

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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5Qs with Ann Carlsen of Carlsen Resources

As Cablefax readies for our exclusive Leaders Retreat at the Ritz-Carlton in Amelia Island, FL, on April 30-May 1, we caught up with one of our many high-profile participants, Ann Carlsen of Carlsen Resources, to ask about the state of recruiting and retention amid massive industry change. **With so many options for the most talented execs, what can traditional cable do to retain the best of the best—especially as Silicon Valley tries to woo them away?** The way Silicon Valley and most innovative organizations sell themselves to potential candidates and to their employees is quite different and unconventional from the very first point of contact. They put a great deal of time and effort into building an emotional connection with potential and current employees by presenting an alluring and compelling vision of their organizations' that is futuristic, fun, and fast-paced... The freedom to take risks and fail is also a big selling point. **So are Silicon Valley companies just more skilled at selling themselves to prospects?** Typically, they do a better job than traditional cable/media companies of selling and delivering a sense of community, a culture of empowerment with a focus on experimentation, innovation, independence, ownership, purpose, ethics and a true commitment to employee development. Many big media companies aren't structured to deliver on this type of opportunity. The attributes of a soul-crushing, Sisyphean, anti-change workplace run deep. These companies appeal to the entrepreneurial spirit. They often compare their opportunity to that of the early cable industry when it was young, fresh and beaming with possibility. That is very appealing to a vast majority of people in the traditional cable space today. **What are some techniques to create the most attractive package for each prospect? What's the best way to balance compensation, flexibility, incentives and other factors?** Personalization, creativity and an open mind. Get creative with compensation. Some companies now pay special "hot skills" premiums to employees whose expertise is crucial and in short supply. The payments ensure that top-level talent stays in place for critical periods, such as through the late stages of the design of an important product. Paying signing bonuses in stages, rather than as lump sums, can also help to keep new employees in place, at least in the short run. Deferred signing bonuses are becoming the norm for executive-level hires. We, as an industry, need to redefine how we think about talent relative to how we hire, retain, train and promote. Hiring processes, customization of benefits and training plans, coaching, preparation for the next role, rotations in different functional areas...all are more important than

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Leaders Retreat

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ever going forward. **What techniques are working best in 2018—and what advice do you have for companies wanting to improve their results?** Hire a well-regarded recruiting firm that knows the business and is well connected in the space. We have seen an exponential growth uptick in our own business as companies get serious about competing for the best talent. Also, keep an open mind and go outside of your comfort zone instead of hiring the same type of person over and over. Easy to say... almost impossible to do. And finally, over communicate with job applicants regularly and in particular... if you don't hire them, as that is what people remember most. The same goes for current employees... communication of passion, energy and purpose are not that hard to do... and make all the difference. **How can companies best use these techniques to appeal to millennials?** Develop and sell clear career paths and opportunities so people have something to aspire to. Digital talent, and millennials in general, need to see a clear path for uninhibited career development that's based on merit, not years spent. If they don't, they won't see a reason to stay with the company in the long term. Design and promote long-term career paths and invest heavily in employee development. *[For more info on the Cablefax Leaders Retreat and register, go to <http://www.cablefax.com/event/2018-cablefax-leaders-retreat>]*

Powell's Take: The government has become desensitized to risks linked to having personal information accessible by web companies, **NCTA** pres/CEO *Michael Powell* said in an interview for **C-SPAN's** 'The Communicators' series in an episode set to air on C-SPAN March 31 at 6:30pm and on **C-SPAN2** on April 2 at 8am and 8pm. Powell said the **Facebook-Cambridge Analytica** case is an "extraordinary moment" that was predictable. "Essentially you have a brilliant platform-based advertising model that emphasizes precision propaganda, and that precision propaganda can be used for good or evil," said the former **FCC** chmn. "A big part of communication conversation going forward will have to be necessarily comprehensive and include how to think about companies whose enormous profits derive from the amassing of massive intimate data sets that they monetize to various forces." When asked why cable should be trusted, Powell noted that if customers are subscribing to cable companies for a suite of services, the transaction is transparent. With cord-cutting in mind, providers will do anything to maintain customer trust.

Digging for Data: **AMC Networks** is creating a data sales team to support products for advertisers as the company heads into its 2018 Upfront, with efforts expanding the availability of its Aurora Video Targeting Solutions platform. The group, known as AMCN Agility, will be headed by *Adam Gaynor*, who will serve as vp. Gaynor joined AMC a year ago to lead DISH's media sales team and advanced advertising.

Viva Las Vegas: Las Vegas is the third city to join **Cox Communications'** Smart Gigabit Communities program. Cox expects to offer Gigabit internet to the area by 2019's end. Las Vegas joins Phoenix, AZ, and San Diego, CA, in the program.

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Think about that for a minute...

The High Cost of “Free”

Commentary by Steve Effros

It all started with NATO. No, not the European alliance, the National Association of Theatre Owners. In the 1960's that organization launched a nationwide campaign to “Save Free TV.” They were very worried about what this new thing, “community antenna television” was going to do to their box office. The mere fact that folks would pay for the delivery of television was thought to be an existential threat to the movie folks.

Of course, all that changed. The “home box office” turned into a great success, and while the theatre owners had to clean up their act (and their buildings) before customers came back, program producers had a win-win with more demand than ever for good programming. But the term “free” was ruined forever. TV was never “free.” The fees were simply hidden in the cost of the advertising, which was passed on to consumers in the cost of goods purchased. Every time you pop the top on a Bud or “squeeze the Charmin” you’re paying for “free TV.”

Of course, I’ve mentioned this many times before in the long battle with the broadcasters over “free TV” and retransmission consent, but now things have gone to an entirely new level, and consumers may finally be figuring out that when companies say they are giving you something for “free,” you had better hold on to your wallet—and lots of other things!

The reality is forced upon us by Facebook, Google, Cambridge Analytica and the like. The “cost,” as many of us have known and tried to explain for a long time, is all your personal data. Obviously, based on the fact that Google and Facebook are two of the highest valued companies in the world, that data is worth one heck



of a lot! Both companies portray themselves—and are seen by their users as—offering something for “free!” The massive search and recommendation engine that is Google, or the “social network” platform that billions have chosen to use called Facebook seemingly offer their services to anyone for “free.” But as has always been the case, the actual cost is that your data, your use, your identity, “friends,” likes, dislikes, interests, etc., are all then collected, analyzed, aggregated and sold to advertisers, interest groups, political campaigns and maybe even governments.

That’s a very high cost to the individual. And just like “free TV,” since it’s somewhat hidden, the person ultimately paying the bill is often blissfully ignorant of the fact that while they don’t get that bill directly, they sure as heck are ultimately paying for it, many times over!

Have these companies done anything illegal? Maybe not. In all that smudge of small legalise you have to “accept” before using Google, Facebook or whatever it may indeed mention that you are totally giving up the rights to the information they glean. Maybe we should write laws making that illegal, or maybe, just as with the effort to turn ISPs into common carriers, we should declare that a massive “search engine” like a library index card catalog should be declared a “public utility” and not allowed to link with any other business, like selling the data gleaned from which books you are looking for. As to the “social media,” should there be a law that says the “platform” is a utility? That it cannot “scrape” information from your friends and sell that information? All valid questions, and we’re going to hear a lot more as folks appreciate the high cost of “free.”

Steve

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(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)

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