



Inside "Better Call Saul"™'s Character-Driven Campaign

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When the penultimate season of Better Call Saul premieres Sunday, Feb 23, fans will finally get their long-awaited introduction to Breaking Bad's infamous lawyer, Saul Goodman (Bob Odenkirk), "criminal attorney."

Though it's the center of this season's key art (below) and teasers, approaching the overall campaign was business as usual, said Linda Schupack, president of marketing, AMC Networks Entertainment Group.

"We approach this season like we approach all seasons of Better Call Saul - making sure the marketing is as singular and distinctive as the show itself," Schupack told Daily Brief via email. "Our fans appreciate the cleverness of Better Call Saul and they expect that from our marketing. We know our fans like to 'discover' things about the show rather than being told, so we make sure we subtly seed things like Easter Eggs rather than overtly reveal."

Though most fans already knew what was in store for Jimmy-that he eventually evolves into Saul-his character development has driven not only the series but AMC's marketing campaign as well.

"Breaking Bad was about the transformation of Walter White from Mr. Chips to

Scarface. Better Call Saul is about the transformation of Jimmy McGill to Saul Goodman (and of course, Gene). The show is an American epic, and the story reflects extremely entertaining and nuanced character development. Of course, there's definitely an advantage in working with a character that already has an established fanbase, but the delight for fans has come with discovering the rich layers they did not already know. And that is what we celebrate in our marketing," Schupack said.

Back in November, fans had plenty to discover with help from Better Call Saul's long-standing partner, Cinnabon. To announce the air date for season five, Cinnabon released "archival" footage from its Omaha grand opening; however, the only connection to the series was the "manager" and his nametag.

"Cinnabon has been an incredible partner and has helped us create opportunities that blur the fourth wall and organically take the Better Call Saul narrative into the real world," Schupack said. "Again, we know our fans love 'discovery' - and we also know they appreciate the 'clever' over the 'overt' when it comes to marketing. So, our fans knew it was Gene from the show, and they solved the teaser to reveal the premiere date, resulting in extremely robust fan engagement across various social platforms."

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Character-driven content didn't stop with Jimmy/Saul. A key part of season five's marketing is a series of "How-To-Tuesday" videos, which began rolling out digitally six weeks pre-premiere.

AMC's creative team took inspiration from already existing how-to videos that populate YouTube and social media; however, they imagined how the show's beloved characters, such as Saul, Kim Wexler (Rhea Seahorn) and Mike Ehrmantraut (Jonathan Banks), would express themselves in the medium.

How to Get Out of Jury Duty

How to Negotiate

How to Make a Sandwich

"We worked closely with the show writers to make sure we got the show and character voice right for this social content, creating how-to pieces that tap into each character's unique personality and voice." Fans loved them, and these how-tos quickly became the most popular social-first content of the season. Consistent with their love of 'discovery,' fans immediately started predicting and even requesting specific videos."

During winter TCA in January, AMC announced that Better Call Saul will end

with season six. Though it's too early to tell what the final season's marketing will look like, Schupack ensures a proper conclusion to the Breaking Bad prequel.

"It's so very early in the process, but I can say that it's been an utter privilege to work on this show over five seasons," Schupack said. "We look forward to collaborating closely with co-creators Vince Gilligan and Peter Gould, as well as the rest of the Better Call Saul team, to give the series the send-off it deserves."

Season five of Better Call Saul premieres Sunday, Feb. 23 at 10 p.m. ET. Its second episode will premiere the next night on Monday, Feb. 24 at 9 p.m.

[All images and videos courtesy of AMC Networks].