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FROM TOP,

#### **ADWEEK** IN THIS ISSUE

APRIL 2023 | VOL. LXIV NO. 4



As upfronts loom, the race is on to build TV's multicurrency future.



#### **INSIGHTS**

In a crowded field of 60+ alternative ID solutions, meet the top contenders.



**PERSPECTIVE** Born in a mall, **Cinnabon** is thinking beyond the food court.



#### OFF THE CLOCK

In our new department, Boots CMO Pete Markey shares his improv hobby.

**COVER**PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR ADWEEK

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### THE MONTH IN MEDIA AND MARKETING THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF THE PARTY

**BATTER UP** 

MLB AND NEW AOR W+K ARE CHANGING BASEBALL MARKETING. BY JAMESON FLEMING

The Major League Baseball season got underway March 30 with some big changes on the field and behind the scenes.

For the first time in eight years, MLB has chosen an agency of record—Wieden+Kennedy Portland—to give America's pastime a boost, amid new rules designed to make the game more-fast paced and higher scoring.

"We wanted the right partner to be able to work with us not only on filmed creative, but across a variety of different things," said MLB CMO Karin Timpone.

The first work, "Baseball Is Something Else," debuted just ahead of Opening Day and features four fundamentals of what fans find at a baseball game, which will be treated as brand platform ideas with multi-year potential.

The league is also striving to make the game more accessible. MLB.TV and the MLB app will carry more minor league games and content that introduces the next generation of stars. It's also leaning into creators on YouTube and TikTok, as well as an app called Greenfly to get more players involved on social media.

MLB handed Wieden+Kennedy the account without a competitive pitch, trusting that W+K will help integrate baseball better into culture through outlets like food, fashion and music.

"Not only are [W+K Portland] known for their partnership with great brands," Timpone said, "but they also have just really good insights around uncovering the brand truth."



The I VNY logo designed by Milton Glaser for a 1977 tourism campaign remains iconic. But a new WE NYC version, created by independent creative agency Founders for Partnership for New York City, has received largely negative reviews, including from prominent figures: City Council member Justin Brannan compared it to the Holland Tunnel's widely panned 2018 holiday decor. The campaign has cheekily acknowledged the reception on Instagram: "We ♥ critics even if they don't like our logo." —Samantha Nelson



**BIG NUMBER** 

IN 2022, THE PROPORTION OF U.S. HOUSEHOLDS THAT SUBSCRIBE TO TRADITIONAL **PAY TV** DROPPED BELOW 50% FOR THE FIRST TIME

#### **AWARDS**

Each year, Adweek honors the most innovative and inspirational professionals in the world with our Creative 100 list.

While the final list is curated by Adweek's editors, anyone can nominate a potential honoree. (Note: The Creative 100 never repeats a name, so please check whether your nominee has appeared on the list before.) This year's categories include:

- Agency leaders
- Rising agency talent
- Branded content innovators
- Media innovators
- TV and streaming innovators
- Authors and artists
- Directors
- Influencers and celebrities

The deadline for submissions is April 17 for recognition in Adweek's June issue. To nominate a leader, visit adweek.com.

—Brittaney Kiefer



**ON THE MOVE** 



**Dentsu Creative** parts ways with global CCO **Fred Levron** 



Consumer Cellular awards \$50 million media account to **Brainlabs** 



Fernando Machado returns to the food industry as CMO of NotCo

**LESSONS LEARNED** 

### **EMILY SIEGEL**

THE LAFAYETTE
AMERICAN FOUNDER
CHAMPIONS
CAREGIVERS—AND
BETTING ON YOURSELF.
BY EMMY LIEDERMAN

When Emily Siegel was in her 20s, she received a valuable piece of professional advice. After she had bemoaned working a longer day than co-workers rushing home to their children, a colleague reminded her, "You're playing that role now so someone can give you that grace later."

Those words have only grown more resonant with time. "Your career will likely be long and have many chapters to it," said Siegel, president and founding partner at full-service agency Lafayette American. "It's OK to be patient with yourself and remember that each chapter might look different."

Whether someone is taking a step back from work because of child care, family obligations or a decline in mental health, Siegel is an

#### **WORK HISTORY**

Emily Siegel is the president and partner of Lafayette American, a creative, design and strategy agency based in Detroit. Before starting Lafayette American in 2018, Siegel spent four years working on Ford Motor Company's content strategy under WPPowned agency GTB, where she launched a branded podcast and introduced the Pinewood Derby to the Girl Scouts for the first time as part of Ford's STEM initiative. Siegel also held program manager and content strategy roles at Federated Media Publishing and began her advertising career as a Teach for America recruitment associate.



advocate for doing the job that one's current circumstance warrants. Since founding her agency in 2018, she has focused on facilitating a culture of mutual compassion by being unapologetic about her own needs—and welcoming others to do the same.

And when transitioning from a stable and predictable WPP agency role to entrepreneurship during her first pregnancy, Siegel said the highlights of her career have stemmed from trusting intuition over succumbing to self-doubt. When establishing both internal culture and client strategies, she encourages other industry professionals to boldly declare their intentions from the get-go while refusing to allow logistical uncertainty to cloud creative instincts.

#### Catalyzing connection off the clock

Siegel, who executed agency GTB's content strategy for Ford Motor Co. before becoming a founding partner, knows that speaking openly about life outside of work facilitates comfort and community.

Through refusing to hide any side of herself, including blocking off time on her public calendar for child care and family obligations, Siegel

has seen results in how others show up as well. To reduce the number of meetings, she also suggested discontinuing a daily standup (though ultimately, the team wanted to keep it for connection).

When starting the agency as a new mom, she immediately demonstrated her values by establishing paid leave for all caregivers and now urges leaders to understand that conventional policies do not account for diverse circumstances.

"People have really complicated lives, and work is only one part of that," said Siegel, adding that she works with HR to accommodate challenges beyond parenthood. "To keep the best people, we need to make sure our talent is supported and truly feel like they want to be here."

#### Solutions first, logistics second

Lafayette American doesn't want to exceed its core capabilities just to please a potential client, but the agency also isn't interested in letting internal parameters discourage an ideal creative concept.

To offer brands optimized solutions without overextending

talent, Siegel stressed the importance of developing a strong freelance network. She also encourages leaders to invest in client longevity by studying and internalizing a brand beyond the requirements of a single brief.

When health care company Livongo came to the agency with a specific ask, chief creative officer Toby Barlow instead suggested the brand write a book, which would require the help of outside talent.

"We definitely had to build that skill set by seeking support from people with deep publishing backgrounds," Siegel said. "Getting to know a client sometimes means they ask for one thing, but what we're actually hearing them say shows that they need something else."

Beyond endorsing holistic employee support and client solutions that defy limitations, Siegel also reminds leaders that the best professional jump isn't always the most practical.

"Take risks and bet on yourself," she said. "Starting an agency with a newborn was definitely a risk, and becoming an entrepreneur was never on my bucket list, but it has led me to a much more interesting path."

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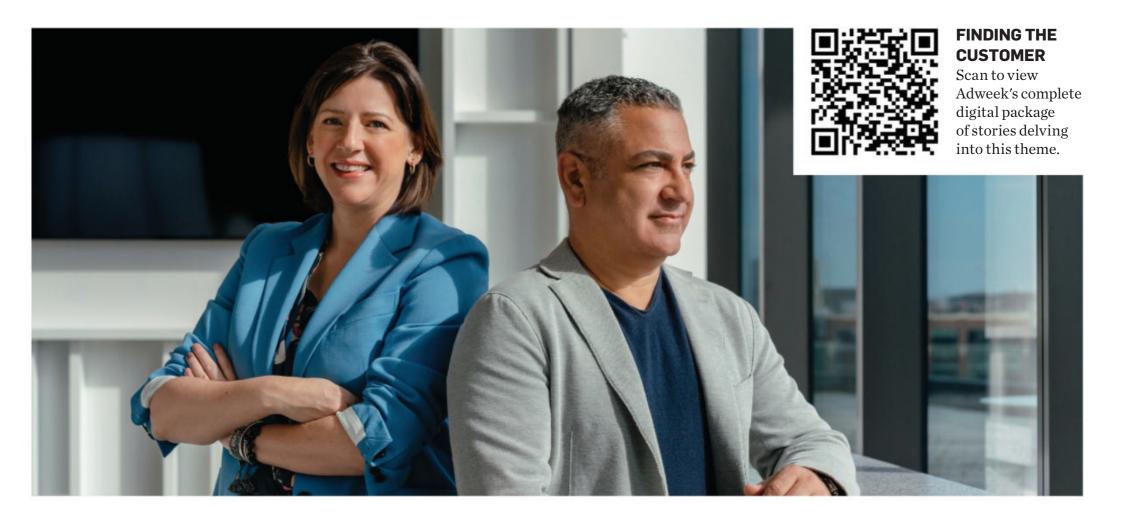
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#### **CONNECTING MCD'S WITH GEN Z**

CMOS MORGAN FLATLEY AND TARIQ HASSAN EXCEL AT NOT ONLY FINDING THE CUSTOMER, BUT ALSO KEEPING THEM IN THE FOLD.

HOW DO YOU BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO AN ICONIC—BUT SOMEWHAT MUSTY—BRAND? It's one of the toughest tasks in marketing: getting consumers to set aside what might be their lifelong perceptions of a brand to reconsider it in a new light. Yet our cover subjects—McDonald's global CMO Morgan Flatley and U.S. CMO Tariq Hassan—have excelled at it without breaking a sweat.

As our Europe brand editor Rebecca Stewart writes in this month's cover story, as recently as just a few years ago, McDonald's was well known, but not necessarily well loved—especially by Gen Zers. That has changed thanks to Flatley, who was elevated to global CMO in 2021, and Hassan, who was hired as U.S. CMO at that time. Together, they have reinvented the brand and ushered in double-digit sales increases by rolling out buzzy McDonald's menus featuring celebs like Travis Scott and BTS, an unexpected yet successful collaboration with streetwear brand Cactus Plant Flea Market, and by expertly parsing a sea of first- and third-party data to drive cultural moments with digital natives.

That made them the ideal focus of this month's theme, Finding the Customer, which spotlights marketers' efforts to accurately

measure and track evolving consumer behaviors and engagement. But Flatley and Hassan take that one step further—they've not only found their ideal customers, but they are also keeping them in the fold thanks to the MyMcDonald's Rewards program, a key feature of the McDonald's app. According to the company, the app has more than 50 million "active" loyalty users in its top six markets since its 2021 U.S. rollout. The cover story is a fascinating read—and offers a rare peek inside the golden arches.

