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THREE WAYS TO MAKE SURE YOUR REAL-TIME MARKETING DOESN’T SUCK

by Lindsay Lichtenberg, VP, Publishing Platform and Partnership, Starcom MediaVest Group

As someone who’s keenly interested in agile and real-time marketing (RTM), I often frequent the RTMsucks Tumblr. With every passing cultural event, the blog lights up with new cases of brands seeking out their “Oreo” or “Arby’s” moment as a way to shine within the cluttered branded social media landscape. The blog proclaims, “Watch as brands poorly attempt to capitalize on the RTM trend.”

What RTMsucks is missing is that RTM is not a trend, but in fact will be a primary ingredient in the future of marketing; so it’s critical for brands today to test, learn, fail and adapt as they iterate and improve their RTM capabilities—fail fast, succeed faster.

As such, I’m going to share three things brands can do today to get better at RTM and prepare themselves for the future.

1. Focus on “real-life” moments, not just mass media events.

Why do brands wait for the Olympics or World Cup to engage in RTM and fight with hundreds of brands for the most pithy response of the evening? Focusing only on major events can devalue RTM as nothing more than a simple tactic. Brands that allow culture to dictate their entire RTM often find themselves rebuilding their framework and infrastructure for each event, which can be an inefficient use of time and resources.

Conversely, brands that make agile marketing a part of their DNA—sensing and responding to “real-life” consumer expressions on a regular basis—are consistently able to achieve strong, sustained levels of engagement, generate greater awareness, and shift perceptions because the content they create and distribute is highly relevant and authentic. An added benefit, of course, is that a consistent RTM program also enables the brand to capitalize on mass media events, like the Oscars, with ease.

2. Don’t wait for an enterprise infrastructure; architect and iterate along the way.

The development of an agile RTM infrastructure should be as nimble as the marketing itself. Waiting to deploy the ideal technology stack (e.g. content workflow, asset management, etc.) and a holistic, meticulously organized data environment will undoubtedly allow precious moments, insights, trials, errors and successes to fly on by.

Instead of waiting to get the entire house in order, align on most critical data sets and technology enablers, build a fit-for-purpose workflow, assess performance regularly, and iterate along the way. In the end, operating in this manner will inform new processes, hidden data streams, and innovative partners that will make you better, smarter and faster in the long run.

3. Scale beyond social.

It’s a big web out there, but many brands focus RTM primarily on real-time activation with Facebook and Twitter. To be sure, consumers are highly engaged in these spaces and new content can be distributed with ease; but innovative marketplace technology now also allows brands to scale and target their agile RTM content through the breadth of paid channels.

Brands are now able to distribute content in real-time across desktop and mobile display, using these mass reach channels as real-time storytelling platforms, just like they would with Facebook and Twitter. And the results say it all—in the past year alone, brands have been able to increase content engagement by up to seven times compared to their own historical rich media performance benchmarks.

VIEW THE RESULTS FROM SMG AND TWITTER’S “SOCIAL TV LAB,” A STUDY ON HOW TO BEST ACTIVATE TWITTER ALONGSIDE TV TO DELIVER THE MOST MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES.
AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROLYN EVERSON

Facebook’s Vice President of Global Marketing Solutions shares valuable insights into the future possibilities of advertising and a few emerging technologies.

by Monica Helms, Coordinator, Social Media/Web Marketing, University of Central Oklahoma

The following interview was conducted on May 29, 2014 during ADMERICA!, AAF’s national conference.

MONICA HELMS: What makes a good or a bad Facebook profile?

CAROLYN EVERSON: I think a good profile is just when you’re your authentic self, because Facebook is really built around your personal connections—brands that are important, charities that are important—and so the more you are yourself and don’t try to be someone else, I think that’s really when you get the best experience out of Facebook.

MH: What insight do you have for those who say Millennials and teens are leaving Facebook for other platforms?

CE: We look at this extremely carefully, as you can imagine, studying every data point, that is tied to how people are using Facebook, and the truth is that we have seen essentially no decline in teen usage. As a matter of fact, they are really our top engaged audience on Facebook. In markets like the United States and Western Europe, places that we’ve been for a very long time, we have practically full penetration of teens. Now, what we are seeing with teens is that they’re using multiple services. Teens absolutely love Instagram, and, often, if you pick up a teen’s phone or a Millennials’s phone, they’re going to have several different applications on it. So they might have Facebook, and Instagram, and Twitter, and others, and that’s fine. That’s how the younger generation is growing up. They’re very comfortable seamlessly moving between the different apps, and they use them for very different reasons, but we are very happy with our teen audience. And as I said, they’re our most engaged audience.

MH: It’s been about two years since Facebook acquired Instagram, and about six months since Instagram debuted an advertising structure of its own, currently limited to beta brands. It seems like the chatter surrounding the debut has been pretty positive—are you able to speak to that, or fill us in on the future of advertising on Instagram?

