

24/7 Oprah

Sam Schechner, "Can't Get Enough Oprah? Wait a Few Years," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2008.

Oprah Winfrey has become an iconic American brand, with her own television show, magazine, and Web site. In all these forums, she tends to discuss regular issues that most people can relate to, like weight gain and loss, relationship issues, and health. To extend her reach even further, she has just partnered with Discovery Communications to create the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), which will feature programming that Winfrey chooses.

The *Oprah Winfrey Show* already is the top-rated talk show on television; her new network will enable the popular host to penetrate the market even further, especially among women and families, her target market. But starting a television network is difficult, no matter how big the name is behind it, and OWN will face stiff competition from Oxygen, NBC's network for women, as well as from video-on-demand and Web video services, not to mention the many cable channels available.

Television enables Winfrey to promote her beliefs and values to her viewers. Even though her shows often center on particular subjects that pertain to select groups of people, the variety of topics they cover ensures that her programming appeals to the mass market. Furthermore, her various media platforms consistently deliver what customers are looking for from their favorite daytime star.

The Discovery network has only 123,000 viewers for all its shows, compared with Oprah Winfrey's 7.3 million viewers of her show alone. The new network plans to revamp its content and image and go public in the second quarter of this year. Discovery will then launch another new channel, Planet Green, to focus on an eco-friendly lifestyle, and cancel some underperforming shows. For Oprah-anatics, their greatest wishes seem to be coming true!