

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Turning 40: WICT Launches First-Ever PSA, #LeadWithMore Campaign

For 40 years, WICT has been a bit of an industry secret—creating women leaders in the media, broadband and cable space, but keeping a relatively low profile outside the industry. Not anymore, with the association on Monday launching its first-ever PSA. Industry partners **Comcast NBCU, Cox, Discovery, Charter Spectrum** and **Turner** have committed to supporting the spot with more than \$6m in airtime and others are expected to air it as well. There's also a months-long digital campaign, #LeadWithMore, that runs through June 4. The PSA, produced by Cox at its HQ, features Turner evp, global HRO *Angela Santone*, Cox technology engineering and operations vp *Toni Stubbs*, Charter's *Kelly Atkinson*, head of Spectrum marketing, consumer & SMB, and Comcast-NBCU's *Noopur Davis*, svp, chief product and information security officer, as well as young female actresses who portray the execs as children. "For 40 years, we have helped women lead and grow. There's so much we can do together," WICT pres/CEO *Maria Brennan* concludes in the spot, which directs viewers to leadwithmore.com. In addition to celebrating WICT's 40th anniversary, the website serves as a way to find open jobs within the industry. That call to action is a key part of WICT's message. "We are urging businesses in this country to recruit, retain and promote women. It's good for business, bottom line," said Cox pres *Pat Esser*, who was at DC's National Press Club Monday for the PSAs kick-off event. He noted that women have choices and "we want you to choose this industry." While this is WICT's biggest reach outside the industry, it has been casting a wider net in recent years, including through partnerships with groups such as **Girls Who Code** and **Girls Inc.** "Once you're 30 years in, you all sort of know each other internally. But there was so much power and might in the WICT community that we wanted to look for meaningful ways to have outreach," Brennan told **Cablefax**. "When we thought about turning 40, we didn't want to do it in a way that was all about us. We wanted to do it in a way that was all about an industry. It really does, like no other industry we can cite, measure, analyze and enact changes based on our original research." That is what sets WICT and cable apart, concluded Comcast senior evp and chief diversity officer *David Cohen*. "The headline, I think, is not our individual company accomplishments, but it's our industry's commitment to diversity and inclusion," he said. "I can't think of another industry that works together, shares a commitment to diversity and inclusion that has an organization like WICT to keep us focused and keep us organized. We legitimately work together to advance the diversity and inclusion needle in our

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entire industry.” WICT’s PAR Survey, which **NAMIC** is partnering on, helps track progress in the field of diversity and creates mapping that allows a company to know what it’s on track to look like down the road. Cohen said about almost 40% of Comcast’s leadership team is female led. *Marva Johnson*, WICT global chair and Charter regional vp, state govt affairs, said Charter is gearing up to launch employee resource group Spectrum Women in the coming weeks. “We know that investing in women is good for business,” she said. While there were women speakers at the National Press Club event, including Santone, Stubbs and even the young actress who played Stubbs (*Gabrielle Manning*), there were also plenty of men in the audience. Cohen and Esser were joined by **FCC** chmn *Ajit Pai* and commissioner *Mike O’Rielly*, who heaped praise on WICT, and **NCTA** pres/CEO Michael Powell sat in the audience. “[Cox’s Esser] and I both have amazing women who participated in this video and amazing women who represent us at this press conference. But the success of our industry, the success of meaningfully moving the needle on diversity and inclusion, the success of growing women who are in executive positions in our industry depends on male allies,” Cohen said.

Another Executive Shift: The management shakeup at **WarnerMedia** continued Monday with the official reveal that former **NBC Entertainment** chmn *Bob Greenblatt* will take on the role of chmn, WarnerMedia entertainment and direct-to-consumer. That will include **HBO, TNT, TBS, truTV** and the upcoming DTC service from the company. *Jeff Zucker* will see an expanded role, becoming chmn, WarnerMedia news & sports. **CNN Worldwide, Turner Sports, Bleacher Report** and the **AT&T** RSNs will all fall under his purview. *Kevin Tsujihara* will continue on as chmn/CEO of **Warner Bros**, while overseeing a new global kids and young adults business that will include **Cartoon Network, Adult Swim** and **Boomerang**. His business unit will also act as the home of **Otter Media** and **Turner Classic Movies**. *Gerhard Zeiler* has been upped from **Turner International** pres to WarnerMedia CRO. All WarnerMedia affils and ad sales groups will come together in a unified structure under Zeiler. While AT&T execs have spoken at length about how important it is to protect the culture at the properties it acquired, analysts are pointing to the recent departures of HBO’s *Richard Plepler* and Turner’s *David Levy* as huge hurdles AT&T will have to overcome as it pursues its “modern media company” strategy. “There is nothing more critical in a media company than talent and the personal relationships that that talent brings. It therefore follows that retaining talent is job one,” **MoffettNathanson** wrote in a research note. “In this regard, AT&T starts with one strike against them.” **MoffettNathanson** did look kindly upon the appointment of Greenblatt, saying that having someone from the media world rather than a telco should be somewhat reassuring to those at both Turner and HBO. Still, it may be a while before all is calm over at WarnerMedia. “At a time when media companies already face tremendous structural risks, AT&T has added an additional layer of cultural risk that is unique,”

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MoffettNathanson continued. “Strategic rationalization may be necessary. But it could easily end very badly indeed.”