CE: So, Instagram now has about 200 million monthly users around the world. Actually, a good portion of them are outside of the United States, 35% of about 200 million of them are in the United States, 65% are outside the US. It is actually one of the fastest growing apps that’s ever been out there, growing faster even than Facebook did in its time. So when we introduced advertising about six months ago, we introduced it very slowly and very carefully, because we wanted to really respect the integrity of the Instagram community. Instagram’s mission is to document the world through imagery, and what people do on Instagram is curate that one great photo from that experience, which is very different from uploading an album of 30 or 60 pictures, so it’s a community of people that really care about the imagery and the content they’re consuming. From an advertising standpoint, we’ve run about a dozen campaigns. They’re 100% focused on brand and awareness metrics, and really, companies like Michael Kors, and Macy’s, and Levi, and Lexus, Ben & Jerry’s, have been the initial advertisers,
and they’ve been very pleased with the results. In general, we’ve seen anywhere between a 10- to 30-point uplift in ad recall, people that are having intent to increase awareness in the brand, intent to increase purchase, and so from the initial early days, we felt really positive. We have broadened it out, and will be having more and more marketers enter Instagram, but at the end of the day we’re going to do it in a really slow and methodical way, to make sure that we introduce it in the best way possible.

**MH:** Can you talk a little about the response Facebook has received to the recent feed algorithm changes and the impact it’ll have on brand pages?

**CE:** There’s really two things that are driving what’s been changing in organic reach and the algorithm. The first and most important thing is to state that everything we do is to benefit the people who use Facebook. So as the algorithm gets smarter, it’s really trying to serve the content people really want in their newsfeed. So on any given moment, when you pull up Facebook, there are about 1,500, sometimes even more, stories that could be relevant to you, based on the personal connections you have, the brands you’re interested in and the local businesses and community service organizations you care about. So out of those 1,500 stories, the algorithm has to choose around 150 to show you on any given time you come onto Facebook. There’s just been a huge increase in the amount of content people are sharing, and mobile has been a big driver of that. Think back three years ago, when mobile was not the predominant way people used Facebook. You had to be in front of a computer to upload a photo and to actually put on content.

Now, people check their devices about 100 times a day, and so the amount of content that’s getting uploaded is enormous, but our human capacity to consume that content hasn’t increased that dramatically. And so what happens is that the algorithm is trying to pick what is the most relevant content, which means organic reach is going to decline, and that is something that happens in all feed-based systems. Even when Google first started out with search, you could, without paying, get organic search results. Well, more and more businesses got into search model. So this is a very natural evolution, and one that involves a lot of large numbers. There’s just only so much content that’s getting uploaded is enormous, but our human capacity to consume that hasn’t increased that dramatically. And so what happens is that the algorithm is trying to pick what is the most relevant content, which means organic reach is going to decline, and that is something that happens in all feed-based systems. Even when Google first started out with search, you could, without paying, get organic search results. So as the algorithm gets smarter, it’s really trying to serve the content people really want in their newsfeed.

**MH:** In light of these algorithm changes, do you have any advice for nonprofits or other small businesses/organizations who might not have the budget to boost posts to reach their fans? How will the algorithm changes affect these entities?

**CE:** The best advice we can give is almost the same advice I’d give you as an individual, which is to think about content that is going to be engaging as possible and is relevant for the audience you’re trying to communicate with. Depending on what your message is, being authentic is usually the best way. So, if a brand or a business has humor as part of their brand equity, then being humorous is expected and you should do that. If a brand is brought to life better visually, then that’s how the brand should come to life visually on Facebook. But at the end of the day, it’s really about finding authentic and relevant content that people will care about and hopefully be inspired to share.

Even if you’re not a business or a nonprofit, I say you get different reactions from your own personal posts. When you talk about something very emotional, or, God forbid, someone is sick in your family, or if you’re celebrating a major milestone, Facebook explodes with people getting into the excitement. Maybe if you’re posting a picture of a meal, maybe only certain people are going to be that interested, or have food as an interest. So I think it’s very much around what’s actually going to inspire people to share, and actually care about what you’re putting up.

**MH:** When Facebook acquired WhatsApp, it sounded like the company was pretty happy with the product as-is. Is there any news on the horizon for WhatsApp?

**CE:** Well, we haven’t closed on the deal yet, so we are not working together as companies. What I can say is that WhatsApp hit a half-a-million users very recently. They’re growing incredibly quickly. We believe there’s only going to be a handful of services that can reach a billion users, and we believe WhatsApp is going to be one of them. Messaging happens to be one of the fastest-growing applications people want to have access to, and WhatsApp has a delightful user experience. So we’re really excited and we hope the deal closes soon.

**MH:** What do you think the future holds for Facebook? How will it continue to revolutionize the way people communicate with each other?

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CE: Well, I think the world is going to be really different in a handful of years when a majority of the world is connected to the Internet. If you think about right now, we have seven billion people on the planet, and less than one-third are connected to the Internet, or about one-third, with those increases at about a million people a day in terms of people getting connected. There’s about 80% of the entire world’s population having access to a 2G or 3G tower, but they’re not yet on the Internet, and there’s usually two reasons for that. One is awareness: they don’t even know what it means to get connected to the Internet. Number two: costs, because of data plans. And so we’re actively working to address those two issues, and I think the world—when you have literally four, five, or six billion people connected to the Internet, and first have access to information they’ve never had before, with health, financial services, and education — it’s going to be a really different place for us to be living in than we are today, and I think there’s going to be opportunities that we never thought imaginable. From a Facebook perspective, Mark’s mission, when he started the company a little over ten years ago, was to connect the world and to make it more open, and that mission is still very much true to the core and heart of what we’re doing today. And so we’re on a mission to try to connect the world and to bring them delightful experiences so that they can communicate and share information.

