



Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment's Free Streaming Company Crackle Plus Presents Growth Plans at 2021 NewFronts

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Crackle Plus Launches New Chicken Soup for the Soul AVOD Network with Premium, Diverse Content

Previews New Crackle Consumer Interface and Plans for Added Distribution to 34 New Consumer Touchpoints by the End of 2021

COS COB, Conn., May 03, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Crackle Plus, a Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, Inc. (Nasdaq: CSSE) company and one of the largest operators of streaming advertising-supported video-on-demand (AVOD) networks, announced today at the 2021 NewFronts key elements of its growth plans, including a new user interface for Crackle, the launch of a new Chicken Soup for Soul AVOD network, its parent company namesake, and expanded distribution to both new AVOD and FAST platforms after a rapid year of growth.

Premium content offerings

Crackle Plus has doubled its content offerings in the last year, and added over 200 hours of original and exclusive programming with a brand new slate to come in the coming months. With award-winning original unscripted programming, sports docu-series and feature films, Crackle has built a deep pipeline of unique, diverse and inspiring new content to entertain and empower its viewers. In 2020, Crackle's originals and exclusives accounted for almost 30% of all streams and 20% of all delivered ad impressions.

"As part of Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, our success is built in large part on featuring original and exclusive content from the production and distribution arms of our parent company," said Philippe Guelton, President of Crackle Plus. "Our platforms provide an effortless way to watch free premium content for customers with smart TVs and connected devices."

Enhanced Crackle viewing experiences

The company is making a large investment into innovative technology to enhance the product and user experience with its consumer-first strategy. In Q3, Crackle will re-launch with brand new experiences for both smartphones and television. The redesigned Crackle connected TV applications include improved ways to display content, better search recommendations, a comprehensive content calendar and a sleek new user experience.

The Crackle smartphone app will feature a new feed on the home page to keep viewers up-to-date on upcoming content and provide new recommendation mechanics. The super casting feature also allows users to browse for content on smartphones and automatically play back on any device. Additional updates include initiatives to increase user sign-in, moving from client-side to server-side advertising for better and more unique ad partnerships and a new loyalty program to reward devoted users.

Expanded distribution

This year, Crackle Plus will add 34 new VOD and digital linear touch points for Crackle, Popcornflix, and the Chicken Soup for the Soul AVOD including endpoints on Plex, Philo, Xumo, fuboTV, Comcast Flex, Xfinity and Redbox as well as many others. VIZIO will be the exclusive launch partner for Crackle's new app and user experience. The unique partnership includes a Crackle-branded remote button, inclusion on VIZIO's retail packaging and joint testing of content and creative performance with the VIZIO SmartCast audience.

"VIZIO and Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, Inc. share the same common interest of delivering a great entertainment experience," said Katherine Pond, VP of Business Development at VIZIO. "This exciting partnership will help deliver a more relevant advertising experience on CTV to brands and consumers alike."

Chicken Soup for the Soul AVOD launch

Chicken Soup for the Soul, a brand new AVOD network in the Crackle Plus portfolio, will launch this fall. The Chicken Soup for the Soul AVOD network and FAST linear channels will reflect what the brand's mission has been since day one – to change the world one story at a time. The programming showcased on the network will be inspiring, uplifting and informative content all designed to help viewers live a better life. Users will find a large selection of scripted movies and TV shows for adults and families, anchored in part by the award-winning library from Sonar Entertainment, with unscripted shows and documentaries featuring the lives of both history-makers and everyday heroes and lifestyle programming showcasing the best home, food, DIY, style and travel experts.

"Chicken Soup for the Soul is about that feeling of comfort, goodwill and trust, all combined with entertainment," said Amy Newmark, Editor in Chief of Chicken Soup for the Soul books who has published over 170 titles in 13 years. "We already made such a seamless move from books to television and films. This AVOD network gives us an opportunity to provide ever more storytelling to our fan base."

Unique ad experiences

In addition to its owned and operated AVOD services, Crackle Plus has partnered with an expanding group of premium media brands – giving advertisers direct access to the best in advertising-supported streaming. This unique portfolio of partners includes some of the largest OTT networks – each bringing long-form, premium programming for free.