Another key component of our Finding the Customer theme is measurement, a topic that I've written hundreds of stories about on the TV beat during my time at Adweek. And while the buzz around TV measurement seems to have quieted compared to this time last year, make no mistake: It remains one of the industry's most pressing issues, especially with upfront negotiations ramping up. So my TV colleagues Bill Bradley and Mollie Cahillane teamed up for an important deep dive on the current state of measurement, as well as how all of the top companies stack up against one other, from Comscore to VideoAmp.

As always, after you've finished this issue, be sure to read our expanded Finding the Customer digital package online (scan the QR code above), with several more in-depth features examining this theme, including what buyers and TV insiders really think about the biggest measurement providers, the industry's struggle to standardize attention metrics and whether lavish influencer trips are still valuable for brands. It is essential reading as you plot out your media mix heading into the upfront.



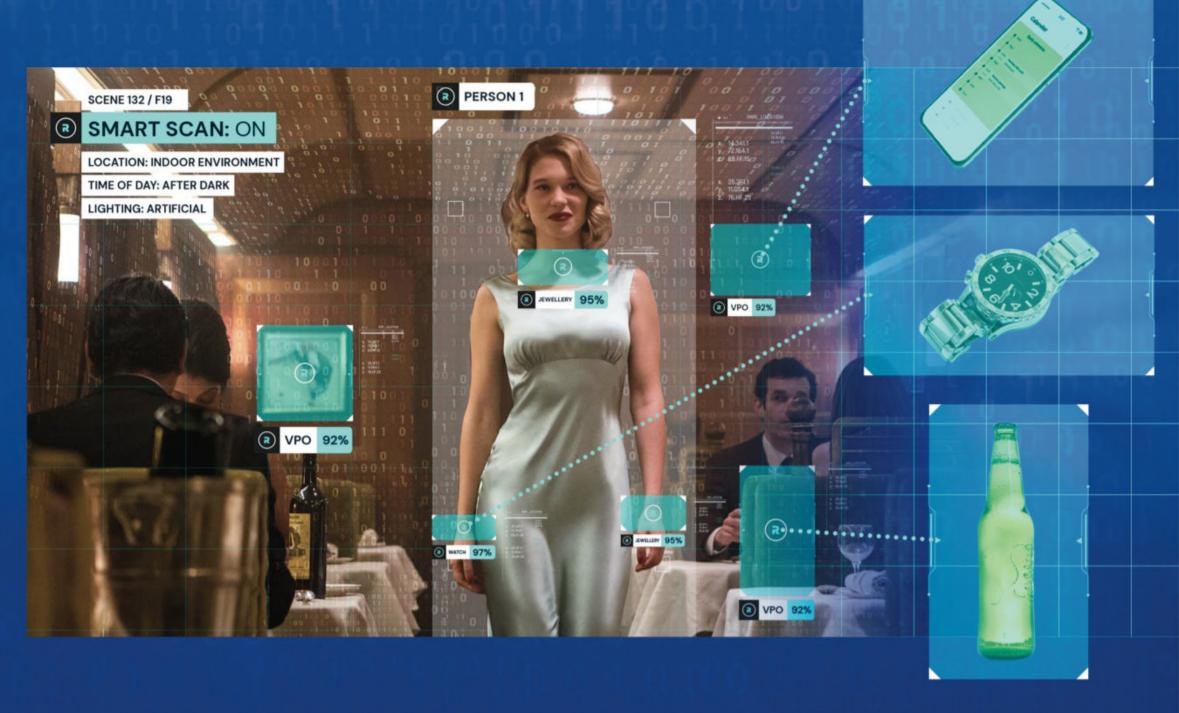
**Jason Lynch**Senior Managing Editor, TV and Features
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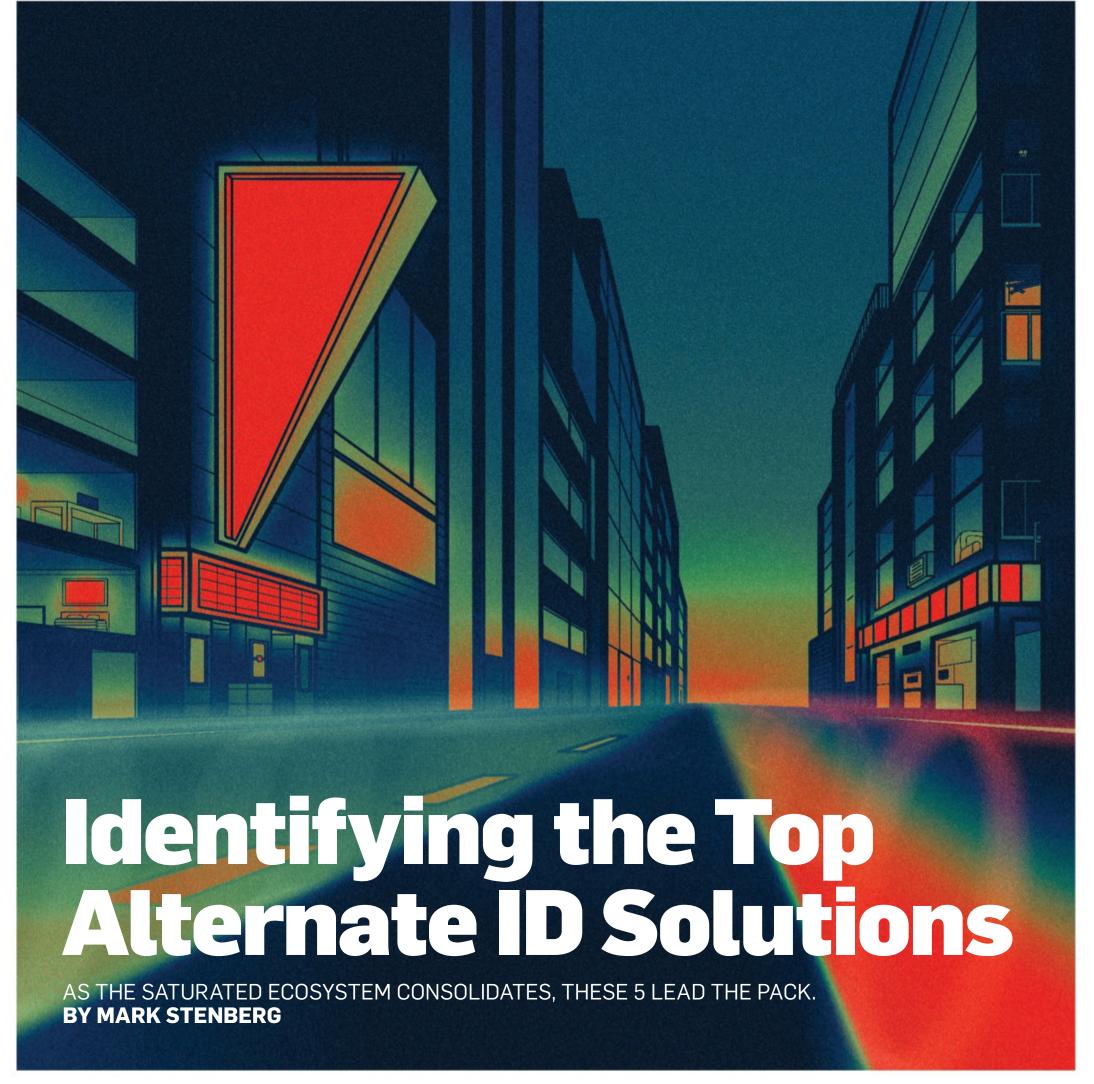


ILLUSTRATION BY KACY BURDETTE

rom the moment Google announced its intention in January 2020 to deprecate third-party cookies, the digital advertising industry has found itself consumed by a single, deceptively complex question: What will replace them?

Experts agree the answer lies in a portfolio approach: a curated mix of alternative identifiers that, collectively, offer a comparable, privacy-compliant means of targeting and measurement. But this strategy has led to heightened competition among the 60-plus alternative IDs looking to make the cut.

"We are never going to recommend just one solution," said Sarah Polli, senior director of marketing technology at Hearts and Science. "We recommend a mixture, because we need as many signals in the bid stream as possible."

Despite these challenges, five alternative IDs have pulled away from the pack, according to interviews with a dozen digital advertising experts, as well as exclusive data from the currency platform Sincera and supplyside platform Sovrn.

When accounting for their total adoption, financial performance and privacy durability, RampID, UID2.0 and SharedID lead among deterministic candidates, while ID5 and Panorama set the pace for probabilistic options.

The emergence of a cadre of leading solutions aligns with broader data from Sovrn, which finds that the industry has begun to coalesce around a handful of IDs, according to Peter Cunha, its managing director of ad management.

Of the 25,000 domains Sovrn monitors, the number of publishers deploying three or more solutions has decreased in the last six months, down to 19%. Likewise, 49% of publishers now deploy only one ID and 32% deploy two.

However, this comes as the percentage of bid requests with an alternative ID present has risen, to 67% in the U.S. and 64% in the U.K., meaning publishers are using a smaller number of solutions but in greater volume.

#### How publishers assess alternative IDs

To solve for the universal addressability once offered by third-party cookies, publishers and marketers must employ a mix of deterministic and probabilistic solutions.

Deterministic IDs require users to authenticate themselves, often with an email address, which enables marketers to serve them targeted ads but bottlenecks their total reach. Probabilistic IDs do not require authentication, giving them broader scale but at the expense of precision.

Combined, the two tiers provide publishers a way to serve as relevant an ad as possible in every given environment, while ensuring people have consented to the exchange.

But while they divide broadly into neat categories, the individual solutions can differ radically. As such, marketers must evaluate IDs based on additional criteria, such as their performance, level of adoption and business model.

These factors can be difficult to measure. Performance, for example, which measures match rates and

deployments, according to data from Sincera, which crawls 270,000 domains and monitors bid-stream data to chronicle ID adoption, said co-founder Mike O'Sullivan. Each deployment represents a publisher that has installed the identifier, although that metric—and Sincera data generally—paints only a partial picture of the landscape.

RampID, which serves as the currency for an infrastructure called Authenticated Traffic Solutions (ATS), benefited from a first-mover advantage, having launched in 2017. It also bakes its costs into the buy-side, encouraging publisher adoption.