MH: Any closing thoughts?

CE: I think what I’d like to add, if perhaps we could go back to the role of Facebook and marketing, is that we believe you’re going to be a very key driver in making business personal again. What I mean by that is, if you think about before mass media—before TV, print, radio—business operated very locally, those shopkeepers knew their customers; they had relationships with them, they knew what kind of products they liked, and business was very personal. Then the advent of mass media happened, and it was fabulous in terms of building world-class brands at huge scale, and reaching millions and millions of people—but business became less personal. So what we’re trying to do at Facebook is actually combine the best of both worlds. So we have significant scale—over 1.2 billion people—but also have the opportunity for businesses to have a really personal relationship with their customers and the people that really matter to them. And that’s the journey we’re on—to make business personal again.

MH: Talking about making business personal again and diving into the ground roots, there is the facial recognition technology, and Facebook is all over it. Businesses now are really honing in on facial recognition and they are starting to be able to target audiences—separate from Facebook—but they are able to know when a customer comes in, what they like, and usually order. Does Facebook have any plans to tap into that side of marketing for local businesses, or can you speak to that at all?

CE: Certainly, we see a world in the future where merchants are going to know who their customers are whether they’re physically in the store or not. So there’s all sorts of scenarios that we plan out in the future—what would it be like to walk into a local bar and have the bar know you’re coming in? And suddenly your music and the music your friends like most is playing, and the bartender knows your drink ahead of time. And suddenly your music and the music your friends like most is playing, and the bartender knows your drink ahead of time. And so we do have very interesting scenario plans, but we don’t have any products right now that we’re on a road map with, that’s not something we’re currently discussing with our product road map. But we see a future where that’s possible.
SOCIAL ADVERTISING: A NEW MODEL FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

by Andy Wiedlin, Chief Revenue Officer, BuzzFeed

Today, as we consider new formats for digital advertising, I’m reminded of the famous Einstein quote on the definition of insanity: “Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

From the origin of the consumer Internet, banners have been the primary advertising vehicle. They’ve been ignored, maligned and largely ineffective. In a mobile/broadband world, we have virtually unlimited supply and decreasing demand. This is an economic prescription for disaster.

An Einstein companion quote is “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.” Social, mobile and video make the world of banners obsolete and dead.

Yet some advertisers and publishers insist on doing the same thing and expect better results. The newest savior is “Big Data”—if we just use more data we’ll get this broken down jalopy to run.

Many advertisers and publishers continue to support the Banner Industrial Complex because of inertia and apathy. “It’s easy,” “there is a marketplace” and “it is standard.” We’ve known for years that the emperor has no clothes, yet we continue to invest in a broken system. It’s as if advertisers and publishers joined hands at the top of the John Hancock building, jumped over the side and, as they plummet toward the inescapable end, they murmur to each other “ok so far…ok so far…”. Enough. There are better ways. Social/Mobile/Video has made the Internet even more awesome, and the in-charge consumer can find new and delightful things, engage with them, and share them with their friends. Advertisers and publishers need to embrace the hard reality that consumers are in complete control. The days of interruptive advertising are over and forward thinking brands are demanding a better way.

If all content is social, then advertising should be too. There is a new type of digital advertising that is emerging: one that is respectful of consumers, offers them engaging content, and encourages them to share it on the brand’s behalf. Social Advertising requires the advertiser and publisher to put the consumer first and to create and promote interesting and delightful content that they can share with their friends. It’s not as easy as trafficking banners, but rarely is “easy” worthwhile and powerful.

Much like paid search changed the Internet a decade ago, Social Advertising is a new and powerful model that consumers embrace because of a fair value exchange: they get awesome content that makes them look clever and cool when they share with their friends. Brands get word-of-mouth marketing at scale. And publishers can build profitable businesses that align with consumer behavior.

It won’t necessarily be easy. Brands have been in the “pay to say” advertising business forever. And digital publishers have been banner addicts since the beginning, and when you’re a junkie, it’s hard to give up the junk. So, let’s have the good sense to put the consumer first and the courage to do what is right, not what’s easy.

DISCOVER HOW BUZZFEED’S CUSTOM CONTENT CAN HELP YOU GAIN EARNED MEDIA.
viewability in order to shift from a served to a viewed impression. After looking at billions of digital impressions over the course of 18 months, the 3MS decided that an impression would be considered viewable if at least 50% of the ad’s pixels were in view in an active browser for at least one second. The MRC spent months working closely with various vendors in order to accredit their technologies. Today, there are 11 vendors that have been MRC accredited for viewability.

On March 31, 2014, the MRC lifted its November 2012 Viewable Impression Advisory for display media. After working closely with accredited vendors to reconcile their data and understand where the discrepancies in their measurement were coming from, the MRC announced it is now safe to transact on a viewable impression, although 5–10% variances are still to be expected between vendors.