Comcast Looks at Ads: In the wake of **AT&T’s Xandr** launch, **Comcast** is feeling the heat to step up its ad tech. Comcast is evaluating a group of companies to enhance its targeted advertising business, including **Cadent** and **dataxu**, **Cablefax’s** sister publication **AdExchanger** has learned. Comcast declined to comment on the report. Comcast’s latest large acquisitions in the space included **FreeWheel** in 2014 and exchange platform **StickyAds** in 2016. However, **Disney**, one of FreeWheel’s largest customers, jumped ship and gave its ad serving business to **Google Ad Manager** in November. Comcast is facing increased competition from the likes of Google and Xandr, as well as smaller companies such as **INVIDI**. To top it all off, Comcast Advertising is even facing internal pressures, with NBCU prioritizing its homegrown ad tech, AdExchanger reports. Both Cadent and dataxu could provide a side-by-side business that would improve Comcast’s access to programmatic budgets across all of its groups. According to AdExchanger, Comcast is in discussions with both companies, but no word yet as to how close a deal could be. Cadent is working with investment bank **Jefferies** and anticipates 47% recurring revenue in 2019. Its brand clients include **Kraft**, **CoverGirl**, **Exxon Mobil**, **Amazon** and more. On the other hand, dataxu started as a desktop DSP, but has a buyer interface and advanced TV aspirations. Last October, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that dataxu is working with investment bank **GCA Advisors** on a potential sale.

Lending a Hand: An unlikely partner is making a major investment in West Virginia’s internet infrastructure. The state is collaborating with **Facebook** subsidiary **Middle Mile Infrastructure**, which will build a high-capacity fiber-optic cable network set to travel approximately 275 miles starting at the state’s western border. It’s part of an ongoing larger network infrastructure build that will last for roughly 18-24 months, starting in Ashburn, Virginia and ending in Columbus, Ohio. With the announcement Monday, Gov *Jim Justice* (R-WV) called broadband development absolutely critical to West Virginia moving forward. Sen *Shelley Moore Capito* (R-WV) has been calling on Facebook to assist with closing the digital divide, telling Facebook CEO *Mark Zuckerberg* during a joint hearing before the Senate Judiciary and Senate Commerce committees last April to “bring some fiber” the next time he visited the state. Zuckerberg committed to following up with her on the issue of connectivity in the state’s rural areas, saying it’s an issue he’s very passionate about.

Retrans Handshake: One of the longest retrans disputes on the books came to an end Monday, with **Mediacom** reaching an agreement with **Independent Communications** for the carriage of Sioux Falls-based **Fox** affil **KTTW**. The station has been blacked out on Mediacom since Oct 15, 2016. The deal comes just days after **DirecTV** and KTTW ended their 7.5 week blackout. KTTW returned to DirecTV’s lineup Wednesday.

Behind the Screens: **Comcast** is upping its security portfolio, revealing Monday it has acquired cybersecurity technology developer **BluVector**. The company uses advanced AI and machine learning to offer additional cybersecurity protections to companies and government agencies alike. The two will work together to grow BluVector’s existing business and collaborate on the development of new technologies. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. *Eric Malawar*, former cybersecurity staff director for the **House Committee on Homeland Security**, has been named CEO of BluVector. Founding CEO *Kris Lovejoy*, who recently left for another role, will continue to serve as an advisor and consultant to the two companies. Comcast chief information security officer *Noopur Davis* will also be heavily involved, leading the process to identify opportunities to leverage the companies’ combined tech to support new products.

Ranking Official: **The Walt Disney Company** is adding *Ravi Ahuja* to its senior leadership team as pres, business operations and CFO. The transition will happen upon the close of the **21st Century Fox** acquisition, and he will work closely with Disney’s DTC and International segment regarding advertising sales and content distribution. *Robert Langer*, the current CFO for **Disney/ABC Television**, will take on the role of evp, finance & planning for The Walt Disney Company following the close. Ahuja currently serves as CFO for the **Fox Networks Group**, which will no longer exist after the deal. -- Disney CEO/chmn *Bob Iger* won’t be getting quite as large of a payday when the giant closes its acquisition of Fox. In an **SEC** filing Monday, Disney cut his annual base salary by \$500K to \$3mln following the closure of the deal. It will also strike the annual \$8mln increase in Iger’s target bonus, sticking with his original annual target of \$12mln. His long-term incentive award has dropped by \$5mln, landing it at \$20mln.

Tornado Watch: **AccuWeather** released its tornado projections for 2019, predicting an estimated 1,075 tornadoes, an increase from 987 last year. Meteorologist *Paul Pastelok* said the largest shift will be a greater proportion of tornadoes hitting Tornado Alley, an area that had seen a respite the last couple years. While the predicted number of events is higher YOY, Pastelok emphasized that it will actually be a quieter season. “It may be perceived as a very active season due to the fact that we had such a low season last year. Already we’ve already seen one event that’s surpassed the amount of deaths that we saw all last year,” Pastelok said. Over the weekend tornadoes ripped across the southeast, killing at least 23 in Alabama.