"LiveRamp is most transacted on by advertisers," said Patrick McCann, svp of research at CafeMedia. "It is was developed by The Trade Desk and is now operated by Prebid, is free to use for all parties.

SharedID, also from Prebid, serves a much different use case. It does not link an identifier to an individual, which means it is not technically a universal ID and offers limited commercial value.

But the solution, which has notched 58,000 deployments, enables marketers to frequency cap in cookieless environments, boosting publisher CPMs by limiting the pool of biddable impressions and improving clickthrough rates.

When CafeMedia set SharedID as its publisher-provided ID in Google Ad Manager, it saw an 8% lift on AdX buying in Safari, a roughly 1% lift in total revenue, according to McCann.

#### Probabilistic: imprecise scale

As publishers have experimented with the probabilistic solutions, two IDs have emerged from the pack.

The first, ID5, benefits from its early entrance into the field, as it was introduced in 2017. In March, it reached 80,000 deployments, making ID5 the most widely adopted identifier on the open web.

However, it generates little commercial return for its adoptees, according to Wohl, and instead serves as a free insurance policy against the shifting privacy landscape. According to Sovrn, when ID5 is present in a bid request, it generates an average lift in yield of 14%.

Likewise, Panorama serves primarily as a hedge against future uncertainty. It has accrued more than 58,000 deployments, thanks in part to its connection to Lotame, a popular customer data platform.

When the Panorama ID is present in a bid request, it yields on average a 15% lift in CPMs, according to Sovrn.

These two solutions, like their deterministic counterparts, lead in their respective arenas, but all face constant threat. Alternate IDs themselves represent just one of several potential solves for the loss of third-party cookies, alongside browser-based, cohort-based and contextual approaches.

"Universal IDs have their own limitations," said Todd Rose, the senior vice president of addressability at InMobi. "So even they have to be wrapped into a larger portfolio of approaches."



MARK STENBERG IS ADWEEK'S SENIOR MEDIA REPORTER COVERING THE BUSINESS OF DIGITAL AND PRINT MEDIA AND PUBLISHERS. @MARKSTENBERG3

# 'Universal IDs have their own limitations. So even they have to be wrapped into a larger portfolio of approaches.'

**Todd Rose,** svp of addressability, InMobi

revenue lift among other factors, is hard to calculate due to the methods publishers use for testing, according to Justin Wohl, the chief revenue officer of Salon.

To isolate the incremental value of an ID, publishers must split their version-testing by users, not traffic, assigning certain cohorts to ping only against certain solutions. Even then, demand for specific IDs varies, so a solution popular one month could appear abandoned the next.

#### **Deterministic: limited but lucrative potential**

Among deterministic offerings, RampID from LiveRamp has become the most widely adopted solution in the identity space.

In March, it topped 46,000

the glue that holds the addressability space together."

When CafeMedia authenticates traffic through ATS, it sees a 300% to 500% CPM lift for Safari users, and a 20% to 30% CPM increase on Chrome, according to McCann.

The second-most popular deterministic solution, UID2.0, topped 36,000 deployments in March. It owes its rapid adoption, in part, to the ubiquity of its cookie-dependent predecessor, UID, as well as a key integration with RampID, according to Wohl.

"The Trade Desk leapfrogged their way into the market by connecting and syncing with the RampID," Wohl said. "That gave them an immediate response to questions about who was using their ID."

The open-source software, which

BUT BUYERS WONDER WHETHER THE IAB'S ANNUAL DIGITAL CONTENT EVENT IS STILL RELEVANT. BY BILL BRADLEY AND MOLLIE CAHILLANE

The Interactive Advertising
Bureau's annual NewFronts is
almost here, which for advertisers
means a week of sprinting around
Manhattan to view multiple
presentations from digital publishers.
But for Day 3 of this year's digital
content event, taking place May 1-4,
in-person attendees will be able to
remain seated in a single venue.

The May 3 presentations will be held entirely at New York's 225 Liberty St., following requests from the marketing and buying community that the IAB make the NewFronts more accessible and streamlined. "I think it will be good for both presenter and attendee," said IAB CEO David Cohen. "A one-stop-shop for 20 different companies" like Crackle, LG Ads and DirecTV, each of whom will have 10- to 20-minute slots to make their pitches to marketers.

That's not the only change in store for this year's NewFronts, which will offer live and virtual attendee options for the second consecutive year following two years of all-virtual presentations during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Another addition, following feedback from buyers, is further inclusion of presenters from diverse media companies. Blavity, Cocina and Urban One will all have a presence at Wednesday's presentations, and the IAB waived their event participation fees.

It's a theme that Marcy Greenberger, evp and managing partner at UM, will be paying close attention to in this year's presentations.

"There have been a number of partners lately coming up with creative solutions to drive supply and spend with minority-owned publishers," Greenberger said, noting the importance of continuing DEI efforts despite a soft ad market. "So it will be interesting to see if any of those capabilities are shared out during the NewFronts."

#### **Top priorities**

Video will be top of mind at the 2023
NewFronts for buyers, with several
telling Adweek that they're interested
in strides made in shoppable and
ecommerce, including any updates
from Amazon's NFL packages,
especially its first-ever Black Friday
game. Additionally, attendees will
be looking for more insight into
CTV transparency, encompassing
everything from content transparency
to delivery of dayparts and verification.

"There is no doubt that the video landscape has changed materially," said Cohen, noting that ad-supported streaming is vastly different than even three years ago. "The pandemic put an accelerant on where the market is going."

Cohen acknowledged that some presenters believe today's marketplace is a 24/7 and 365-day experience, and choosing a week or two in May for presentations "doesn't make much sense."

However, echoing comments from years past, Cohen and the IAB believe that the industry has to look at video opportunities around the upfront buying season in a single period of time, acknowledging the value of bringing the industry together and building relationships.

"There is an artificial separation between the NewFronts and upfront week, which takes place two weeks later," Cohen said. "Over time, could those two weeks combine into one? Probably. But the time-space continuum doesn't allow for all that to happen in one week."

#### Losing relevancy?

However, some buyers wonder if the timetable for NewFronts and upfront collaboration has already run out. According to one buyer, speaking anonymously, the NewFronts are losing relevancy, as there's "no urgency" to place transactions, and technology is passing the tech event by.

"The NewFronts came about at a time where everything was pretty much around direct digital versus the flexibility of the programmatic

#### NEW FACES AT THE NEWFRONTS

The IAB's annual digital content event, set for May 1-4, will feature several new presenters this year, including Americano Media, Cafe Media, DirecTV, LATV, Revry and Teads. Meanwhile, a number of companies that participated in the 2022 NewFronts are skipping this year's event, including Twitter (following a volatile year with new owner Elon Musk at the helm), Black Enterprise, Dotdash Meredith, Nuestra.TV, Revolt, Tubi and Wave Sports + Entertainment.

world that we live in now," said the buyer. Multiple buyers told Adweek the NewFronts weren't necessarily on their radar, especially with the list of event presenters seemingly coming out later and later each year.

However, others said they'd welcome a more unified NewFronts and upfronts experience in the future.

"The lines have been blurred, particularly when there are partners that take part in both of those weeks, and I think we need to see more collaboration between those two," Samantha Rose, evp and strategic investment lead at Horizon Media, told Adweek. "I do think, particularly with traditional TV partners and traditional streaming services, there's so much commonality across those."

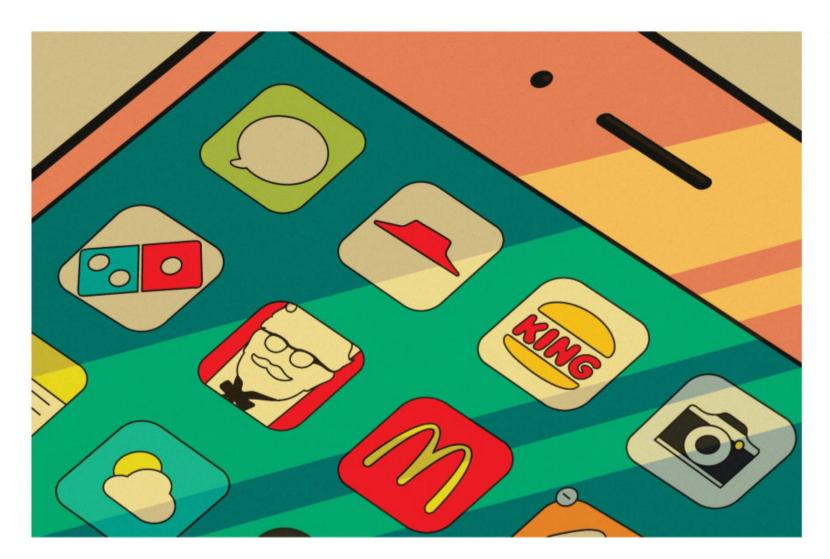
For now, insisted Cohen, "I do think there is value in getting the industry together building relationships, seeing the new and the next, in one fell swoop." That said, he added, "the market is always moving, so it'll be curious to see how the NewFronts and upfronts evolve over time. ... But predicting the future is a notoriously tricky business."



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### Bringing Fast-Food Delivery In-House

DATA-HUNGRY BRANDS CLAMOR TO DELIVER ORDERS THEMSELVES. **BY REBECCA STEWART** 

As players in the \$222 billion food delivery market can attest, when customers with grumbling stomachs want food, they want it now. Breakfast from McDonald's, coffee from Starbucks or a midnight meatball marinara sub? Name it, and it will be at your door in as little as 20 minutes.

Pre-pandemic, frictionless apps such as DoorDash, Uber Eats, Deliveroo and GrubHub were already on the rise, bolstered by a trend toward convenience from millennials and Gen Zers. And post-lockdown, business is still booming: According to research firm Grand View, the market will hit \$505.5 billion by 2030, growing at an annual rate of 10.3% each year.

To satiate customers' appetites, fast food chains have typically partnered with third-party apps to get hot food to doorsteps. However, now a fresh battleground is emerging as major chains take control over delivery

themselves, pushing customers to order via their brands' apps and platforms instead.

Some of this is cost-cutting, with chains looking to bypass the fees third-party platforms charge to access their delivery fleet. But there's something bigger at play, too: Data-hungry advertisers, including McDonald's and KFC, have spotted an opportunity to glean more insights and improve customer loyalty by delivering orders themselves.