In 2012, comScore revealed that 31% of ads never had the opportunity to be seen, which later turned out to be a “best case” scenario. In 2013, comScore’s vCE benchmarks presented a much more ominous depiction of ad viewability in the space, increasing the amount of non-viewable ads to 54%.

Since the inception of digital advertising, we have had access to more data than we know what to do with. Recently, the advertising industry decided to take a step back and focus on the quality of data before the quantity, in order to make better and more efficient use of it. In August of 2013, the IAB, ANA, 4A’s, and the MRC joined forces with the intention of revolutionizing the way digital media was being measured and transacted by establishing a new set of mutually agreed upon industry standards. This initiative is known as 3MS—or Making Measurement Make Sense.

The first major task the 3MS initiative took on was establishing a standard for viewability in order to shift from a served to a viewed impression. After looking at billions of digital impressions over the course of 18 months, the 3MS decided that an impression would be considered viewable if at least 50% of the ad’s pixels were in view in an active browser for at least one second. The MRC spent months working closely with various vendors in order to accredit their technologies. Today, there are 11 vendors that have been MRC accredited for viewability.

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1 “54% of Online Ads Aren’t Viewed,” MarketingCharts.com, June 13, 2013.

2 MRC Accredited Viewable Display Impression and/or Ad Verification Vendors: Enhanced Description (as of 4/21/14)
This is a very exciting time for the industry, and while advertisers should stay ahead of the game, it is important to understand how their data is being measured. Remember, the MRC accreditation process doesn’t rank products, nor does it mean that certain vendors are better than others. What the MRC accreditation establishes is whether or not the claims a vendor makes about their technology are accurate and reflected within their data. It is therefore up to the advertiser to decide what kind of tool they are looking for, based on client needs and expectations.

There are two main methodologies that vendors use to measure viewability. The first is known as the geometric approach, with which viewability is computed directly from information gathered from the browser, including the size and relative placement of the page, browser viewport and ad. This is the most commonly used method, however, it is unable to measure viewability for any cross-domain iFrames running on a webkit browser. This is significant, given most ads are being third-party served and Chrome received the highest share of browser activity in 2013, at 32.1%.

The second methodology is known as the browser optimization approach, which reverse engineers the optimization of content automatically enabled by modern web browsers in order to conserve device resources. While more vendors are starting to use this approach, it remains less frequently used due to the difficulty and complexity of the technology required for its execution. While this approach is unaffected by cross-domain iFrames and works across all browsers, it can take longer to process than the geometric approach, which is why some vendors use a combination of both methodologies depending on the environment in which the ad is being served.

Although measurability rates are often discrepant when comparing data from both methodologies, the viewability rates tend to be quite close. Both methods will likely bring you the same results, but if you are holding partners accountable for viewability guarantees you might be inclined to use the method which allows for a more significant sample size. However, reducing the number of third-party partners might be more important than measurability rates. That aside, the IAB is working on the standardization and implementation of SafeFrames, which will enable data collection within iFrames while still protecting the integrity of the site. We are still a while away from full industry compliance; however progress is definitely being made.

At the end of the day, it is important for advertisers to stay informed on what is being measured and how. Talk to your vendors, publishers, and most importantly your ad ops team to discuss your options when it comes to viewability.

3 January 2013 Web Browser Market Share, w3counter.com
4 SafeFrame Infographic, IAB.com

Part of the Interactive Advertising Bureau’s (IAB) infographic on SafeFrames which allows for reliable data collection.
Today, marketers have the opportunity to embrace a shift in consumer behavior. Consumers have moved from leaning back, receiving brand messages, to leaning forward, actively engaging with them. More than 2 billion consumers go online regularly, thanks to exponential growth in connectivity and third-screen devices like smartphones and tablets.

In this “Participation Age,” consumers control if, when, where and how they engage with brands. To be competitive, marketers need to actively manage an online engagement strategy. “In this age of the customer, the only sustainable competitive advantage is knowledge of and engagement with customers,” writes David M. Cooperstein, VP-research director serving CMO professionals at Forrester Research, in an October 2013 report, “Competitive Strategy in the Age of the Customer.”

To inform marketers’ engagement strategy, Advertising Age and Google conducted two surveys in parallel—a consumer survey that studied how consumers engage with brands and an industry survey that explored how marketers, agencies and media companies engage with consumers. Six core insights from these surveys will help evaluate, modify, and actively manage an online engagement strategy.

### 6 Core Engagement Insights

1. **Engagers Buy More**

Consumers who regularly engage with brands online correlate with those who buy more. When defining an engagement strategy, it helps to have an understanding of online consumers’ propensities to engage and buy.

- 90.8% of consumer respondents report regularly engaging with brands online.
- 62.8% engage with brands online at the high frequency of once per week or more.
- 28.0% engage moderately with brands online at a frequency of less than once per week.
- 9.3% tend to avoid engagement with brands online.

