

## News in brief

## TV DREAMS DISAPPOINTS

BBC TV's *Big Ticket* show has failed to provide the hoped-for boost to Camelot's declining scratchcard sales. Despite a huge publicity push and the launch of the controversial TV Dreams scratchcard offering consumers the chance to appear on TV, sales of Instants actually dropped after the Saturday-night screening at the end of March.



## CO-OP DIVI STEAMS AHEAD

Only recently unveiled, Co-op's new Dividend loyalty card has already attracted one million subscribers. Co-op says the response, which is ahead of forecasts, is due to their offering the 'strongest proposition' in the loyalty arena, with a five pence reward being given for every £1 spent on Co-op-branded goods.

## TEAMTALK AT BP

Football enthusiasts can now 'own' the official England team by collecting cards at BP forecourts across the country. Designed in the style of the old cigarette card sets, the promotional giveaways are aimed at all ages and tie in neatly with this year's World Cup and with BP's associate sponsorship of the England team. A player card is given away free with every £10 spent at BP garages and a collectable booklet can be bought at the counter or is given away with a top-grade carwash.

• BP is launching a series of buy-one-get-one-free offers in a bid to convince customers that shopping on the forecourt doesn't have to be expensive. 'Bogof promotions shout out that you can get value here,' says BP's marketing communications and loyalty manager Duncan Blake.

# New clash for Don Marketing and Shell

OIL giant Shell is being sued for misuse of confidential information and breach of contract by Don Marketing over its use of the Shell Smart Card loyalty programme.

Don Marketing's managing director, John Donovan, claims to have devised and refined the scheme for Shell between the years 1989-93. Donovan issued a High Court writ against Shell on 8 April following a breakdown in talks to resolve the dispute. 'We last took the concept to Shell on 22 November 1992 at the request of the company's national promotions manager, Andrew Lazenby,' says Donovan. 'We know that he briefed Option One (now Tequila/Option One which currently runs the scheme) on "Project Hercules" in January 1993. This is an almost



exact replica of our proposal to Shell.'

Option One subsequently won two ISP Gold awards for the scheme in 1995.

Neither Shell nor Tequila/Option One would discuss the case with *Incentive Today* but Shell has issued the following statement:

'Over the last four years, Mr John Donovan has made various claims that he or his company own rights in respect of several

Shell forecourt promotions. His most recent allegations have been that his company invented the Smart loyalty programme and that he or his company should be compensated for its use. The claim has been most carefully investigated and discussed in correspondence with Mr Donovan and his solicitors, and Shell UK is satisfied that it is entirely without substance. Mr Donovan has now issued a writ against Shell UK in respect of Smart. We intend to defend his claims vigorously in court.'

Shell has reportedly made previous out-of-court settlements to Don Marketing running to several hundred thousand pounds over its 'Make Money', 'Nintendo' and 'Now Showing' forecourt promotions.

# Wine direct causes embarrassment

WHENEVER a direct mail company is unable to fulfil its customers' orders it is another dent in the public perception of direct marketing. This month mail-order wine merchant Cellar Select has gone sour and the company is now in receivership. A statement from Barry Knights, of the Salisbury-based insolvency service Knights & Co., said: 'It is regrettable that the company will be unable to fulfil outstanding customer orders. Company creditors and customers are being notified of the situation.'

Cellar-Select traded under the name of Winefinds and was launched in 1994. By last autumn the company was on target for a projected £6m annual turnover this year and was said to have 40,000 customers. But four months ago its managing director, Bob

Middlemiss, admitted to 'extreme financial difficulties' after cases of wine paid for in advance and promised for Christmas failed to arrive by the New Year.

Cellar Select featured in a *Daily Telegraph* competition in July 97 and there was also a direct mail campaign at the same time which was followed by further mailshots.

The *Telegraph* comments that its wine competition with Cellar-Select ran satisfactorily and points out that separate orders were not part of any offer in the paper and therefore would not have been covered by the Mail Order Protection Scheme (MOPS) operated by national newspapers. This Scheme only gives readers protection if a payment is made directly via a MOPS-approved advertisement.

John Beeching, compliance officer for the Telegraph Group, said: 'We would not accept an advertisement unless approved by MOPS without a separate bank guarantee. However, it is worth knowing that there is a fine line between what will be covered and what will not be. For instance, an advertisement that only invites readers to ask for details of a product and does not ask for money will not be covered by MOPS.'

Meanwhile there is every chance that Cellar-Select will phoenix in another form. Shareholder, Gordon Watt, who has held 101 company directorships in the past and present and is currently chief executive of Endless Holdings of Endless Street, Salisbury, has made an offer to the administrative receivers which has been formally accepted.