#### **Delivering the goods**

In the U.K., KFC Delivery has just inked a lucrative deal with broadcaster Sky Sports to sponsor its top-flight live coverage around soccer, cricket and Formula 1.

The deal was "a huge step" for KFC's delivery service that aligned with its long-term plan to make delivery "relevant to as many home occasions as possible," said Sam Grindey, business director at media agency Mindshare, which is handling the planning for the contextual partnership.

KFC has been going all-in on its delivery proposition in the market for some time. In 2022, a TV and social World Cup campaign from Mother London pushed fans to order on the app via tongue-in-cheek executions celebrating the messy joy of eating at home.

McDonald's, meanwhile, also promoted its McDelivery service heavily during the December Qatar tournament, which resulted in "double-digit" increases in delivery sales across its top 10 markets, according to CEO Chris Kempczinski. The app hosts its loyalty program, MyMcDonald's Rewards, and now counts 50 million active users across its top six markets.

Other fast-food chains including Burger King, KFC and Costa Coffee have already baked loyalty into their official apps, incentivizing customers with points-based spending rewards and personalized discounts.

A new advertising battleground is emerging as they seek to encourage people to sign up. Domino's, Burger King and others are entering the ring with promotions intended to drive direct delivery and pickup sales.

#### All about the data

Perhaps the biggest advantage of onboarding customers to their own apps: Brands can get a better understanding of their customers' habits. "Data is one of the biggest reasons why fast-food brands want to promote their own apps over third-party delivery platforms," said Matt Moorut, director analyst at Gartner.

With inflation increasing the cost of necessities, customers are cutting back and focusing on value. Fast-food brands have a huge opportunity to deliver this perceived value within their own walls, while observing transactional, behavioral and—in some instances—location data.

Meanwhile, said Moorut, brands are starting to realize they're losing out by pointing diners to third-party apps, where customers are just a click away from competitors.

Instead, they want a direct line to fans, where they can mine first-party data. This will not only allow them to improve the customer experience inapp but also give them the potential to build look-alike audiences within the walled gardens of Facebook and Instagram.

Only time will tell what this means for the Ubers and GrubHubs of the world. However, most of the "inhouse" delivery programs are being serviced and scaled by third-party infrastructure. Customers might order via McDelivery, but their Big Mac will still be delivered by a DoorDash or Uber Eats rider across 10,000 U.S. locations. The same goes for KFC, Panera and Taco Bell.

Moorut said restaurants setting up competing delivery programs obviously won't help third-party apps' growth ambitions, but it isn't "terminal" for the third-party market.

"Third-party apps need to double down on what they do well, and improve the efficiency of anything they can," he advised. "The business model works on razor-thin margins, which necessitates a clear focus on optimization to reduce costs to find profitability."



REBECCA STEWART IS ADWEEK'S EUROPE BRAND EDITOR BASED OUT OF LONDON. BEFORE JOINING ADWEEK SHE SPENT 8 YEARS AT THE DRUM.

@BERECCASTEWART

#### The New Job Landscape

THE MARKETING UNIVERSE, UPENDED BY COVID, EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY OVER THE PAST YEAR. BY PAUL HIEBERT

**Three years ago this month,** as Covid-19 began to spread across the country, more than 20 million U.S. jobs disappeared.

The ad industry was not spared. In April 2020, the number of positions in advertising, public relations and other related services declined 8.3% compared to the prior month, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Although employment rates have returned to pre-pandemic levels, the roles are not the same as they were in 2020. Sure enough, figures from LinkedIn show how the marketing universe has changed—and continues to evolve.

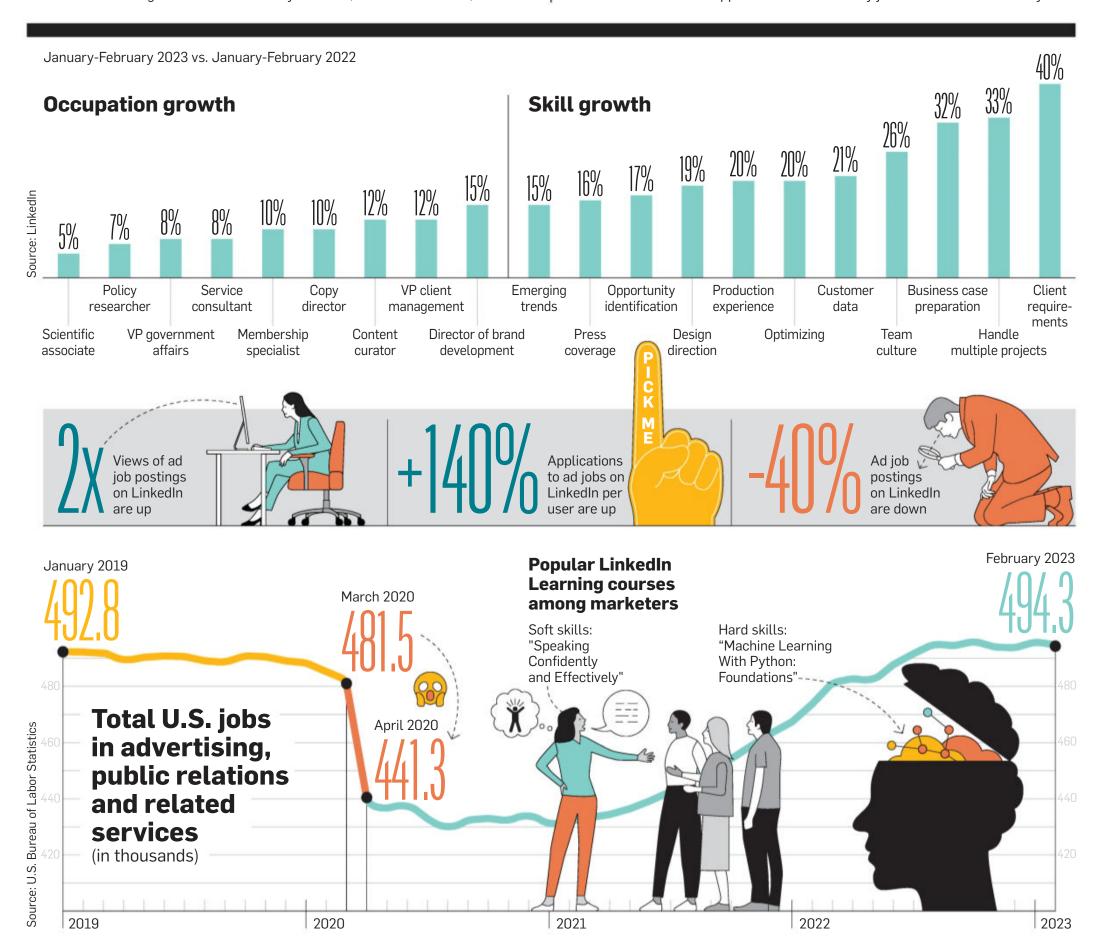
"Brand and content jobs are rising, signaling it's more important for marketers to continue investing in their brands to stay relevant," said Connie Chen, LinkedIn's

insights manager.

During the early months of 2023, more LinkedIn users held titles such as director of brand development and content curator than the same period in 2022. An increase in roles addressing policy and government affairs also points to a growing concern over privacy laws and regulations.

At the same time, ongoing talk of an economic downturn coincides with a tighter industry: Ad job postings on LinkedIn are down 40% so far this year, while the number of submitted applications per user are up 140%.

"The advertising services job market is particularly competitive," Chen added. "Marketers viewed and applied for twice as many jobs in this field than last year."





# The Ever-Wider World of Sports

REACHING FANS IS ABOUT DATA, CREATIVE AND MEASURING IMPRESSIONS. BY DAVID HELMREICH

As TV viewership continues to shift toward streaming, we've seen traditional media channels make their content more widely accessible to digital audiences. And live sports, which has long been considered the last stronghold of linear, is no exception.

Within the past year, major legacy platforms including ESPN, NBC, Fox and most recently MSG have invested in streaming offerings. This is in addition to the established streaming players that have bought rights to live sports, such as Thursday Night Football on Amazon Prime.

A recent LG Ad Solutions study found that 54% of those who anticipated watching the March Madness basketball tournament this year were planning to stream at least one game.

With live sports audiences now spread across both CTV and linear, here are some considerations for advertisers as they navigate this landscape.

#### Make data-backed decisions

At the surface level, with all the different sports streaming apps and

channels, this fragmentation can be overwhelming for advertisers. Rather than firing ad spend across every sports streaming app and channel, brands need to understand which sports their target audiences are engaging with.

As adoption of smart TVs rises, there has never been an easier time to do this. Last year, the global smart TV market was valued at \$197.8 billion and is expected to expand at a 11.4% CAGR from 2023 to 2030. Picking up on this growth, Roku launched its own smart TV earlier this year. These smart TVs provide advertisers with automatic content recognition data, enabling a deeper understanding of audience consumption for targeting and measurement.

#### Focus on relevant consumer experiences

Once data reveals where investments are best distributed, it then comes down to ensuring the consumer is having a good experience with the right creative.

Creative strategies are still largely rooted in a linear viewing experience, starting with a big idea conveyed in a 60- or 30-second spot. These spots are then typically extended into digital formats.

To take advantage of how audiences are increasingly consuming live sports, advertisers need to think about adapting creative for interactive and shoppable experiences. From interactive ads using QR codes to enable shoppable experiences, to dynamic ads using location and timing to serve up different products, this wide range of formats includes experiences that consumers prefer.

These types of activations also enable marketers to better attribute website visits to the actual CTV ad. Think about how many ads from this year's Super Bowl used QR codes compared with 2022. Advertisers realized that QR codes on CTV ads provide them with a measurable performance signal.

In a world where performance is most valued, advertisers must create ads that can be easily measured and attributed to a sale—or risk missing the real impact of digital TV.

#### Measure the metrics that matter

Finally, advertisers need to ensure the live sports spend is worth the investment, which means measuring the metrics that matter: KPIs unique to the businesses and aligned with campaign goals. And while this can be

# 'Advertisers must create [measurable] ads ... or risk missing the real impact of digital TV.'

difficult, measuring impressions as the common count makes it possible.

As more forms of TV are digitally distributed, direct impressions can be better counted. This is a fundamental shift and opens up new ways to get a basic idea of ad exposure, reach, frequency, unique reach and outcomes. Using an impression-based model helps evaluate performance by inventory source.