### Engaged Consumers Buy More

**How often do you purchase a product online?**

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditionalists</th>
<th>Engagers</th>
<th>Hyper-Engagers</th>
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<tr>
<td>% respondents who purchase a product online multiple times a week</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td><strong>15.5%</strong></td>
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<td>% respondents who purchase a product online every day</td>
<td></td>
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Based on Hyper-Engagers, n=251; Engagers, n=112; and Traditionalists, n=37
2. Inspire Engagement, Win Fans

Consumer openness to the inspiration to engage has created bountiful opportunities to communicate with consumers.

The most highly engaged consumers are open to inspiration from any digital channel: 41.8% are inspired to engage with brands due to the quality of a brand’s website, 29.5% by a company’s presence in social media and 26.7% are inspired by online banner ads. For the same audience, 58.6% of them get inspired to engage via TV commercials and 42.6% via online video. This suggests that brands can benefit more when channels work together.

3. Many Companies Have an Engagement Gap

These consumer insights support the case to actively manage an online engagement strategy. Consumers regularly engage with brands online; those who engage more correlate with those who purchase more, and consumers can be inspired to engage with a brand. However, looking at how marketers, agencies and media companies engage with consumers—there’s a gap between the stated importance of engagement and the way companies manage it.

Although a large majority (86.2%) of industry respondents agree that engagement is a priority for their company, only 45.8% say their company actively manages engagement.

4. Measurement Matters

Companies have a lot of work to do to pursue better measurement. For example, only 41.9% of industry respondents say their company quantifies engagement value. Before a brand can manage engagement optimally, it needs to measure engagement. Putting some metrics in place may be the initial step for many companies.

An executive segment of industry respondents in VP- and C-level roles within companies that actively manage and quantify engagement outlined 12 different definitions of engagement. When prompted, however, 88.6% of this executive segment agree that engagement means “moving viewers to take action.”

5. Online Ads Actively Engage

Online ads actively engage consumers and move them to take action. The influence online ads have on purchase decisions makes a compelling case to use online advertising as the core channel in a brand’s engagement strategy. For example, 93.6% of those who are most engaged with brands online, use that information to make purchase decisions sometimes or often. This remains true among those who are engaging once a week. 55.4% use online advertising to make purchase decisions. Even among the minority who say they do not engage with brands online, 29.7% still report they use online advertising to make purchase decisions sometimes or often.

6. To Drive Engagement, Buy Engagement

Many advertisers now pay directly for the engagement they want to drive. In fact, 84.1% of respondents from companies who are actively managing engagement, buy media based on online engagement. To leverage this emerging best practice, companies can run engaging formats and only pay when people take action.
WHAT CAN WORKFLOW AUTOMATION DO FOR YOUR AGENCY?

by Chris O’Hara, Co-Founder & Chief Revenue Officer, Bionic Advertising Systems

82% of online display advertising dollars are spent on premium advertising inventory through guaranteed contracts. Yet, it seems that most advertising technology innovation lately has been focused on the other 18%—remnant inventory. Media planners at agencies have not been well-served by technology. Most still rely on Excel to manually execute a complicated 42-step process. This “grunt work” is costing your agency up to $40k per campaign in labor costs and much more in employee unhappiness, turnover, training, and lost revenue.

Although Microsoft Excel is a highly flexible and powerful tool, it has not been configured perfectly for media planning.

WHAT EXCEL (AND MANUAL PROCESSES) CAN’T DO:

- **RESEARCH:** Most of the success in media happens in the research phase, when planners try and figure out which media properties have the audience best tailored for the goals of a campaign. In cases where an agency has access to expensive tools like comScore or Nielsen, they are not integrated with current planning systems, creating lots of duplicative work. Agencies that lack research tools find themselves getting data directly from vendors via a highly manual and cumbersome RFP process. In both cases, Excel cannot help connect to existing systems, or provide a collaboration point for proposal management.

- **COLLABORATE:** Speaking of collaboration, lots of hands touch a media plan. As a plan changes hands from a planner to a supervisor to an AMD (and beyond), lots of changes and suggestions take place. In Excel, your master file needs to be stored properly and a file “versioned” to ensure everyone is working on the most recent version. Two people working on the same file at once is a recipe for disaster, and it’s hard for a supervisor to oversee the work in progress without stalling it.

- **AUTOMATE:** A lot of time in digital media planning gets spent copying the same data into multiple systems. Sometimes it seems as though digital media planners are actually “digital switchboard operators” that take data from one place (a planning spreadsheet) and put it into another (an ad server). Excel-based planning approaches can’t easily transmit data across multiple systems in a systematic way.

- **CENTRALIZE:** Famous agency man Fairfax Cone (of Foote, Cone, and Belding—today’s FCB) once remarked “an agency’s inventory goes down the elevator every night.” He meant that an agency’s main asset is intellectual property—the knowledge contained in their employee’s heads. Most of today’s digital media shops are staffed with young planners, who typically spend a year or two learning the ropes before trading in their hard won expertise for another job—sometimes at another agency, but as often not. All of their training, media knowledge, and vendor contacts and relationships walk right out the door with them. The agency has no chance to build institutional knowledge up—especially since all the important pricing, performance, and vendor data related to media is caught in various spreadsheets and systems.

