

Leading the Evolution

Tony Besasie says Cannella Media's investment in analytics — while also continuing work to meet the needs of "video-centric" marketers — keeps the agency primed for success.

BY THOMAS HAIRE (THAIRE@QUESTEX.COM)

Cannella Media — a long-time DRMA member company comprised of three-decade old Cannella Response Television, programmatic advertising platform AdMore, short-form direct-response CPA platform REVShare, and Lead Generation Technologies (LGT) — is headquartered in Burlington, Wis., with offices in Los Angeles, New York, and Temecula, Calif.

We recently sat down with Tony Besasie, president of Cannella Response Television and a member of the Response Advisory Board, to discuss some of the company's highlights during the past year — as well as look at where it is headed as the fragmentation of the TV marketplace continues and consumers gain more control over their marketing experiences — in this DRMA Spotlight Update.

Q What have been Cannella Media's biggest accomplishments during the past 12 months?



TONY BESASIE: We launched our short-form division about two years ago, and it's growing at double-digit rates. We're really pleased with the momentum, but one achievement we didn't expect is the number of clients we have using long-form, mid-form, and short-form advertising. Our ability to help our clients leverage all of the video media forms and leverage both our long-form and short-form paid media services and CPA (cost-per-acquisition) platform has been very gratifying. I think we underestimate how unique we are in the marketplace, having the two largest CPA television platforms to complement our paid media services.

Q What have been the biggest challenges Cannella has faced in the same timeframe?

BESASIE: Our challenges are not unique to our business. The continued dilution of viewership driven by over-the-top (OTT) offerings is requiring all of us in the industry to work harder at achieving



Tony Besasie

cost-effective scale. As a company, we have invested heavily in analytics and back-end processes to optimize media quickly. Efficient aggregation and nimble optimization is the new norm to winning.

Q How are you expanding what you offer to current and new clients? What areas of the business is the company looking to move into?

BESASIE: There are two areas we are focusing on that leverage our core strengths. First, we're expanding our media services to capitalize on video everywhere opportunities, whether that is in traditional TV, addressable TV, OTT, targeted social, or digital. Second, we are expanding our CPA platform to include email marketing and digital native media. We've been beta testing both initiatives, which are showing encouraging results.

Q What other areas is Cannella focusing on between now and the end of 2018?

BESASIE: In addition to the expansion of our service offerings, we continue to invest heavily in analytics capabil-

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CANNELLA MEDIA

ities — and specifically in attribution. Our data scientists and developers are using cutting-edge methodologies — like neural networks and machine learning — to provide us with near real-time business intelligence to drive our media decisions. Personally, I'm amazed at how far analytics has come and how far we've come as a company within the past few years. We've always been a data-centric, company but the work our teams are doing now is pushing the boundaries.

 **How is Cannella helping its clients respond to the continued fragmentation of the TV viewing audience and consumers' increasing desires to respond to advertising on their own time and terms?**

BESASIE: There is no disputing the fact that live TV ratings are down and viewership is shifting from ad-supported television to subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) platforms, like Netflix and Amazon, and VOD binge watching. The good news is that video media consumption continues to grow, and traditional

ad-supported TV has an overwhelming share of that consumption.

To address these market dynamics, we are working much more closely with our clients to extract as much efficiency as possible from a TV-initiated response through all downstream touchpoints to achieve a conversion. For example, we are more involved in our clients' business with call center scripting, e-commerce page optimization, and retargeting media to convert online shoppers. We're helping our clients squeeze everything we can get out of a media buy. In addition, we're expanding our scope of media services. Thirty years ago, we started as Cannella Response Television, specializing in long-form paid programming. Today we are Cannella Media, with a video-centric suite of services. We're agnostic to the delivery format, and we continue to focus on direct response promoted by a compelling video selling story and call-to-action.

 **What do you see as two of the hottest topics facing marketers in the performance marketing space?**

BESASIE: It's a great time to be in this business because the opportunities to sell direct-to-consumer are greater now than they ever have been before.

I think we're going to see a significant rise in the use and capabilities of customer relationship management (CRM) systems and more emphasis on customer acquisition. In the past, many



Founded in 1985 by Frank Cannella, Cannella Media's history is built on leveraging innovation to meet the needs of marketers in an increasingly complex media environment. With a customer-oriented team, unwavering focus on media accountability, state-of-the-art technology, and marketing know-how, Cannella companies are focused on delivering customer acquisition solutions. Those companies include: Cannella Response Television, the DRTV media company with the largest scale in North America; AdMore, the largest programmatic media company in North America; and REVShare, the largest short-form CPA media company in North America.

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DR marketers focused on selling a single product to a consumer. It was a transactional exchange that required a high media efficiency ratio (MER). Then, as brands grew in popularity, several marketers expanded into retail and used DRTV to generate pull-through demand and used the revenue from direct sales to subsidize retail, which now includes Amazon.

The dynamics of the marketer/consumer relationship, however, haven't evolved much beyond transactional engagements. The opportunity today is to build an ongoing relationship with the customer for more efficient subsequent sales. Listening to consumers, building a portfolio of brands and engaging them through smartly crafted contact strategies is exciting — and a hot topic.

The other hot topic is figuring out how to work with giants without succumbing to their leverage. The power and control of Google and Facebook, or Amazon and Walmart/Jet, are forcing marketers and their agencies to develop specialty practices to navigate these juggernauts. ▽