A very common misperception, particularly with CTV, is that it's an opaque ecosystem with little ability to understand how inventory sources overlap because walled gardens don't make data readily available. Using impressions negates this issue, and when combined with linear viewership data, marketers can glean robust insights in the overlap between traditional television and CTV.

Even with live sports spread across linear and CTV, brands can still successfully reach fans. They need to identify where their audience is, explore dynamic and interactive ad formats, and align on impression-based measurement to drive reach and outcomes.



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# Golden Arch-itects

Old McDonald's? Not anymore, thanks to CMOs Morgan Flatley and Tariq Hassan, who reinvigorated the brand for Gen Z.

MCDONALD'S LOGO IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMILIAR symbols on earth, recognized by more people around the world than the Christian cross. At 68, the fast-food brand is still one of the most valuable advertisers too, with Kantar putting its worth at \$196.5 billion.

However, in the years before the Covid-19 pandemic, McDonald's was facing a major problem: Among young, digitally fluid audiences, the shine had come off those golden arches. A leaked 2016 internal memo suggested just 20% of millennials had tried a Big Mac. Elsewhere, data from financial firm Piper Sandler showed that teens were defecting to rivals Chickfil-A, Chipotle and Dunkin'.

In 2020, then-U.S. CMO Flatley acknowledged that under-34s were becoming harder for brands to reach. So she decided to take a risk and go all-in on celebrity partnerships intended to cement McDonald's place in culture and rebuild its connection with younger audiences. Enter the Travis Scott Meal: a Quarter Pounder with cheese, french fries and a Sprite that gave the brand a 4.6% quarterly boost and doubled sales of its flagship patty.



"What I saw in the U.S., and I can now see globally, is the power of putting McDonald's side by side with other cultural icons," Flatley—now the company's global CMO—told Adweek. "It's helped us reinvent the brand in new, more relevant ways for Gen Z."

Scott's combo (the first celebrity item to grace the fast-food chain's menu since Michael Jordan's McJordan in 1992) formed part of McDonald's nationwide "Famous Orders" campaign devised by Flatley and Wieden+Kennedy in 2020. The work pushed the universal truth that everyone has a go-to McDonald's order, even customers as iconic as Magic Johnson and Kim Kardashian.

Flatley's gamble on celebrity paid off, and the success of the Houston-born rapper's combo started the chain on a path that not only helped it become more relevant, but also negated some of the damage Covid-19 had inflicted on its business.

McDonald's most senior marketer, Flatley, was promoted to global CMO in 2021, before being elevated again in 2023 to evp, global CMO and new business ventures. Tasked with building on the foundations his predecessor had laid, Tariq Hassan took up the U.S. CMO role when Flatley stepped up, with the added responsibility of leading McDonald's customer experience.

Both Hassan and Flatley—the company's dynamic marketing duo—are laser-focused on reasserting McDonald's status as an iconic brand, one that's culturally relevant across continents and generations. The recipe they're cooking up features a sprinkling of star power and insights rooted in fan truths, as well as a more cohesive internal approach to marketing—held together with a smart data and digital strategy.

This approach is a "new world recipe for success," said James Kirkham, CEO and founder of brand consultancy Iconic, who previously worked agency-side on McDonald's digital strategy in the U.K. "Rather than falling into the trap of trying to pastiche classic spots, the brand has instead taken core cultural ingredients and is turning them into a truly exciting body of work. ... Cultural chaos is being tamed by the bright minds in Golden Arches HQ right now—and adland feels all the more fresh and fun for it."

#### **MAKING CULTURE, NOT BURGERS**

When Hassan arrived at McDonald's in August 2021 following a tenure as Petco's CMO, he wanted to keep that momentum going. "Famous Orders' woke up the brand and put some swagger back into the way we speak to consumers," he said. His message to his marketing team and agency partners, as per W+K: "McDonald's isn't just in the business of making burgers; it's now in the business of making culture." (see sidebar)

Other celebrities began launching their

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own menu items that year, including rapper Saweetie. With some help from K-pop outfit BTS, Flatley took the campaign global, running it in almost 50 markets including India, Spain and Australia.

What followed next was a complete reappraisal of McDonald's place in culture, as Hassan noted the brand's U.S. marketing had become heavily fixed around a busy promotional calendar. This, coupled with McDonald's sheer size and ubiquity, meant it was too transactional. Its advertising spoke to everyone but said very little about its place in people's lives: It was well known, but not

necessarily well loved.

So Hassan has spent the past two years deepening the connection that the Travis Scott meal kickstarted with younger audiences, through what he described as "fan truths": the moments, memories and real-life experiences that make McDonald's relevant to individuals.

"We've shifted our logic of being a brand that speaks brand-to-fan to one that speaks fan-to-fan," Hassan said. Every single piece of communication McDonald's puts out in the U.S. is derived from a physical book containing these vignettes, which is maintained by W+K, before being reflected in McDonald's creative.

#### **GIVING FANS A SEAT AT THE TABLE**

In-store and online surveys, and data gleaned from social listening and McDonald's official app inform these truths, which could range from people rehearsing their order before they approach the drive-thru speaker to, "I always put my hash brown inside my Sausage and Egg McMuffin." Softer metrics play a part too, with marketers taking what Hassan dubbed "road trips" across different markets to intersect with the brand's patrons where







Recent hit campaigns include (from left) 'Guess Who's Back,' Szechuan sauce's return and McRib's 'farewell tour.'

### Would You Like a Side of Culture With That?

When it comes to marketing, McDonald's doesn't just want to sell burgers—it also wants to shape popular culture.

Hassan is the first to admit that the word "culture" has become overused by marketers. But for McDonald's, the term starts with something very simple: the menu.

"It's so central to our business," said Flatley, noting the menu team sits within the U.S. and global marketing divisions. The brand spends time going on what Hassan described as "food safaris" around different markets to get a feel for trends and what customers want and create new classics.

That includes the McCrispy (a crunchy fried chicken sandwich), which was launched into markets including the U.S., U.K. and LATAM to help the brand grow its share of the chicken market. Flatley said her team has been tasked with turning

the menu item into a "global icon," as famous as the Big Mac.

"We're a food company," said Hassan. "We must think about how we impact culture from a taste perspective. We must find fun and unique ways to reflect the changing dynamic and culture in each market."

It's not all about food, though, as Hassan made clear to the brand's U.S. creative agency, W+K, when he joined in 2021. Marques Gartrell and Brandon Henderson, the agency's global executive creative directors for the McDonald's account, relayed his original brief: McDonald's wasn't just in the business of making burgers; it now had to be in "the business of driving culture." The pair had already been

working on the brand's fan-led strategy with Flatley, putting "Famous Orders" and the Travis Scott meal out into the world.

"For those fan truths, we always say they're at their best when they're specific, special and shared," said Gartrell, adding that the brand decided to stop listening to the "haters" and instead follow fans' lead.

So they also focused on the menu, responding to fan calls for the return of McDonald's legendary Szechuan sauce (available exclusively via the app), which has only appeared on the menu four times in the past 25 years.

Once the sauce's return was announced in March 2022, W+K knew diners would go crazy to collect the packaging, so it leaned into the behavior by treating it like an exclusive sneaker drop, with five different collectible designs, said Gartrell. McDonald's official social media accounts were flooded with promotions, alongside a Times Square billboard. The social-led campaign became the brand's most cost-efficient app download campaign, reaching 420 million people.

Henderson's favorite work to date for the brand was centered around another cult classic, the McRib, which was brought back in October 2022 for what McDonald's claimed was a "farewell tour."

Posters displaying the juicy BBQ pork dish's image appeared nationwide, while an accompanying website told fans where to get it, along with how to access McRib trivia, download T-shirt decals and send messages to fellow McRib lovers.

Globally, the same ethos is being driven by agencies including TBWA\Paris, which has been McDonald's partner in France since 1985. In 2021, post-lockdown, the creative shop unveiled "Guess Who's Back": a logo- and product-free pixel campaign that made a visual play on just how embedded McDonald's is in everyday culture.

"That campaign was all about reductionism; it was minimalist and simple," said Faustin Claverie, executive creative director at TBWA\Paris. "We wanted to have fun with consumers, and the brand is so immediately recognizable that this was easy to do." —*R.S.* 

PHOTOS (L TO R): MCDONALD'S, TBWA\PARIS; MCDONALD'S, W+K; MCDONALD'S, W+K

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Completing the fan-to-fan cycle, McDonald's asks fans to relay the message themselves, whether its Saweetie or a Filet-o-Fish-loving mom on TikTok. "When you attach the brand to other fans, whether they're celebrities, cultural figures or designers, they breathe new life into it, yet they still manage to retain much of what is so special about McDonald's," said Flatley.

The brand's "Menu Hacks" campaign—in essence, "Famous Orders" for its less-starry customers—has seen unusual McDonald's food combinations that had risen to fame on TikTok become official menu options. For Hassan, it was a manifestation of this entire approach.

"We didn't invent the menu hack—it was alive and well on TikTok—but we just decided to lean in, in a simple way and create a unique experience for fans," Hassan said, noting that each food item was packaged separately so people had to "build" their own McDonald's meal.

In another instance, a relatable tweet from a customer declaring how sad it was that "one day you ordered a Happy Meal for the last time, and you didn't even know it" was the genesis for the brand's unexpected but successful 2021 collaboration with streetwear brand Cactus Plant Flea Market.

The imprint's founder, Cynthia Lu, redesigned the famous little red box for adults. Each one contained a meal and a surprise: one of four collectible figurines based on familiar McDonald's characters including the Hamburglar and a new limited-edition mascot, Cactus Buddy. Custom Cactus Plant Flea Market x McDonald's

items including T-shirts were also listed online.

Lu "and the design team delved into their own nostalgia and experiences and brought an idea that was all about friendship to life," Hassan said. "As a marketer, you must find the insight, find the idea, enter culture and collaborate. To do that, you can't control it—you've got to share the pen."

Hassan called the campaign a "home run," and said it led McDonald's to experience its highest weekly digital figures in history after its launch in September 2022.

Flatley praised Lu for helping customers, and McDonald's itself, "see the brand in a new light."

#### 'A MARKETER'S DREAM'

In the brand's U.S. home market, Hassan's strategic approach is paying off with sales increasing 5.9% in 2022, boosted by increased foot traffic and consumers trading down from full-service restaurants amid an economic squeeze.

