



THE ENQUIRER

## More Rachael, less Emeril

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The Food Network, owned in part by Cincinnati-based E.W. Scripps, today offered a glimpse of the new direction for the popular network that reaches more than 90 million households.

The company announced it has signed a two-year deal with Rachael Ray for 60 new episodes of her 30 Minute Meal show and for a new show, Rachael's Vacation, which launches in January.

The deal with Ray comes as the Food Network scales back an 11-year relationship with Emeril Lagasse by ending production of his nightly "Emeril Live" show last week. The show, which has been on the network for 11 years, will continue to air for at least another year as new episodes that have already been taped are shown.

All good things come to an end, and it was time to do something new," said Brooke Johnson, the network's president. "Right now, we're figuring out what that something new is."

Lagasse's "Essence of Emeril" remains in production at the network.

Hitching the network's future to Ray – and not Lagasse – is a sign that Scripps and the Tribune Co., another part owner, are making an effort to bring down production costs, said Peter Sealey, adjunct professor of marketing at Peter Drucker Graduate School of Management at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, Calif. and author of "Simplicity Marketing: End Brand Complexity, Clutter, and Confusion" (Free Press; 2007).

Not only was the nightly Lagasse show, which featured an in-studio band, expensive, but Sealey said it built the Lagasse brand and not the Food Network brand.

It also may increasingly have become a TV show relic because consumers rarely have time anymore to spend it in a kitchen cooking. "When I worked with the Duncan Hines brand back at the Procter & Gamble Co. in 1964, people spent an average of 2 hours and 11 minutes a day preparing food at home," Sealey said. "Today that figure is 17 minutes."

The network is scrambling to deal with sliding daytime ratings. In addition, its signature weekend block of instructional programs, known collectively as "In the Kitchen," has lost viewers.

This has left the network owing refunds, known as "make-goods," to advertisers, executives confirmed.

The New York Times contributed to this report.

