

Cablefax Daily™

Tuesday — March 13, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 29 / No. 048

Exclusive Access: Creating the Perfect Entertainment Bundle

Exclusive content is increasingly the name of the game—and that applies across multiple platforms. Did you find yourself watching “La La Land” on an airplane just a mere two months after its release in theaters? You can thank **Global Eagle** for that. “We were invested in the script so we had the exclusive rights to distribute it after it was in the theaters,” said *Mike Miller*, vp, communications & marketing for Global Eagle, which provides video for both airlines and cruise ships. “It’s a big advantage to have the best content to distribute exclusively.” Miller was part of a panel discussion at **Satellite 2018** Monday on building the ultimate entertainment bundle. Exclusivity was described as a key ingredient. It’s also telling that content providers are looking for non-traditional partnerships. Movie studios “actually come to us sometimes and say, ‘hey, this may be more of a family movie that works well in the travel market. Do you want to partner with us?’ There are instances where it makes sense for us and sometimes it doesn’t,” Miller said. “You can’t underestimate the need to provide something competitors don’t have.” Exclusive content deals are becoming increasingly popular in cable, with **Charter** reaching arrangements with **AMC Networks** and **Viacom** for one-of-a-kind content. **AMC** teamed with **Comcast** for the \$4.99/month AMC Premiere that gives subs access to AMC shows without the ads as well as bonus scenes and interviews. Exclusive content arrangements are also partly what make **Sky** so attractive that **Comcast** has bid \$31bln for the UK-based satellite company. “Rupert Murdoch had this vision of exclusive content, particularly sports. He said sports was the battling ram for pay television. They locked down long-term rights for really high value content, like Premier League football, Formula 1, cricket, rugby, etc, and they just made that the magnet for their proposition,” said panelist *William Fisher*, an advisor to **Wipro Technologies**’ New Age Media practice. Wipro’s clients include **DISH’s Sling TV** and **DirectTV Now**. When it comes to building the ultimate bundle, sports also has a role, said *Eddie Vaca*, founder and CEO of **Amplive**, a live streaming platform helping broadcasters multiply audiences for their live events. “Everyone wants it, everyone can’t have it and consumers can’t get enough of it,” he said. Global Eagle has amassed more than 1500 hours of sports

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programming. But Fisher argues there's also a place for non-sports OTT offerings like **Philo's** \$16/month non-sports offering in the US. Ultimately, Vaca predicts video will be all about direct-to-consumer apps in the future, letting consumer curate their own packages with the right mix of sports and other content. Will that mean taking your **Netflix** or **Hulu** portal with you on to an airplane's in-flight system? Not yet. "We're not close," Miller said, citing rights issues with taking content from one location to another, particularly across global borders. "Some of those walls are coming down, but I still think we're 5-10 years away from some of that happening."

Dubuc Leaving A+E Networks: Nancy Dubuc is stepping down as pres/CEO of **A+E Networks** effective April 16, **Hearst** and **The Walt Disney Company** announced Monday. *Abbe Raven*, chmn emeritus and former CEO of A+E, will return to serve as acting chair until a replacement is found. According to a report by *Variety*, Dubuc is in talks to replace *Shane Smith* as CEO of **Vice Media**. Dubuc was appointed pres/CEO in 2013, succeeding Raven, who had served in the position since 2005. "After 20 years at A+E, the hardest thing will be to leave the people and company I love," Dubuc said in a statement. "But, as a creative entrepreneur and leader, and to stay true to my personal mantra, I need my next dare and my next challenge." Dubuc was recently rumored to be a top candidate to head **Amazon Studios** before ultimately pulling herself out of the running. The job ended up going to **NBC Entertainment** pres *Jennifer Salke*.

Sub Losses Continue for Pay-TV: The largest pay-TV providers lost around 1.495mln net video subs last year, nearly double the losses from 2016 (760K). The top six cable companies lost around 660K in 2017, according to **Leichtman Research**, while satellite TV services lost about 1.55mln subs. **DirecTV** may have posted a gain of 1.228mln in 2016, but it wasn't immune to the losses either, seeing 554K dropping the service last year. Telephone companies followed suit, dropping 885K through 2017.

Second Chance for Softbank?: **Softbank** is after **Charter** again, buying nearly 5% of the company recently, according to the *Sunday Times*. This isn't the first time an acquisition has been attempted by Softbank. The company tried to acquire Charter last year for a reported \$540/share, but Charter declined. They did discuss a MVNO deal, but it never came to fruition. **Newstreet Research** says Charter is likely to continue its **Verizon** MVNO. Newstreet predicts that the deal will stick at least until **Sprint** rebuilds its network and shows the value of network sharing with **Altice USA**. If this is another acquisition attempt, then it is likely others will come to the table, including those like Verizon who joined in the bidding war last year.