Globally, same-store sales climbed 10.9% for the year, with strong demand in the U.K., Germany and France. This was despite a financial hit from exiting Russia after 30 years in the market, following the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Overseeing marketing for the more than 38,000 locations it operates in across the world, Flatley has been fixed on executing the McDonald's "Accelerating the Arches" digital growth strategy, which has meant doubling down on what she termed the "four Ds": delivery, digital, drive-thru and development.

Digital sales in its top six global markets topped \$7 billion in the final three months of 2022, accounting for 35% of the fast-food

behemoth's revenues.

With these numbers still on the rise, a huge focus for the PepsiCo and Saatchi & Saatchi alum Flatley has been onboarding consumers to McDonald's official app—host to its MyMcDonald's Rewards program—which CEO Chris Kempczinski recently told investors has more than 50 million "active" users in its top six markets. The initiative offers discounts on everything from fries to McFlurries and allows consumers to earn points on their purchases that can later be redeemed for menu items.

"Our app is so important. Getting to know consumers better is the way forward," Flatley said, adding that the company was already successfully serving personalized offers and messages to customers, leading to "increased visits and frequency of purchase."

Hassan acknowledged the app was "a marketer's dream" in a world where brands are increasingly leaning on first-party data, and it was one of the things that drew him to McDonald's just prior to its debut. More tailored advertising and customization is in the pipeline, said Hassan, outlining his ambition that the app would use data exchange to drive cultural moments with digital natives.

Hassan already tried his hand at this in 2022 with "Camp McDonald's," a "reimagined" digital version of organized summer fun geared toward Gen Z customers. Hosted within the mobile app, the collaboration with musician Kid Cudi was billed as 27 days of daily programs where fans could engage with promotions, merch and more.

"It was an acquisition program, and it encouraged 2 million customers onto the

#### Inside McDonald's Global Marketing Consortium

World travelers know that McDonald's tastes a little different around the globe. From its Dosa Masala Burger in India to its Philippines' exclusive Cheesy Eggdesal breakfast option, the chain caters to individuals across continents and

But when it comes to global marketing, Flatley is encouraging its brand custodians to take lessons from one another, bringing both a culture of collaboration and more cohesion to McDonald's global marketing proposition.

A worldwide consortium of McDonald's CMOs—from those based in China to the U.S.—meet monthly to share ideas and progress. The group was formed at the height of Covid-19, when the brand's global marketers were feeling "unsure" about their next step, Flatley said. Meetings were initially set to develop a "support

network" that would help steer the brand through a tumultuous period.

Since then, though, the concept has evolved into a space where CMOs can share creative ideas, working as a collective toward McDonald's goal of cementing its place in culture.

The ultimate example of this forum in action, said Flatley, was **McDonald's "Raise Your Arches" work** developed by Leo Burnett London under the watch of Michelle Graham-Clare, the brand's U.K. CMO.

Graham-Clare shared the work—which celebrated the iconic golden arches without mentioning the brand name—with her peers ahead of launch. "It was so special that we were able to scale the work worldwide," said Flatley, who extended the campaign into 35 additional markets. -R.S.



MCDONALD'S, LEO BURNETT LONDO

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app. But if you talk to people who experienced it, they wouldn't say they were 'acquired.' Instead, they engaged with a monthlong experience," Hassan noted. "When we talk about marketing at McDonald's, we don't separate brand or performance—we talk about brand performance. That was a perfect example of this in action."

For Flatley, seeing how customers interact with the app is also helping to bridge the gap between customer experience (CX) and brand—an initiative the company forged an entire division dedicated to achieving in 2020.

Led by chief customer officer Manu Steijaert, the CX team combines data analytics, digital engagement, global marketing and operations to improve how guests engage with the brand at each physical and digital touchpoint.

"We sit down and talk with them about how the decisions we make as marketers impact everything from back of house to restaurant design," said Flatley. She highlighted markets such as China, where most customer transactions are digital (whether via the app or in-store screens) and how this evolving behavior will impact every brand interaction.

"Marketing needs to have a strong seat at the CX table to talk about the role of the consumer," she said. "That is what the future is going to look like for McDonald's."

#### **BRINGING COHESION TO CREATIVITY**

As well as preparing the brand for its digital future, Flatley is steering a culture of creative

excellence internally and with agency partners—including Leo Burnett, DDB, TBWA, W+K, Starcom and OMD—to cement the brand's cultural status beyond the U.S. and deliver results for the Happy Meal maker across borders.

To meet these goals, Flatley has started to bake "more structure" into its creative processes to ensure campaigns are "much more consistent" between markets, she said. This has included giving CMOs standardized briefing guidelines and building propriety measurement tools to assess how a campaign will land and whether it has delivered its intended results. McDonald's global roster of CMOs also meet regularly to share ideas and knowledge. (see sidebar)

Currently, McDonald's is piloting a test in the U.S. and U.K. and using its own firstparty data to inform marketing decisions early in the creative process, according to Flatley. This will be rolled out across the globe later this year.

"The data piece is something we're getting really smart on," said Flatley. "We've been piloting this for the last nine months, and it has given us a great understanding of how it will work. It's helped us work with CMOs and their teams and agencies on how to build data into their processes without disrupting creativity."

This shift comes as marketers are facing more pressure than ever to deliver results to the C-suite, with a recent survey from marketing intelligence firm WARC saying two-thirds of all brand bosses expect a recession to have a significant impact on their strategy.

And even McDonald's isn't immune to the challenging economic environment: At press time, it was prepared to follow fellow giants like Amazon, Facebook and Disney in making layoffs to brace the business for a downturn. However, the company declined to comment on how those cutbacks could affect Flatley and Hassan's marketing strategy.

As Hassan and Flatley look to what might help McDonald's operate in a leaner fashion in the future, they're buoyed by the creative promise held by generative AI tech such as ChatGPT and OpenAi's DALL-E. "We're starting to think about the role it's going to play for us, how it will help us triangulate third- and first-party data to give us a predictive understanding of our fans and what they want," Hassan said.

Pilots are planned for the U.S. later this year. Flatley stressed that rather than replacing humans, AI would help McDonald's deliver more relevant creativity at scale—helping supercharge the brand's already ambitious marketing strategy.

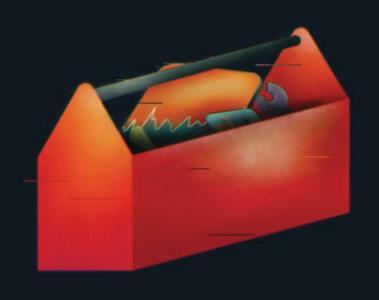
"You can't build the great relationship our brand hinges on without great creativity. I haven't been able to figure out how to do that at scale. [These technologies], combined with all our agencies and the creative brains inside them, [will serve up] hundreds of thousands of personalized creative campaigns," she said. "It's going to be a game-changer for us."

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# Raings Grah



# WITH UPFRONTS LOOMING, THE INDUSTRY NAVIGATES A NEW SET OF MEASUREMENT OBSTACLES AS IT BUILDS TV'S MULTICURRENCY FUTURE.



#### BY BILL BRADLEY AND MOLLIE CAHILLANE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KACY BURDETTE

hen Nielsen, long viewed as the standard for measurement, lost its third-party accreditation status through the Media Rating Council in 2021, the TV industry—already reeling from the pandemic—was thrown into even more chaos. Publishers and marketers publicly began grappling with the urgent need to develop measurement alternatives and new currencies—just as audience behavior had begun rapidly shifting from linear to streaming.

"Covid-19 completely changed people's consumption habits from an entertainment standpoint," said Jen Faraci, chief data officer, Digitas North America. "And so with that, there are marketplace changes around where people spend their time, what that competition looks like, [and] how do we make sure we're attracting the right type of audiences [as well as] understanding the people that we are reaching and how."

Seizing the opportunity, several ambitious measurement companies in the space, including VideoAmp, Comscore, iSpot.tv and more, have been rapidly striking deals with holding companies and publishers alike, launching test-and-learns, developing new solutions

and claiming real estate as the industry tries to figure out what the next evolution of measurement looks like.

"We've had a monopoly of one company that wasn't forced to innovate, so competition is extremely good for that," said David Campanelli, evp and chief investment officer, Horizon Media. "And that will help keep measurement accurate and better if we can find alternatives that are as valuable or more valuable than the current system."

#### **MEASUREMENT VS. CURRENCY**

While the public chatter around measurement seems to have quieted compared to the bluster a year ago, there is no less urgency among the industry to find new solutions and alternatives, especially as upfront negotiations kick off once again. This year, publishers, buyers and providers find themselves facing some of the same obstacles around measurement as they did last year—along with a few new ones.

Multiple executives told Adweek that the biggest challenges include breaking through the noise of all the new alternatives, developing industrywide trust and a uniform set of standards, and correcting a fundamental misunderstanding of the difference between measurement and currency.

"Simply put, many assumed because there was measurement, it was a currency. Not the right assumption," Kelly Metz, managing director, advanced TV activation at Omnicom Media Group, explained. "Currency means you can transact, and that was obviously a major point of confusion last year because plenty of measurement providers could measure effectively, but you could not transact, and you're still seeing a bit of those struggles in today's marketplace."

In 2022, more transactions than ever flowed through alternate currencies—that is, guarantees on metrics other than Nielsen's. However, there were also significant struggles, with publishers promising alternative currency transactions ahead of the upfront that never came to fruition.

"It was well intended, but when it came time to put your money where your mouth was, no one was doing it because there were too many complications," Campanelli said of last year's upfront marketplace. "This year, it's different."

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Several major publishers have already announced that in this year's upfront, they're incorporating alternative currencies in addition to Nielsen. Warner Bros. Discovery said it will transact on VideoAmp and Comscore, while NBCU, which told Adweek that more than 40% of its transactions were across multiple currencies in 2022, expects that number to increase in 2023. Meanwhile, Paramount has been activating audience-based and demo-based guarantees on VideoAmp and Comscore since last year's upfront.

#### **NIELSEN ONE: NEW, BUT IMPROVED?**

As the measurement world shifts around it, Nielsen has been busy making its own changes.

The company went private last year and has begun rolling out its new flagship product. Nielsen One is designed to adapt to the changing tides as viewer habits move from appointment-based viewing into a more streaming-centric world as a cross-platform solution. It will be fully operational in late 2024 when the company sunsets C3, TV's standard metric for commercial measurement.

"If the world is moving more towards audiences, you have to build a measurement framework that is able to adapt to ads and make ad measurement comprehensive and specific," said Karthik Rao, CEO at Nielsen Audience Measurement.