- **APPLY:** By “apply” I mean leveraging applications that can apply media data
programmatically to various digital media tasks. Planners spend hours manually creating flowcharts from media plan data...something that a system can do with a mouse click. What about analyzing media spend allocations and pivoting that data by vendor, media program, or channel? Again, something that computers do in seconds rather than hours. Imagine if your spreadsheet could “talk” periodically with your ad server, so you could see how your current media plan aligns with your performance and budgeting goals?

Everything described above which is difficult for Excel to do is possible (and actually exists) with cloud-based software. New “programmatic direct” software is helping to centralize the entire process of media planning so that agencies can have an “operating system” to run their business.

WHAT PROGRAMMATIC DIRECT SOFTWARE SHOULD DO:

• **CENTRALIZE**: Instead of having all of your campaigns on individual files on central server (or scattered among various computers), an agency should be able to login to a cloud-based system and have access to ALL of their campaigns—past, present, and future. Everyone who needs to access campaign planning data for their job should be able to find what they need, and do their portion of the job in a single collaborative environment.

• **RESEARCH**: The media business is ultimately about the media you buy. A modern system needs to go beyond “where should I buy?” and help planners understand where they should buy, how much they should pay for it, and who to buy it from. The right system will have all of the agency’s negotiated rates, media contacts, and be able to help planners programmatically negotiate with vendors. On the flipside, publishers should have a clean, easy-to-use interface for creating proposals.

• **PLANNING**: When it comes to putting the actual plan together, media planners shouldn’t have to create all kinds of complicated formulas and macros just to calculate agency fees, and align planning data with ad server requirements. The right planning interface should come with lots of planner-friendly built-in formulas, and calculate media costs automatically. Also, the right tool should enable planners to build cross-channel media plans that include online and offline buys in the same spreadsheet—and should be able to show those media investments in a flowchart with the click of a button.

• **ORDERING**: The new generation of planning tools shouldn’t require a planner to manually create an insertion order for every publisher on a media buy. For big plans, that can mean dozens of documents and hours of work. Never mind having to create a media authorization for your client, change orders, and a bulk upload sheet for the ad server. These are all things that software was born to do. A modern planning system should spit out IOs and authorizations with a button click.

• **CONNECTING**: Modern planning systems should also be able to connect to an agency’s other everyday tools like research systems, ad servers, and billing/order management software. Today’s modern, API-driven software should be able to plug in and connect to various systems seamlessly, and eliminate the drudgery of re-keying data from one system into another. Moreover, a connected system can help planners by bringing valuable data back into the planning system (to track the performance and pacing of a plan by connecting to the ad server, as an example).

Programmatic direct software eliminates the long hours of grunt work so you can spend more time on the fun stuff your client hired you to do—and get paid more to do it.

[Learn more about Bionic Advertising’s digital media planning system](#)
Here’s what the Pew Research Center concluded in April 2014:  
“The American public anticipates that the coming half-century will be a period of profound scientific change, as inventions that were once confined to the realm of science fiction come into common usage.”

Here’s what you might be thinking:  
“That’s well and good but there’s an art to brand marketing and brilliant advertising efforts come from brilliant human hearts and minds. I’m not ceding total control to a machine any day soon.”

It used to be simple to find your target consumer. They all fit into easily identified demos, and they were all watching TV, together, in the living room. Fast forward to the post-modern family, where consumers are simultaneously watching multiple screens of all sizes.

Today, advertisers are chasing elusive consumers as they dart from screen to screen, and it has become very difficult—not only to find them, but to know you’ve made an impact.

By partnering with technology, marketers can once again capture consumers seamlessly and effectively. Here’s how:  
1. Reach the right people in the right places at scale with video; 2. Entice them deep into your brand story; and 3. Get smarter and smarter all the time while you see what works and what doesn’t.

Let me explain.

**Technology gets you in all the right places.**

People, as consumers of media, products and services, are untethered, in control, and downright all over the place. Technology can be your heat-seeking brand-performance machine, finding them in their natural habitats when they are willing to let you in. Technology can see all those lit-up screens as one universe and find the right match, so your ad lands where it will truly shine.

**Technology takes TV advertising to new...depths.**

The combination of sight, sound, and motion is the most powerful form of persuasion. Add touch, or enticing interactivity, and those same ads become high-performing mind shifters. The art of the possible becomes wildly exciting on a digital canvas, making it easy to tell more of your story and invite consumers to engage.

**Technology will tell you things no one else can or will.**

Your consumers used to fit easily into neat demographic buckets. In the post-modern world with fluid roles, consumers are much more unpredictable. Technology today will tell you if your video ad campaign is finding your true hand-raisers and performing against your goal. It doesn’t mince words, so you can be super smart, super savvy, and super successful all the time. You’ll get exponentially more actionable insight from what technology reveals than was ever possible before.

Surround yourself with the right technology, lean on it for what you need, and get back to the art of brand marketing and the business of brilliant advertising creativity where humans win every time.

**CHECK OUT TREMOR VIDEO’S AD LAB TO SEE HOW SCIENCE + ART = GOOD BRANDING**
AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID SHING

AOL’s Digital Prophet provides both historical perspective and current context as he lays out his vision of the brave, new world of marketing.

by Monica Helms, Coordinator, Social Media/Web Marketing, University of Central Oklahoma

The following interview was conducted on May 29, 2014 during ADMERICA!, AAF’s national conference.

