94
Wild Oats	Married w Child	F	66.7	71.4	68.8	60.0	PULLED					Sep-94

Note. The networks are A=ABC, C=CBS, N=NBC, F=Fox

Table 1 (con't)

1995	Lead-In	Net	Debut	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	Last Show
Almost Perfect	Cybill	C	87.5	80.0	87.5	82.4	88.9	87.5	81.3	MOVED		Oct-96
Can't Hurry Love	The Nanny	C	95.5	90.0	84.2	88.9	81.0	85.7	94.1	85.0		Feb-96
Caroline in City	Seinfeld	N	86.5	82.9	82.9	85.3	87.9	84.8	91.2			
Drew Carey	Ellen	A	81.8	81.8	80.0	89.5	83.3	81.0	78.9			
Hudson Street	Roseanne	A	96.2	95.5	84.6	86.4	82.6	77.3	89.5			Feb-96
If Not for You	Murphy Brown	C	68.3	83.9	79.3	82.1	92.3	78.6	90.5	79.3		Oct-95
In the House	Fresh Prince	N	100.0	93.3	86.7	93.8	93.3	100.0	93.8			
Misry Loves Compny	Married w Child	F	85.7	75.0	69.2	70.0	PULLED					Oct-95
Naked Truth	Grace Under Fire	A	87.0	88.5	76.0	90.0	82.6	83.3	86.4			
Pursuit of Happn	Frasier	N	70.8	71.4	75.0	57.1	PULLED					Nov-95
Single Guy	Friends	N	90.9	87.1	90.3	83.9	83.3	90.0	93.5			Aug-97
The Home Court	John Larroquette	N	92.9	100.0	100.0	90.0						Oct-95
Preston Episodes	Martin	F	100.0	90.0	70.0	90.0	80.0	88.9	77.8	75	PULLED	Oct-95
Too Something	The Simpsons	F	66.7	57.1	64.3	72.7	64.7	PULLED				Oct-95
1996												
Common Law	Coach	A	83.3	75.0	100.0	81.8	PULLED					Oct-96
Evbody Lovs Raymnd	Dave's World	C	100.0	86.7	85.7	92.9	92.9	80.0	85.7	85.7		
Life's Work	Roseanne	A	85.7	81.0	90.9	89.5	89.5	82.4	84.2	100.0		
Love and Marriage	Married w Child	F	54.5	70.0	PULLED							Oct-96
Men Behaving Badly	NewsRadio	N	114.3	116.7	108.3	116.7	100.0	92.3	91.7			
Pearl (Monday)	Cosby	C	92.6	83.3	95.0	95.0						
Pearl (Wednesday)	The Nanny	C	84.2	85.0	88.2	75.0	88.2					
Public Morals	Almost Perfect	C	80.0	PULLED								Oct-96
Sabrina	Family Matters	A	111.1	94.7	94.4	MOVED TO BREAKPOINT						
Something So Right	Mad About You	N	95.7	95.2	87.5	86.7	94.1	82.6				
Spin City	Home Improvement	A	92.6	92.0	89.3	89.3	88	85.7	82.1	82.6		
Suddenly Susan	Friends	N	94.1	91.2	85.3	85.3	83.9	81.3	90.9	87.9		
Townies	Ellen	A	107.0	81.3	93.8	87.5	85.7	85.7	80			
1997												
Dharma & Greg	Spin City	A	120.0	100.0	113.3	113.3	106.7	100.0	100.0			
George & Leo	Cybill	C	100.0	116.7	93.3	100.0	100.0	100.0				
Hiller and Diller	Home Improvement	A	72.0	72.7	76.0	72.0	78.9	68.4	76.5	PULLED		Oct-97
Meego	Family Matters	A	91.7	90.9	91.7	83.3	84.6	100.0				
Over the Top	Soul Man	A	87.5	85.7	83.3	PULLED						Oct-97
Union Square	Friends	N	84.4	76.7	78.6	78.6	76.9	75.0				
Veronica's Closet	Seinfeld	N	94.6	90.9	90.3	87.5	83.9	87.5				
Working	3rd Rock fr Sun	N	123.1	90.9	81.3	92.3						

Note. The networks are A=ABC, C=CBS, N=NBC, F=Fox

Table 2

Average I.S. (Inheritance Score) and Outcome by Season, Owner, Type, and Compatibility