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Introducing the Slingers: Sling is launching a new marketing campaign across television, digital, mobile, social, out-of-home and new media platforms. The campaign, created and produced by **The Martin Agency**, aims to position Sling TV as the most flexible live streaming service on the market. Alongside the new commercials, the “We Are Slingers” campaign will feature a dedicated landing page, a revamping of the sling.com homepage, **YouTube** videos, social media posts and in-device promotions. Ads ranging from 15-60 seconds will be a part of the campaign. The Martin Agency will be charged with managing the strategic planning, creative deployment and production efforts for the Sling TV brand.

Pink Slips: Univision laid off 20 staffers last Friday in an effort to cut costs, including executives *Felipe Holguin* and *Daniel Eilemberg*. Holguin was CEO of **Fusion Media Group**, which includes **Gizmodo Media Group** and the company’s stake in *The Onion*. Eilemberg operated as pres/chief content officer of **Fusion** cable network. “As the media industry rapidly evolves, we are focused on continuing to transform UCI for the future,” a Univision statement said. “As part of this process, we have recently taken steps to realign parts of our operations and reallocate resources to invest in growth that will best serve our audiences, community and partners.” The news arrives soon after it was announced that Univision was scrapping an IPO and that CEO *Randy Falco* would retire at the end of the year despite extending his contract last November through January 2020.

First Day On the Market: **GCI Liberty** ended its first trading day on the NASDAQ Stock Exchange Monday, closing at \$54.73 per share, up about 1%. GCI Liberty first opened Monday at \$54.29/share, rising as high as \$55.47.

Trump for the Block: President *Trump* issued an executive order blocking **Broadcom’s** attempt to buy **Qualcomm**, citing national security concerns. Trump’s order said there is credible evidence that leads him to believe Singapore-based Broadcom might take action through exercising control of Qualcomm that threatens to impair national security. Broadcom made a \$117bln hostile bid for Qualcomm.

Ratings: The premiere of **CNN’s** “American Dynasties: The Kennedys” ranked as No 1 in cable news Sunday night in total viewers (1.715mln), 25-54s (395K) and 18-34s (103K). The network also scored with the debut episode of “Pope: The Most Powerful Man in History,” which also ranked No 1 among A25-54 (350K) and A18-34 (77K). -- **Golf Channel’s** final round lead-in coverage for the Valspar Championship (1-3pm) earned a 1.65 overnight rating, making it the highest-rated Golf Channel PGA Tour lead-in telecast on record. Peak coverage occurred from 2:30-3pm, with a 2.12 rating. -- The 90-minute conclusion of **Disney XD’s** “Star Wars Rebels” on Monday was up 46% over the prior week’s 1-hour ep, notching 673K total viewers. On digital platforms, Rebels generated 2.4mln video starts on the **Disney XD App + DisneyNOW** and over 3.2mln VOD transactions during its final season.

Programming: The 2018 iHeartRadio Music Awards, carried live on **TBS, TNT** and **truTV** Sunday, trended #1 on Twitter worldwide and in the US in more than 30 cities. The iHeartRadio Music Awards also garnered over 216bln social media impressions in the US alone. -- *Anna Paquin* (“True Blood”) is set to star in **Pop’s** upcoming dramedy “Flack,” which heads into production this month in London. The six-episode limited series was created by *Oliver Lansley*, who will also executive produce. -- *Steve Baldikoski* and *Bryan Behar* will act as executive producers and showrunners for the fourth season of **Netflix’s** “Fuller House.” The two replace *Jeff Franklin*, who was fired last month after he was alleged to be verbally abusive to staff. Both have served as co-executive producers since the launch of the series in 2016. Production begins later this year. -- *Gabrielle Dennis* (“Rosewood”) will act as *Whitney Houston* in **BET’s** upcoming two-part miniseries “The Bobby Brown Story.” The series is set to premiere in September. -- **Starz** acquired seven exclusive first-run documentaries including “The Rape of Recy Taylor,” which will premiere in July 2018. The other documentaries will air from March to July, and will also be available for download or streaming through the Starz app. -- **Showtime** extended animated series “Our Cartoon President,” adding seven episodes to its order this summer. The last of the initial 10-episode run will air April 8 at 8pm.

People: **NCTA** announced the addition of *Mark Kulish* and *Robert Rubinovitz* to its executive team. **US Telecom** veteran Kulish will serve as svp, finance & administration, taking over for the recently retired *Bruce Carnes*. Rubinovitz is leaving the US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration for NCTA and has held positions at the **DOJ** and **NERA Economic Consulting**. -- *Eric Trabb* is joining the **NAB** as the organization’s svp of business development. He comes from **NewBay Media**, where he served as vp of sales and group publisher for the broadcast/video group for 11 years.