MONICA HELMS: There is new content on social media every day. Now more than ever, the users have the ability to create and customize images quickly, easily, and fairly professionally. What is your favorite image you have seen on social and why?

DAVID SHING: Greg Olsen, actually, from my presentation—Jesus, talking to the young kid, that’s my all-time favorite. And it’s a painting, actually. It wasn’t meant as crude—he’s actually a Christian artist. But I just thought it was absolutely appropriate to tag, it’s one of my all-time favorites.

MH: Understanding that users now have the ability to create art from an app and share it quite globally, what type of impact do you see this having on brands?

DS: I do think the impact is massive, because it reduces what it costs to commission. We’ve already seen that; and I know that as a real designer, there’s always a revolution that happens. But what does happen, once you go through the cycle of it being inexpensive and easy to produce – what sticks out are people who have become craftsmen, who have done all these crafts with digital pixel design, and have become (in my mind) artists, with an incredibly powerful new craft. And so there’ll be a new genre. Let me be very frank. Back in the day when I came through design school, desktop publishing was just starting. Color printers were just starting. Everyone designed in their head, ‘cause you’ve got 40 fonts, but don’t know what the hell you can make them do, so everything looks like crap. And so once you cycle through that, you really need to design as a particular art, so arts, craftsmanship becomes very important. So it’ll have a new genre as a craft.

MH: You’ve spoken on media overload in the past as a contributor to stress. In the attention-economy, brands struggle to consider their utility and capitalize on how they can be useful to someone’s day-to-day habits in the midst of this overload. These things considered, what advice would you offer a brand on where to start when building a strategy?

DS: The first thing is insight—you’ve got to use enough insight to understand what you’re doing. Then the insight asks the question: Why? Why are you doing that thing? Most brands that I know jump into the water, with the attitude, “Well, we need social. We need…just do it.” I’m like, are you out of your mind? What you really want to do is make sure you have the insight that says this is why people want to engage with you, so you can go this way. It’s all about authenticity; it’s not about creating a motion because everybody seems to be doing that. What will happen is that, over time, we will move away from distractions. It’s already happening. People are sort of fragmenting their marketing. They’re not focusing their time on the ones that really matter.

MH: Many brands understand that they have to engage their audience with something unexpected. Often times, you will hear a request to “create something that will go viral.” What do you say to these leaders requesting a “viral” content piece?
**Shing interview, continued**

**DS:** First of all, “viral” needs to go away. The way that people, I believe, have to think about marketing, is a portfolio. Because if you’re going to do one beautiful craft or experience and say, “That’s it. We’re going to put it all out. We’re going to put our muscle behind this. This is the thing that’s going to get us the awards,” then it’s probably not going to happen. But if you do 20 of them, you have a chance that one might work, ‘cause at the end of the day, somebody who’s looking at that experience is a human. They’re the ones who are going to determine what it can do, not you, not you as a brand. You may have an instinct, but the best ideas, I think, come from making mistakes. Coke is really good at that. It divides the budget by 70/20/10. 70% of it goes to ROI-driven tactics, so nobody gets fired—amen. Then they spend 20% of their budget on stuff that’s perceived has having risk, and then 10% goes to stuff that they have no idea if it’s going to work.

**MH:** Similarly, leaders of brands are often looking at the number of “likes” as a success measure and are developing content with this objective in mind. Can you speak to this a bit and offer guidance to brands who may be working to achieve “likes.”

**DS:** Yeah; “likes” are rubbish. And they’re rubbish because it’s passive. There’s no skin in the game. If you and I want to be friends, you have to accept my friend request. That used to happen. So we went from a brand having several hundred committed friends to several thou-

sand “likes” because we thought it was a better concept than what it was. The “like” button came out of a hack, and it feels like it. It’s just a soft metric. You need metrics that are verbs; you need something that allows people to pass it on. That’s why I like “share,” because it’s physically something you commit to.

**MH:** With advertising being the backbone of digital, it’s important to build experi-

ences for the user that can be passed on, with “experience” being key to success. Creating sharable experiences may be easier for larger brands that have more budget to afford, leaving smaller brands in a more difficult place in the competition. Can you offer any advice to smaller brands that may be unable to afford a celebrity or more attractive experience?

**DS:** That’s a multi-threaded question you’re asking. It’s no longer about digital marketing, which you need to balance paid advertising marketing, which gives you scale with marketing which is you are prepared to experiment with channels, where you know your prospects are spending time. Now you need to scale it on something that works for smaller brands. For example, Trulia. Earlier today, when I showed you the example of Barbie’s house being sold for $25 million, by Mattel, and they supplemented some paid ads around it. It’s a really smart way of saying, “Who buys our product? Where are they shopping? How can I get their attention?” Barbie’s house. Genius. It’s a genius idea. And in the place of Trulia, it would be really inexpensive to do that as a listing. If you put it as a listing? It would be tiny. But they were just trying to pitch this new way of thinking. So brands just need to do that. It’s not about budget. Budget will get you scale, but it’s not going to get you attention. So you need to have really good ideas. Niche ideas can be really good, as long as they actually have a use. I’ll give you another example—I can’t remember the brand that did it, but the concept, it was called a Band in a Banner. They took a standard, 720x90 banner, and they built an actual stage, with the same particular scale, and they had a band crawl into it and play their instruments, and so if you come across it, you see this band playing, and you think, “What’s that about? Is this a band or just a banner ad?” It was just lovely. Different. Unusual. And contextual to the banner, because they did the 720x90 scale; it was pretty cool.