As a trusted ad partner of anime mega brands Funimation and Crunchyroll, Crackle offers advertisers a direct buying opportunity with full transparency on where and when its media runs, with access to “communities of interest” at unparalleled scale and reach in OTT.

Crackle Plus also recently expanded their partnership with the growing streaming brand Plex to sell advertising across their entire platform. Scott Olechowski, Chief Product Officer and co-founder of Plex, said, “We are so excited to be working with Crackle and we really look forward to a great year together.”

Crackle Plus continues to partner with iSpot in over 60 campaigns in Q4 of 2020. Crackle Plus found that when brands had similar exposure on both traditional and linear TV and Crackle Plus networks in the same time period, there was virtually zero overlap. Brands also paid a fraction of the cost to reach new households on Crackle at a far lower frequency.

“We are humbled to work alongside Crackle Plus within their ad sales engine and inventory valuation approach to capture audiences,” said Stuart Schwartzapfel, Senior VP of Media Partnerships at iSpot. “The innovative business decisions made when it comes to ad sale offerings and go-to-market strategy, help to realize the full potential of its connected TV audiences.”

Crackle Plus has also announced a new partnership with TransUnion to bring first-party data and best in class identity products to the connected TV space. Aaron Shuster, strategic partnerships for TransUnion’s media vertical, said, “We’re really excited about our partnership with Crackle. We look forward to supporting their continued growth and their mission to provide free video content to viewers.”

“Crackle Plus’ audiences are unique, not just incremental,” said Darren Olive, Executive Vice President, Sales and Strategy for Crackle Plus. “Our ability to not only be effective - but efficient - in reaching new and differentiated viewers on CTV is what sets us apart.”

Crackle Plus linear and VOD networks are available in the U.S. and can be accessed on 31 devices and services including Amazon FireTV, RokuTV, Apple TV, Smart TVs (Samsung, LG, VIZIO), gaming consoles (PS4 and XboxOne), Plex, iOS and Android mobile devices and on desktops at Crackle.com. Crackle is also available in approximately 500,000 hotel rooms in the Marriott Bonvoy chain.

CRACKLE PLUS, A CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. COMPANY

Crackle Plus owns and operates ad-supported VOD networks Crackle, Popcornflix and Chicken Soup for the Soul, making it one of the largest AVOD streaming platforms in the U.S. Crackle Plus has AVOD rights to over 11,000 films and 22,000 episodes of television series. Crackle Plus networks premiere at least one original and one exclusive program each month, differentiating it from other AVODs. Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, Inc. (Nasdaq: CSSE) owns Crackle Plus and also acquires and distributes video content through its Screen Media subsidiary and produces original long and short-form content through Halcyon Television, Landmark Studio Group, its Chicken Soup for the Soul Unscripted division and APlus Productions. Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, Inc. is a subsidiary of Chicken Soup for the Soul, LLC, which publishes the famous book series and produces super-premium pet food under the Chicken Soup for the Soul brand name.

ABOUT CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL ENTERTAINMENT

Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment, Inc. (Nasdaq: CSSE) operates streaming video-on-demand networks (VOD). The company owns Crackle Plus, which owns and operates a variety of ad-supported and subscription-based VOD networks including Crackle, Popcornflix, Popcornflix Kids, Truli, Pivotshare, Españolflix and FrightPix. The company also acquires and distributes video content through its Screen Media subsidiary and produces original long and short-form content through Landmark Studio Group, its Chicken Soup for the Soul Originals division and APlus.com. Chicken Soup for the Soul Entertainment is a subsidiary of Chicken Soup for the Soul, LLC, which publishes the famous book series and produces super-premium pet food under the Chicken Soup for the Soul brand name.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This press release includes forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Forward-looking statements are statements that are not historical facts. These statements are based on various assumptions, whether or not identified in this press release, and on the current expectations of management and are not predictions of actual performance. Forward-looking statements are subject to known and unknown risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to those risks set forth in the Company’s Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2020. If any of these risks materialize or our assumptions prove incorrect, actual results could differ materially from the results implied by these forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements speak only as of the date hereof and the Company expressly disclaims any obligation or undertaking to release publicly any updates or revisions to any forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect any change in the Company’s expectations with respect thereto or any change in events, conditions or circumstances on which any statement is based.

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