1991	Lead-In	Producer	Net	Home Grown	Type	Compat	Outcome	I.S.
Drexell's Class	The Simpsons	Fox	F	1	D	1	L	67
Herman's Head	Married W Child	Witt Thomas	F		D	2	W	75
Home Improvement	Full House	Touchstone	A	*	A	1	H	96
Nurses	Empty Nest	Touchstone	N		C	1	W	91
Roc	In Living Color	HBO	F		D	1	W	74
Sibs	Doogie Howser	Gracie	A		B	2	L	68
Step By Step	Family Matters	Miller-Boyett	A		C	1	W!	94
Torkelsons	The Golden Girls	Touchstone	N		C	3	L	77
1992								
Bob	Designing Women	Paramount	C		C	2	L	91
Camp Wilder	Dinosaurs	ABC	A	0	C	1	L	88
Hangin with Mr. C	Full House	Lorimar	A		B	1	W	88
Hearts Afire	Evening Shade	Mozark	C		A	1	W	99
Laurie Hill	Home Improvement	Marlens-Black	A		A	3	B	66
Love & War	Murphy Brown	TriStar	C		A	1	W	85
Mad About You	Seinfeld	TriStar	F		A	1	H	94
Martin	The Simpsons	HBO	F		D	2	W!	85
Rhythm & Blues	Different World	Fox	N		B	1	B	79
1993								
Bakersfield, P.D.	Roc	???	F		D	2	L	92
Boy Meets World	Family Matters	Disney	A	*	C	1	W	91
Daddy Dearest	Married W Child	???	F		D	2	L!	75
Dave's World	Evening Shade	CBS	C	1	A	1	W!	103
Frasier	Seinfeld	Paramount	N		A	2	H	92
Living Single	Martin	Warner	F		D	1	W!	104
Phenom	Full House	Columbia	C		A	2	L	89
Sinbad Show	he Simpsons	Disney	F		D	2	L	77
1994								
All-American Girl	Thunder Alley	Disney	A	*	B	3	L	97
Blue Skies	Coach	Universal	A		B	3	L!	71
Friends	Mad About You	Warner	N		A	1	H	89
Hardball	The Simpsons	Disney	F		D	3	L!	77
Madman of People	Seinfeld	Spelling	N		A	3	L!	75
Martin Short Show	Wings	NBC	N	0	B	3	B	91
Me and the Boys	Full House	ABC	A	1	A	2	L	98
On Our Own	Funniest Videos	Warner	A		A	3	L	88
Wild Oats	Married W Child	Fox	F		D	3	B	67

Note. Compatibility is 1=high, 3=low; Outcome is H=hit, W!=strategic winner, W=winner, L=loser, L!=weak loser, B=bomb; Homegrown is 0=owned by network in weaker timeslot, 1=strong timeslot; Type is A=big-three network/high-HUT[homes using television]/highly-ranked lead-in, B=big-three/high-HUT/lower-ranked lead-in, C=big-three/low-HUT, D=Fox Network/high-HUT, E=Fox, low-HUT
(* ABC purchased by Disney/Touchstone in 1995)

Table 2 (con't)

1995	Lead-In	Producer	Net	Home Grown	Type	Compat	Outcome	I.S.
Almost Perfect	Cybill	Paramount	C		B	1	W!	85
Can't Hurry Love	The Nanny	TriStar	C		A	1	L	87
Caroline in City	Seinfeld	CBS	N		A	1	W!	87
Drew Carey	Ellen	Warner	A		A	1	W!	83
Hudson Street	Roseanne	TriStar	A		A	2	L	84
If Not for You	Murphy Brown	Disney	C		A	3	B	85
In the House	Fresh Prince	NBC	N	1	A	1	W!	95
Misery Loves Compny	Married W Child	Disney	F		D	2	B	75
Naked Truth	Grace Under Fire	Brillstn-Grey	A		A	2	W	86
Pursuit Happiness	Frasier	Paramount	N		A	1	B	69
Single Guy	Friends	NBC	N	1	A	1	W	88
The Home Court	John Larroquette	Paramount	N		C	1	L	90
Preston Episodes	Martin	FOX	F	0	E	2	L!	82
Too Something	The Simpsons	Warner	F		D	3	B	69
1996								
Common Law	Coach	Witt Thomas	A		C	3	B	85
Evbody Lovs Raymnd	Dave's World	Wwide Pnts/HBO	C		C	1	W	87
Life's Work	Roseanne	Touchstone	A	1	A	2	L	89
Love and Marriage	Married W Child	TriStar	F		E	3	B	62
Men Behaving Badly	NewsRadio	Carsey-Werner	N		B	1	W!	100
Mr. Rhodes	Jeff Foxworthy	NBC/Universal	N	0	B	3	L	91
Pearl (Monday)	Cosby	Witt Thomas	C		A	1	L	91
Pearl (Wednesday)	The Nanny	Witt Thomas	C		A	1	L	82
Public Morals	Almost Perfect	Bochco	C		B	3	B	80
Sabrina Teen Witch	Family Matters	Viacom	A		C	1	H	100
Something So Right	Mad About You	Universal	N		A	3	L	88
Spin City	Home Improvement	DreamWorks/Ubu	A		A	2	W!	86
Suddenly Susan	Friends	Warner	N		A	1	W!	86
Townies	Ellen	Carsey-Werner	A		A	1	L	85
1997								
Dharma & Greg	Spin City	Fox	A		B	2	W!	105
George & Leo	Cybill	Paramount	C		B	2	L	100
Hiller and Diller	Home Improvement	Touchstone	A	1	A	3	L!	74
Meego	Family Matters	Warner	A		C	1	L!	89
Over the Top	Soul Man	Columbia	A		B	3	B	86
Union Square	Friends	NBC	N	1	A	1	L	77
Veronica's Closet	Seinfeld	Warner	N		A	2	W	86
Working	3rd Rock fr Sun	NBC	N	1	A	3	W	88

Note. Compatibility is 1=high, 3=low; Outcome is H=hit, W!=strategic winner, W=winner, L=loser, L!=weak loser, B=bomb; Homegrown is 0=owned by network in weaker timeslot, 1=strong timeslot; Type is A=big-three network/high-HUT[homes using television]/highly-ranked lead-in, B=big-three/high-HUT/lower-ranked lead-in, C=big-three/low-HUT, D=Fox Network/high-HUT, E=Fox, low-HUT

Table 3

Success Outcomes and Prediction Factors

	<u>n</u>	<u>Inheritance Scores</u>		<u>Compatibility</u>	
		<u>Correct</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Correct</u>	<u>%</u>
Bombs	8	12	66.7	9	75.0
Losers	26	9	35.0	9	35.0
Winners	21	19	90.5	17	81.0
Hits	5	5	100.0	3	60.0