Nielsen One is divided into two segments: one measuring content and another measuring ads, which Rao said is designed to enable a world where buying and selling can happen based on campaigns and audiences, as well as one where companies can sell based on content.

Part of the Nielsen One offering, Nielsen One Ads, officially launched in January and is said to measure cross-media, deduplicated reach and frequency.

"It's a good way for people to start to get comfortable with how to work with this," said Rao, noting that the TV currency will eventually change to be based on ads and content. "But this is enough of a change in itself that the market will probably need a fair amount of time to get used to it."

So far, early reviews of the new product are decidedly mixed. Speaking anonymously, some industry insiders told Adweek that Nielsen One had potential and said the company is being transparent about its tool kit and framework. However, others weren't as impressed: One lamented that Nielsen has "deliberately confused the marketplace" due to the extended rollout of the product.

"It's very hard for people in the marketplace, our clients in particular, to break through all the Nielsen messaging because Nielsen says Nielsen One is launched, but Nielsen One has not launched with their big data linear data set," one buyer said, adding that the product seems more like Nielsen's existing Digital Ad Ratings in a new dashboard.

Another early point of contention: Nielsen One's advanced audience offering, which one buyer said was "MRI survey audiences based on, like, 14,000 respondents. That's not an addressable audience. That's a hope and a prayer." (Nielsen told Adweek that the offering will eventually add advanced audience enhancements.)

Though Nielsen is taking its time regarding advanced audiences, companies like VideoAmp and Comscore are stepping things up through partnerships with various publishers such as Warner Bros. Discovery.

Meanwhile, iSpot is choosing to focus on the broader demos, given that advanced audiences only make up about 5% of the marketplace, according to iSpot svp of agency partnerships Jodie McAfee.

But despite the market changes and last year's flurry of activity, things are still progressing slowly on the measurement front. In fact, according to Nielsen, part of the reason its new product, Nielsen One, has taken four years to build is to give the market time to adjust.

"A lot of people were anxious to see Nielsen One, given that it has at least some tie to something everyone's familiar with," Stacey Stewart, U.S. chief marketplace officer, UM, said. "But we're talking about changing billions and billions of dollars and how it's transacted, and I don't think anyone's anxious to just flip a switch and do it."

#### **THIRD-PARTY OPTIONS**

Another element that often gets lost in the measurement mix is the work of third-party platforms like Mediaocean and OpenAP, which work to streamline the advertising workflow by providing marketers with a unified and standardized currency. But those efforts have also been bumpy.

A publisher told Adweek that companies like Mediaocean are currently working to move from established workflows based on legacy Nielsen data to also service digital and streaming, which has been a challenge.

According to publishers, Mediaocean is trying to pull in newer data sets, similar to what iSpot and VideoAmp are doing, in time for the upfront, but it is not yet connected to digital and streaming, meaning some of the

newer metrics are not ingested in the data at this time.

"Most buyers and sellers see a future that's infused with rich data for planning, buying/selling, optimizing and reporting. Getting from where we are to where we want to be must happen in stages and takes significant investment and coordination," said Ramsey McGrory, chief development officer at Mediaocean, in a statement to Adweek.

McGrory added that the company plans to incorporate advanced measurement in its applications in time for the 2024 upfront, and is working on enabling alternative measurement providers on basic demo linear campaigns before moving to advanced audiences and converged linear/CTV measurement.

#### THE FUTURE OF MEASUREMENT

Even with all of the increased focus on, and competition from, other measurement companies, could Nielsen really lose its top spot in the market? Rao, not surprisingly, dismissed the idea.

"It has always been the case that there are other guarantees also made during the upfronts," Rao said. "Nielsen was never 100%, and that's a good thing because there are other things that augment what Nielsen does. It's just that the noise level around it is higher [this year]."

But still, Nielsen is closing in on its second full year without MRC certification. The organization specified six KPIs that the measurement company must bring back to the "highest standard," and Nielsen CEO David Kenny told Adweek that things are on the right track to do so.

"I'm going to let the MRC comment on where it is because they manage that process," said Kenny. "But I would say I feel very confident that we are delivering on our KPIs right now."

"While we generally do not comment on audits in progress, suffice to say that the accreditation review for Nielsen continues to be in process, and we will issue updates on this process as warranted," David Gunzerath, MRC svp and associate director, said in a statement.

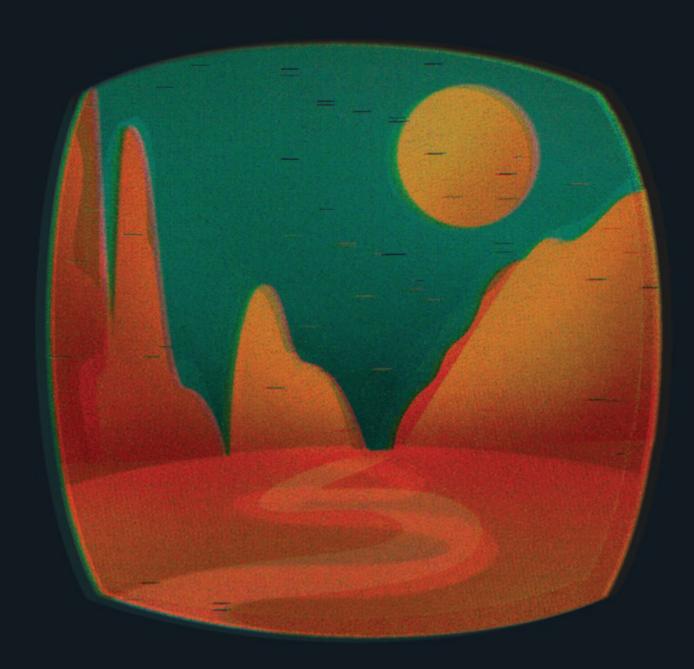
Regardless of when—or whether—Nielsen restores its accreditation, sellers are beginning to embrace the need to move to cross-platform currencies, especially as adsupported streaming businesses like Peacock and HBO Max—and now Disney+ and Netflix, entering their first upfront with new ad tiers—see growing and shifting audiences.

"It's a revolution, in a way, in terms of how we talk about TV buying in general," Mike

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# 'IF THE WORLD ORE TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE **AND SPECIFIC.**

KARTHIK RAO, CEO AT NIELSEN AUDIENCE MEASUREMENT



Bregman, chief data officer, Havas Media Group North America, said. "Now you have multiscreen, multidevice streaming data; I think it's changing the game altogether. So you need a lot of these new measurement and currency providers to come in and provide that broad perspective of what's happening with co-viewing and digital viewing."

And publishers are starting to embrace the new reality, finding strength in numbers.

"What you're going to start to see is a more collaborative effort," added Kelly Abcarian, evp of measurement and impact at NBCUniversal, "as opposed to having individual publishers like NBCU, Paramount and Disney going at this multicurrency future in a more stand-alone way. The industry is now fully awake and aware of the need to usher in new currencies, inclusive of Nielsen One."

As a result of that collaboration, the TV industry got together in January to announce the formation of the first U.S. Joint Industry Committee (JIC) to enable multiple currencies. OpenAP leads the operating group, which includes national programmers such as Fox, NBCUniversal, Paramount, TelevisaUnivision

and Warner Bros. Discovery; media agencies such as Dentsu, GroupM, Horizon Media and Omnicom Media Group; and the VAB.

The committee will primarily focus on creating a measurement certification process to establish the suitability of cross-platform measurement solutions ahead of the 2024 upfront, and several buyers Adweek spoke with called the JIC a "tipping point" in the move toward multiple currencies.

Thus far, the JIC has already provided its criteria for premium video cross-platform currencies to be transactional, inviting several of the biggest players in the space to participate. The group is set to deliver an update on its multicurrency progress on April 25.

It's an aggressive timeline, but one made with the knowledge that when Nielsen retires C3 in 2024, all currencies in the marketplace will be new.

"We all know change is coming in 2024 and that the currency we've used for decades is going to disappear," said Abcarian. "I'm really starting to see the buy-side lean in and work with us on how to use these new currencies and metrics."

### HOW THE BIG MEASUREMENT COMPANIES

	e comscore	EDO	iSp <b>o</b> t.t∨
YEAR FOUNDED	1999	2015	2012
KEY Partnerships	Long-established partnerships across the largest media players on the buy-side and sell-side, including 85 of the top 100 U.S. national networks, 1,100 local stations and more than 350 agencies.	Partners with TV networks, top-tier brand advertisers and ad agencies. Clients include Amazon, Disney and Toyota. Agency partnerships include OMG, Dentsu and Mediahub, and tech partners include Inscape, Kantar and Similarweb.	Counts more than 60% of TV's top 100 advertisers, including 10 of the top 10, as clients. iSpot.tv is the default crossplatform measurement provider for The Trade Desk and has partnered with NBCUniversal, Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount and Disney.
BIGGEST INNOVATIONS IN PAST YEAR	The development and delivery of 48-hour post-air viewing metrics for all 210 local markets and national, incorporating vMVPD viewing into local television reporting and rolling out its Total Digital Solution, allowing side-by-side consumption metrics across digital multiplatform and social reporting.	Helping make streaming measurement as simple as linear measurement with immediate consumer behavioral signals that respect strict privacy protections. A partnership with Similarweb expanded EDO's existing consumer engagement data set for OTT, increasing the number of surveyed household panels to millions. Its Creative Rotation Optimization offering can help brands discover which ads are generating the most consumer engagement to guide creative strategy and in-market rotation decisions.	The development of always-on ad-first currency capabilities covering all of linear and its work on new streaming verification and the integration of coviewing for 900-plus publishers.
WHAT SETS IT APART FROM PEERS	"Broadly, it is our unique ability to provide a view into content consumption across all platforms—from TV to digital to cinema—but in particular, as relates to TV, it is our expertise in return path data," said Carol Hinnant, chief revenue officer, Comscore.	"EDO is solely focused on measuring predictive outcomes from convergent TV investments. We do this by measuring ad airings in real-time—as well as the resulting behavioral engagement signals—to capture that magic moment when awareness shifts to intent. Most TV measurement is focused on metrics like reach, frequency and attention—but these are diagnostic signals, at best. Further down the funnel, traditional outcomes data like purchase and store visits are too slow to help brands optimize their media, taking weeks, if not months, to see ROI. What's needed is a more immediate signal that operates at the speed of business," said Kevin Krim, president and CEO, EDO.	"iSpot has an unmatched real-time ad cataloging system that measures and unifies every second of TV advertising. It has the largest smart TV panel and most advanced development on ACR that enables verification at a massive scale. iSpot is the currency built for and adopted by brands directly Only iSpot provides ad-first measurement, instead of program-centric measurement. iSpot is the only currency with independent verification of ad occurrences for linear and ad delivery to TVs that are on for streaming. iSpot has the largest smart TV panel, which enables verification, speed and single source measurement and deduping across linear and streaming. [And it's] trusted by more brands than any other measurement platform," said Sean Muller, founder and CEO, iSpot.