**MH:** When it comes to storytelling in your content strategy, creativity has to...
be redefined with each product launch. Brands don’t have to originate the story but rather just have to own it by placing it in smart places. This can present brands the opportunity to use their audience for curating content by having them blog for them, create home videos for testimonials, etc. You’re familiar with the suggested hoax by Apple, wherein a band held a jam session on a train by playing music from their iPhones. Considering the pressure that brands are experiencing to stay ahead in the game, can you speak to the importance of transparency when developing content?

**DS:** I don’t think transparency is necessarily that important. The reason for that is, if it’s just good content, people will pass it around. A good example of that is Pepsi. I don’t know who the driver is now, because I’m not really a sports fan, but there’s a NASCAR driver who took a guy on a whirl round in a car. And the only thing you saw is that Pepsi MAX was on the dashboard. So if you did look close, you’d see the Pepsi MAX was there. But the thing about it was, the idea, was that it was a hoax. And they all transparently said it was a hoax, but people could care less, they still shared it a hundred million times. It’s just the idea. Where it becomes really important is if you’re able to balance that with doing something authentic and interesting, then it can happen. It doesn’t have to be complicated or expensive. Dog driving is a classic example. But it’s been viewed a hundred million times.

**MH:** Shifting to the topic of search, search is always changing, and although the intent is to better serve the consumer, it can actually be more difficult to find what you’re looking for now. Do you have any predictions for how search might continue to evolve and what challenges brands might consequently face?

**DS:** It’s really going to change from the model of search today. Search is important, because it’s what we do. A referral code goes up because people tend to want to learn by what’s recommended. So if you go to a recommendation, that’s a search thing, it’s just going to evolve into something completely different. In addition to that though, if we’ve gotten all the gadgets that actually have push, meaning I don’t have to search because it’s actually pushing me information as I want it and need it, in location-based services, it’s going to evolve into something completely different. So search today is just a very passive environment. However, if you think about it, search is the number one way they’re able to afford to do all the things that they do — “they” being Google. They took an organic search results page on Google, and the majority of it is not organic, it’s paid. So search is already an evolving environment. But if we have wearables, and the penetration of wearables goes up, it has no screen to take with you. So yeah, it’s coming back to how you change or morph. As somebody who is selling a physical brand, you’re going to have to become really, really interesting, and different when thinking about your physical brand connected to a physical device that has no screen. It’s easy on phones today; you have an iPhone. That iPhone is your brand particularly. And if that brand is of use, than I promise that’s something I’m going to remember and travel with it. If there’s no screen, there’s no icon. So either brands are going to have to get into wearables, or they’re going to have to figure out ways to connect their physical product to the wearable that connects to the phone to give them a reason to actually use their phone.

**KEEP UP WITH THE COMINGS, GOINGS AND MUSINGS OF DAVID SHING AT SHINGY.COM**
AAF’s Thought Leadership series is designed to allow its corporate members and other industry leaders to share their expertise with their peers in a thought-provoking and insightful environment. It helps generate effective ideas that lead to enhanced business practices and innovation in the industry. Visit the Thought Leadership website at AAFTL.COM to view webinars and forums on topics ranging from multicultural brand messaging to digital technology.
Real-Time Marketing Gets Real

Social media continues to speed the pace of our everyday conversations, whether about breaking news, fitness or our plans for the upcoming weekend. And now a next-generation platform from Starcom MediaVest Group called CONTENT@SCALE will enable marketers to access and publish relevant content in digital media—as quickly as these conversations are taking place.

CONTENT@SCALE is a product created by SMG that is powered by Flite technology and in participation with some of the world’s leading content publishers—including Ahalogy, AOL, Batanga Media, BermanBraun, BlogHer, Cafe Mom/mamas Latinas, CBSi, Demand Media, Forbes, Glam Media, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Parade, Rodale, Say Media and Time Inc. It will give marketers immediate access to premium content that they can publish live into paid media, providing consumers with relevant information that SMG research already shows they care about.

“Until now, two of the biggest obstacles to making real-time marketing a reality have been the timely availability of quality content and the challenge of scaling it—within paid media in particular,” says Lisa Weinstein, SMG’s president of global digital data and analytics. CONTENT@SCALE solves both of these problems.

The platform, which launched in beta in the U.S. in the first quarter and is rolling out in Latin America and Canada during the first half of 2014, is an evolution of SMG’s link.d3 real-time content engine, which leverages real-time data for brands to align with the most relevant topics and react with meaningful content across paid, owned and earned channels. CONTENT@SCALE will automate the end-to-end process and allow brands to quickly identify, source, publish and scale premium evergreen content across a media buy.