

Sandy Climan, Hollywood's 3D man

Ronald Grover

As head of 3ality, he's helping to bring a new generation of 3D to the big screen and, perhaps soon, to TV, too.

Sanford R. "Sandy" Climan spent more than a decade as one of Hollywood's most powerful dealmakers. A top lieutenant to superagent Michael Ovitz, Climan represented such stars as Robert De Niro, Robert Redford, and Kevin Costner while brokering deals for Sony (SNE), Mastushita, and Seagram to buy Hollywood studios. These days he has a new role: bringing 3D movies, television shows, and live events to the masses on movie screens and, perhaps soon, on TV sets from which characters will seemingly pop off the screen and into your living room.

Older readers might recall 3D from the 1950s, when moviegoers donned dorky green-and-red cardboard specs for a Saturday matinee. And younger readers undoubtedly know 3D from IMAX theaters. Climan hopes to go further. The 52-year-old chief executive of 3ality Digital and his crew of 40 or so employees have developed a patent-pending system of turning films shot on two-dimensional cameras into 3D flicks using equipment including a rig that puts two cameras together—one to shoot for each eye—and then synchronizes them perfectly so their images appear to come off the screen.

So far, 3ality has produced a 3D concert movie by the band U2 and in early January shot a 3D college football game, the FedEx (FDX) BCS National Championship, that partner Cindedigm Digital Cinema (CIDM) beamed to more than 80 theaters.

By this time next year theaters will be cluttered with 3D flicks. Movie houses are hustling to install new digital projectors so they can boost revenue by charging the higher ticket prices that 3D features command. Film studios, which get about half of what theaters collect from showing their productions, see larger dollar signs, too, from 3D. Among the coming attractions: DreamWorks Animation's (DWA) *Monsters vs. Aliens* and *Avatar*, a sci-fi flick from Titanic director James Cameron. Meantime, Walt Disney (DIS) and DreamWorks have committed to making all their animated flicks in 3D, while Steven Spielberg and *Lord of the Rings* director Peter Jackson are collaborating on a 3D *Tintin*.

Climan figures 3D won't be limited to theaters. His Burbank (Calif.) company has filmed a 60-second 3D commercial for PepsiCo's (PEP) SoBe Lifewater that will appear during the Feb. 1 Super Bowl. They've also used 3ality's technology to convert an episode of the NBC show *Chuck* into 3D, which will air the next day. In both cases, folks at home will need special cardboard blue-and-amber 3D glasses that are being made available at Kmart (S), Target (TGT) and several grocery chains. DreamWorks is also showing a 3D trailer of its *Monsters vs. Aliens* during the NFL championship. "Once you see a picture in 3D, you never want to go back," says Climan, "whether it's in a movie theater or your home theater."

Although 3D goes back to the early years of film, 3ality's movies and video employ technology that might finally bring 3D into the mainstream.

Thanks to computerized digital timing, new 3D films can be broken down to the millisecond, eliminating jumps or pauses that caused previous generations of 3D movies, which were shown on two projectors at once, to fall out of sync and produce laughable or sometimes even nauseating effects. (3ality's gear uses Intel (INTC) microprocessors, which explains why the chipmaker has joined with Pepsi in sponsoring the giveaway glasses for the 3D ad.)

Since leaving Ovitz and his Creative Artists Agency behind in 1999, Climan has become a full-fledged entertainment entrepreneur. A Harvard MBA—Climan also has a master's degree in

health policy and management from Harvard—he started Entertainment Media Ventures, which owns a significant piece of Legacy Sports, a sports talent agency. The Los Angeles venture is also an entertainment consultant for Harrah's Entertainment (HET) and has arranged long-term gigs for Elton John and Jerry Seinfeld at Harrah's Las Vegas casinos.

But it's 3ality where Climan sees the brightest prospects. The company, he says, intends to offer its services to any studio that wants to show its own products. Although he's generally mum on potential deals, he says he's talking with Fox and Sony, which have already partnered with 3ality on the football game broadcast. At the same time, 3ality will produce content itself, as it did in its test with U2, which turned into a theatrical concert movie that grossed \$20 million last year. The mantra for now, he says, is for Hollywood to create enough content for viewers in movie theaters and, when the price comes down, on TV.

And how soon might 3D come to people's homes? LG, Sony, Philips (PHG), and Samsung all showed off 3D sets at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January. Though none is yet on the market, the sets will be able to show 3D movies that studios are currently putting on high-definition Blu-ray discs, he says. For now folks will still have to wear those glasses, although sunglass designers are making them less clunky and maybe even a little cool. And down the road—how far even Climan isn't willing to venture—consumer-electronics companies will offer sets that won't require 3D glasses at all. That's when the picture will, well, pop.

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