

## CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

### Organization:

Equinox Productions

### Industry:

Entertainment

### Focus:

Specializes in post-production services for advertising spots and billboards for syndicated TV shows

### Need:

HD; SD encoding and conversion; electronic distribution and verification; closed captioning

### Solution:

Advanced Digital Services distribution and digital services

## Equinox Productions Scales Business by Leveraging ADS Digital Services to Convert, Close Caption, and Deliver Ad Spots On Time and On Budget

ADS, a leading Hollywood based digital services company to the Media & Entertainment community from major motion picture studios and world-class advertising agencies to small independents and CODs alike, works hand-in-hand with Equinox Productions for finishing and distributing their TV spots to the appropriate outlet so that the commercial will be available to run at the scheduled time. Operating like an extension of Equinox, ADS supports their workflow needs from inception to delivery. From the start, ADS works with Equinox to develop a workflow and budget that meets their clients' budget requirements. Once approved, ADS takes the project to fruition including encoding, down converting, and closed captioning; and provides on time distribution of the finished ad spot to the exacting specifications of the client, ensuring its acceptance and returning a Proof of Delivery (POD) to Equinox.

### THE SITUATION:

While formally servicing clients as Equinox Productions since 2011, Penny Johnson, founder, owner, editor and post production supervisor, has been working with some of her clients for close to 30 years. Equinox Productions, a southern California company, traces its roots back through Interpublic Group to Western International Media, where she worked with David Nelson doing over one hundred commercials a year at the Casablanca Productions division. Johnson, a member of the Directors Guild of America, focuses her company today on post-production services for ad spots and billboards for syndicated television shows. In addition to mentoring by Nelson, Johnson credits

media buying pioneer, Dennis Holt, founder of WIMC, with putting his faith in her and buying her editing equipment to learn this craft she loves so much.

Equinox clients include agencies for pharmaceutical companies, grocery chains, consumer products, deli products, and billboards for FOX. These spots go to daytime programming that's in syndication. Some notable examples are *Doctors*, *Katie Couric*, *The Price is Right*, *Rachael Ray*, *Live with Kelly and Michael*, *Weather Channel*, *CNN*, *Dr. Phil*, *Arsenio*, *King of Queens*, *Glee*, *Jeff Probst*, *ABC Weekend Adventures*, *30 Rock*, *Wheel of Fortune*, *Family Feud* and *Dr. Oz*.

### THE CHALLENGE:

On any given day, Equinox starts its day at 6 AM to work with east coast clients and doesn't finish until the last of their west coast customers requirements are fulfilled. As such, Johnson's company doesn't have the additional manpower and equipment resources to handle the logistics associated with the distribution of digital content.



*"ADS provides the highest quality in terms of product, service, and price. I have never had a spot rejected that ADS has sent out for me. I consider them an integral part of my company."*

*-- Penny Johnson, Founder, Equinox Productions*



According to Johnson, the distribution for ad spots in the past was straightforward. A tape was made and sent to the media outlet to be played. There was a one-to-one relationship between ad distribution and the syndicated show.

Explaining about today's more complex finishing and distribution requirements, Johnson elaborated, "While electronic distribution eliminates weather and transportation difficulty in shipping the content, five shows may share the same electronic delivery box and each delivery box can have different requirements for the acceptance of the ad spot. Requirements for ad delivery and acceptance can change over time and if questions arise, they need to be addressed before the ad is scheduled to run. There is also a larger need to provide HD spots for syndication which means much bigger files to store and distribute. In addition, all ads need to be closed captioned and as long as there are still analog TV's, ads will also need to be created in SD. If a spot isn't completed and delivered properly and on time, the ad won't run and no one gets paid."

## THE SOLUTION:

In starting Equinox, Johnson approached ADS to set up an account to provide her finishing work. "ADS treated me like I was a large client even though I had just started my business and their terms were more than reasonable," said Johnson. "They made it work and I am a firm believer in getting and giving value for the service you provide. I always get value for the dollar I spend with ADS. ADS and my voice-over talent is the reason I am in business today and able to deliver such an exceptional product to my clients."

To help expedite Equinox's client needs, ADS had set up a secure file folder that allows Equinox to upload their content, regardless of file size, directly to the ADS servers. When received, the ADS team then takes care of any required finishing work, distributing the content to the appropriate electronic delivery box, getting the delivery accepted, and returning a POD (Proof of Delivery) so the client knows that the ad was available to air on time.

Johnson continued her explanation on why ADS is the perfect service partner, expanding on ADS's value proposition of service excellence, quality and value to the customer. "I love the ease of working with ADS," continued Johnson. "If my client doesn't know what electronic box to send the TV spot to, ADS researches it for me and gets the information right back to me. They can tell me not only do they need an HD version but that they also require an SD version. This allows me to go back to my client and deliver an accurate P.O. to them. Moreover, I have the wonderful convenience of only needing to create the HD spot and sending it to ADS to have them do a down conversion to SD. I have ADS do the work because they do a machine-to-machine conversion rather than a software conversion that other studios may do. I know the ADS version will be the highest



quality possible which makes for happy clients. That's a great service that they provide that takes the burden off of me."

ADS also adds closed captioning to all of Equinox's ad spots, further reducing Johnson's workload. "I send the spot to ADS and they close caption and distribute it for me – another burden taken off of me. I have closed caption houses call me regularly and say they can do it cheaper. I don't care how cheap someone thinks they can undercut a step in the process, I can't afford to miss an air date. With ADS, I'm always confident that the spot will be delivered perfectly. All the money savings in the world doesn't mean a thing if the spot doesn't get delivered on time. Frankly, I can sleep at night knowing ADS is on the job."

ADS is also renowned for its service to its clients. "Their service level is very high. Aside from keeping me abreast of the latest finishing and delivery requirements to make sure I have done the spot correctly, it is incredibly important for me to get answers right away when I have a question, no matter the time. ADS has always gotten back to me in short order. Even for questions outside the scope of what I have hired them for. For example, a client sends me a spot already edited and it was done on an AVID system and I can't really see it well on my system. ADS will go out of their way and will check it for compliance or tell me if there is something wrong, and that I need to go back to the original editor to have it corrected - that's service."

Concluded Johnson, "ADS provides the highest quality in terms of product, service, and price. I have never had a spot rejected that ADS has sent out for me. I consider them an integral part of my company. On a scale of 1 to 10, I get an 11 in service from them. I think more people should be using them if they are not already."