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Self-Financed Video: A 'Huge' Gamble?

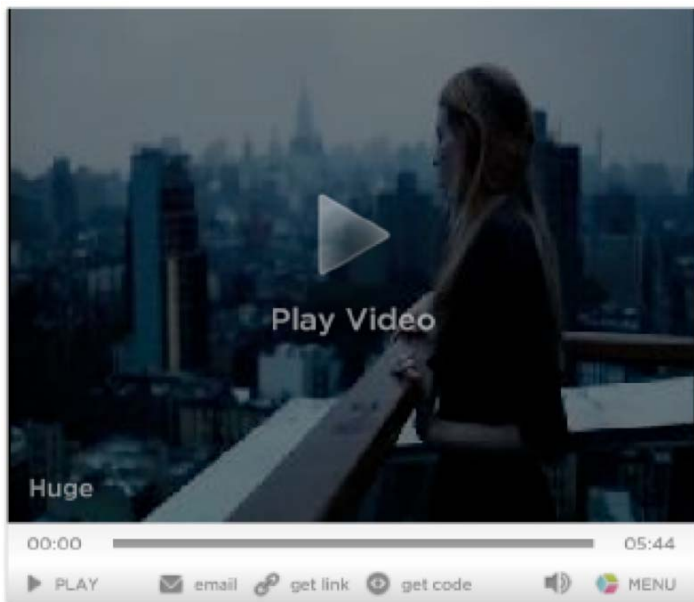
The Enduring Appeal of Models, Sex, and Rock 'n' Roll

By [Daisy Whitney](#)

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Creators: Surrin Grewal and his brothers, Ranjit and RJ, created the Web series "Huge" about a model-turned-band manager. Surrin Grewal is executive producer of the show and also the chief operating officer of JamStarMedia, a media-production company founded by the sibling trio. Ranjit is a fashion photographer and brought his expertise and contacts in that business to bear on "Huge." Surrin and RJ owned four Curves for Women franchises that they recently sold. The brothers self-funded the production with \$200,000.

CASE STUDY VIDEO



The Sponsors: The show launched in September and does not currently have a sponsor. Mr. Grewal said he wanted to prove audience demand before reaching out to advertisers. The show has generated more than 375,000 views in its first two months. He is currently seeking a sales person who's skilled in product placement to handle integrated buys for the show. The creators have developed a technology that enables interactive product placement and will introduce that technology in future episodes.

The Distributors: The first four episodes of the show are currently available exclusively on the independent film Web site Jaman.com. Jaman also releases its programming on cell phones and TiVo, said Geetanjali Dhillon, executive producer with Jaman. She described "Huge" as slick, sexy and entertaining. "For us, 'Huge' is a project that aligns with our core belief that consumers want good quality, high production-value content wherever they are around the world and on their platform of choice. We were motivated to put our marketing muscle behind the project because our platform can deliver a high-quality playback experience

for 'Huge' and our customers globally would enjoy the short form, but cinematic experience." Shot in July 2007, "Huge" was released a year later in September 2008.

Content: "Huge" tells the story of a 26-year-old high-fashion model named Izzie who retires from modeling to become a band manager. "It's about a band on the rise and a model looking for something else to do," Mr. Grewal said. "She needs to find act two of her career so in the course of doing that she comes across the band and two of the members and says 'I am going to be the manager of the band.'" The Grewal brothers shot "Huge" as a half-hour pilot and have released it in five- to six-minute episodes online. Rather than write short self-contained episodes for the Web, "Huge" is written and shot as a half-hour show and then released in those chunks. Mr. Grewal said the producers adhered to a more traditional storytelling length so the show can cross mediums easily if there is television or film interest. "Our budget is more than the average four-to-five minute Web show but not as much as a TV show."

Backstory: Mr. Grewal and his brothers founded JamStarMedia in 2006 to create high-quality content across platforms. "Ranjit realized everything was going to moving pictures so he called my older brother and me—we're corporate guys—and said 'I think there is a great future in making content for the Internet. Ranjit knows fashion photography and RJ and I know bands so we made a treatment and made the show.'"

Endgame: The Internet can be a terrific farm system for television, Mr. Grewal said. "Our goal is to have the show broadcast wherever viewers want to see it. I would love HBO to come in and give us a big contract, but you also lose control when that happens," he said. For now, he's targeting the 18-to-34 age group. "We plan to show the real aspects of this gritty, edgy, fun, sexy and exciting world," he said.

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