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### ACTUALLY MEASURE UP

FROM COMSCORE TO VIDEOAMP, A BREAKDOWN OF THE LANDSCAPE'S KEY PLAYERS—AND WHAT SETS THEM APART FROM THEIR PEERS. BY BILL BRADLEY AND MOLLIE CAHILLANE

Nielsen	SAMBATV	©IX ØERO 5IVE	vid≣oamp
1923	2008	2016	2014
All major networks and publishers; all of the agency holding companies; and leading brands, including 21 out of the top 25 global advertisers. Also in technology (Snowflake, AWS and GCP), identity providers (Experian and TransUnion) and ad tech (The Trade Desk, OpenAP).	Works with all seven of the top agency holding companies, most leading publishers like Disney and Hulu, and has partnered with many of the biggest advertising and digital media platforms, including Twitter, LiveRamp and The Trade Desk.	Fortune 500 companies, large programmers and inventory intermediaries in the premium video market.	Publishers like Paramount, Warner Bros. Discovery and Disney, major holding companies including Omnicom Media Group, Dentsu and GroupM, and digital platforms like YouTube, Amazon and Meta.
The Nielsen One product suite, including January's release of Nielsen One Ads, which looks to provide a consistent, comparable and deduplicated view of ads across all screens. Similarly, Nielsen One Content, currently in a limited alpha release before a wider rollout later this year, delivers a view of aggregated program performance across distribution platforms.	Continued investments in AI with the acquisition of Disruptel and the launch of Samba AI at CES, plus multiyear research and development partnership with TCL to bring a new and advanced level of capabilities to the measurement and targeting world powered by next-generation AI in 2023.	Enabling industry buyers and sellers to accurately predict future media impressions and forecast sales outcomes rooted in 605's methodology and data science capabilities. It also simplified complex attribution outputs in the latest release of 605 IMP4CT, a proprietary attribution product that provides data visualization and storytelling tools to clients in minutes.	Implemented Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PETs) and partnered with major publishers NBCU and Disney to create data cleanrooms to unlock the full potential of first-party data while maintaining consumer privacy. Bought and integrated omnichannel media optimization company Elsy, enabling advertisers to leverage big data to optimize media investments with the help of powerful algorithms.
"As we move toward a cross-platform world, the need for data validated by real people only grows. By combining the scale of big data and granular insights from our people-based panel, Nielsen is able to tackle this measurement challenge. As of today, Nielsen's panels are composed of more than 750,000 panelists that contribute to TV, audio and digital measurement, with approaches ranging from direct metering to calibration to identity validation. Additionally, our panels and methodologies are continuously audited by the MRC [Media Rating Council], and we continue to	"Samba TV invented ACR technology before the word 'streaming' was even in the media lexicon, and we pride ourselves on three key differentiators. First, unlike nearly every other player in the measurement space, Samba TV's entire measurement foundation is built upon the opted-in, first-party data we own. Second, we don't believe data should be walled off; it should be open and freely usable across any platform Finally, we have a scale that enables incredible accuracy with a panel 80 times larger than the legacy incumbent and an owned identity and cross	"Currently, the measurement market is largely focused on retrospective measurement as a means of allowing buyers and sellers to transact through currency. Our focus and comparable excellence in predictive measurement is a key differentiator. At our core, we have the scale, scientific methodology and solutions that continue to provide our clients with data-driven investment decisions. With new changes and challenges across the industry landscape, we've positioned our business to be neutral, reliable and accurate	"What differentiates VideoAmp is the one-stop shop we've created for our clients and how that increases the value of advertising for both buyers and sellers. Providing measurement solutions alone will not allow advertisers to extract the most ROI and sellers to maximize the yield of their inventory in the most efficient way. We provide a full suite of solutions that includes media planning, strategy and research, budget management, activation integrations, data management, optimization, planning and currency The other way we differentiate is

so that our solutions can be

Keaveney, president, 605.

utilized beyond the limited existing

boundaries of currency," said Tom

device graph connecting half a billion

devices, providing the most accurate

across every screen available in the

market today," said Ashwin Navin,

CEO and co-founder, Samba TV.

deduplicated view of audiences

support the MRC quidelines that

measurement. What often gets

lost is that we are incorporating

more big data in our measurement

than any other company out there,"

said Deirdre Thomas, chief product

officer, Nielsen.

set the standard for quality, audited

through our unique relationships

with agency holding companies who license our APIs and data and

planning tools to build out their

own proprietary solutions," said

Ross McCray, VideoAmp CEO.



If you were among the millions of devotees of AMC's much-missed Breaking Bad, odds are you recall the climactic Season 5 episode "Granite State." Bedeviled by the collapse of his meth empire, Walter White attempted to coerce his sketchy lawyer, Saul Goodman, to come with him on the lam—but Goodman did not want any part of it.

"From here on out, I'm Mr. Low Profile," Goodman said. "If I'm lucky, a month from now—best-case scenario—I'm managing a Cinnabon in Omaha."

That jab was the work of the episode's writer/director Peter Gould, and Cinnabon corporate had no idea it was coming. But minutes after the episode aired, the chain tweeted an invitation to actor Bob Odenkirk to check out its careers page.

It's not lost on Cinnabon vp and marketing chief Michael Alberici that his brand had been the butt of a joke in that scene, but corporate played it to its own advantage. "We're OK making fun of ourselves," Alberici told Adweek. So OK, in fact, that Cinnabon wound up working with AMC on the spinoff series Better Call Saul. On the show, cocreated by Gould, Goodman does indeed wind up managing a Cinnabon in Omaha, Neb.—a scenario that the show revisited frequently throughout its six-season run.

Hollywood aside, there's a larger branding lesson here: Adapt or perish.

In 1985, entrepreneur Rich Komen inked a franchise deal to open a bakery called T.J. Cinnamons at Washington's SeaTac Mall. When the deal unexpectedly fell through, Komen had not only a space to fill but also a lease that required him to run a cinnamon roll concept. Komen knew that Seattle restaurant Brusseau's was already renowned for its cinnamon rolls, so he convinced owner Jerilyn Brusseau to develop a proprietary roll for him. The pair cycled through 200 recipes before settling on one that could be baked in a convection oven and emit the enticing aroma that's become Cinnabon's signature hook.

Since that start, the brand has opened 1,800 locations in 51 countries.

But with malls disappearing at a steady rate, Cinnabon has switched things up. Using smaller prototype stores, the brand now operates at truck stops, college campuses and even hospitals. ("If you have the square feet," Alberici likes to say, "we have your treat.") Since 2018, when it created Mini Rolls for Pizza Hut, Cinnabon has also gone all-in on co-branded products—everything from Pinnacle Cinnabon vodka to Cinnabon-flavored protein powder for Ghost. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic nudged Cinnabon into home delivery.

Alas, even that ubiquity probably won't give the brand the exposure it enjoyed in Better Call Saul, which aired its series finale last August. "It was a bittersweet end," Alberici said. The series "inspired the brand team, the marketing team and the PR team," he added. "And it made our team members feel like rock stars."



#### **ROLL CALL**

(Clockwise, from top): Legendary restaurateur and baker Jerilyn Brusseau (1) is today a flour tester for Cairnspring Mills, but back in 1985 she created the secret recipe that allowed Cinnabon's first location (2) to open. While the AMC show Better Call Saul meant great publicity (3), Cinnabon has stayed relevant through nontraditional locations and product partnerships like limited-time treats for Pizza Hut (4) and, more recently, Ghost protein powder (5) and Kellogg's (6).









#### **HOME SWEET HOME**

Companies talk a lot about pivoting these days, but Cinnabon is a test case in how crucial moving fast can be. When Covid-19 made shutins out of shoppers—hardly good news for the country's already struggling malls—Cinnabon had to implement delivery in virtually no time. First, the brand got itself onto the major food delivery services, including Grubhub and DoorDash. By September 2021, it had also launched its first app and a corresponding rewards program, allowing consumers to tap CinnaPacks dropped off at their doors. "We launched that app less than two years ago, [and now] we have over 500,000 loyalty rewards members," Alberici said. "It's definitely been game-changing for us."



## GORDON DRAYSON

# The Funny Thing About Learning Improv

Boots CMO Pete Markey found personal and professional growth in making people laugh.



Pete Markey (l.) and Pete Tucker perform at the Archway Theatre in Horley, Surrey

While in line to buy a train ticket one morning about four years ago, Pete Markey spotted a poster for improv comedy classes that would change his life.

The ad prompted Markey, chief marketing officer of Walgreens-owned British health and beauty retailer Boots, to realize that while he did want to learn something new, his day job didn't leave time for academic coursework. Learning improvisation could be the answer.

Acting also runs in Markey's family: His son James Markey is an actor, something Markey had considered doing as a hobby, but he didn't have time to memorize scripts. What better solution than to go onstage and literally make the lines up himself?

Now, he has graduated to advanced classes, which he still takes weekly. Markey also co-stars in a monthly show.

"I've just fallen in love with it from the first lesson. It has given me some really interesting, authentic friendships with people that I would never have met otherwise," Markey said of improv's positive impact.

"It's good to have people who don't have a similar job to me and who have different experiences and act differently."

Markey's time with improv has also "reignited my job of being creative and spontaneous in the moment." He described it as a "talking point" when meeting others in social occasions, as being a chief marketer often requires.

Improv has also taught Markey that "failure is OK"—after all, the art of improvisational comedy embraces "screwing up" when making people laugh.

For anyone looking to take up improv comedy, Markey claims you don't have to be naturally funny to succeed because a performance requires various roles, some of which aren't comedic. He also highlights that it's not like standup comedy, where the comedian is onstage solo; there are always at least two people involved to bounce off of and support each other.

"Everybody enjoys connecting with people through creating, particularly people that help you feel more alive," he added. "For me, it's the most playful fun I've had since I was a child."

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