

As a former sponsor of NBC's America's Got Talent, the Parents Television Council urgently brings to your attention the return of this program, but with the addition of "shock-jock" Howard Stern as a judge. The season premiere is scheduled to air on Monday, May 14th.

Programs like AGT have offered millions of American families a brief respite from the otherwise-ubiquitous stream of violent, profane and sexually-explicit content on primetime broadcast television. Talent/performance competitions like American Idol, Dancing with the Stars, The Voice and AGT are among the highest-rated programs on the air. A key reason is that these programs have been relatively safe for family viewing. NBC's decision to add Mr. Stern to AGT will likely result in a sharp increase in explicit content, and we urge you to be mindful when considering a media buy.

Stern's reputation for sleaze and misogyny is well known; and to our knowledge his only previous judging experience consisted of looking at insecure, naked young women and telling them whether or not they were hot enough to pose for Playboy. He once told a female guest, "I would like to kiss you and chop off your feet...I wanna bite off your fingers...I wanna have sex with you and throw you in a ditch...[and] chop your head off." Does such commentary accurately reflect your corporate values?

When Stern was rumored to be headed to American Idol, he discussed a previous winner in these terms: "Hey Fantasia, you're not getting little boys hard. Nobody's beating off to you...Little boys want boners. They want a Britney Spears or a Rihanna." With an abundant list of obscene and grotesque material, this is the track record Howard Stern brings to America's Got Talent. Does his decades-long penchant for profanity, his affinity for degrading and sexualizing women, and his proclivity for vulgar and explicit dialog, accurately reflect your corporate values?

There can be, and there must be, a presumption that Mr. Stern will only continue to conduct himself in precisely the same manner as he has done for decades. Unless and until his conduct consistently reflects and respects the time, place and manner of an 8:00 p.m. broadcast television program, we would urge you and your advertising agency to consider alternate network television programming for your media dollars.

The risk of associating your hard-earned corporate brand image with such "shock" is not worth the cost involved – a cost not just in terms of wasted media dollars, but also in terms of countless millions of dollars in customer goodwill. I assure you that every advertiser on America's Got Talent will be held publicly accountable for underwriting any of the inevitably vile antics of Howard Stern.