

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Full Throttle: Vizio's Ad Business Leverages Streaming

As cord cutting drives more viewers to OTT options, advertising has become a growing business for smart TV manufacturers. **Vizio** is the latest to join, forming Vizio Ads, a unit that sells advertising on its own SmartCast operating system. "We see where consumers are gravitating towards. More and more of our consumers are moving to streaming," *Mike O'Donnell*, svp of the platform group, told **CFX**. "We want to leverage our capabilities to help drive as much SVOD consumption with those partners and provide solutions that help our free or ad-supported apps on the platform." Pay-TV providers lost 1.74m net video subs in 3Q this year, up from a net loss of roughly 975K in 3Q18. On the other hand, growth of "connected TV" (referring to content viewed on a smart TV) is accelerating, and CTV advertising is expected to exceed analyst expectations and surpass \$7bn by the end of 2019. Vizio Ads, which works directly with content partners and advertisers rather than selling ads through other companies with programming on SmartCast, provides opportunities for home-screen placement and search and discovery placement, similarly to offerings from **Roku** and **Samsung**. It also will utilize its AVOD channel and **Pluto TV**-powered WatchFree to work with ad-supported platforms to help them monetize. Vizio Ads is taking control of the top of the waterfall, and providing advertisers a direct-to-device ad-buying option, though it still works with partners such as **Comcast's FreeWheel**. "We're different from some of the other streaming-focused players. We also sell televisions," said O'Donnell. "We understand there is a large portion of our viewers that are watching both linear and streaming, and that's why as a company we've done things like continuing to push the OAR initiative in the marketplace to help provide a standard, so we can bring new solutions to both linear and streaming." Vizio is the leader of Project OAR, an industry consortium working to establish an addressable advertising standard for both linear and on-demand formats on smart TVs. Founding members include **Disney**, **NBCU**, **Discovery**, **CBS** and **WarnerMedia**. "We did the hard part first," said O'Donnell, referring to Inscope, Vizio's TV data operation. "We got the data part right. We were very selective about how we were going to work with advertisers to make sure we didn't impact the consumer experience. We're at a place where we can open up the throttle, we can bring in new subscription partners and new ad-supported apps." O'Donnell said Vizio now accounts for some 17% of all smart TVs sold in the US and together with Inscope can reach roughly 13m net Vizio opt-in customers. Vizio will also sell inventory on behalf of other

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WE'VE GOT A HOT ONE



TRACE ADKINS IS BACK FOR A SECOND SEASON OF INSP'S HIT COWBOY COMPETITION SERIES

"Great program. We set the DVR and watched every show each night..." - Patsi M.

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"I would watch most any show with Trace Adkins..." - Dianne

"Trace Adkins was a perfect host!" - Martha Y.

"...Great show..." - Marcia F.

"...LOVED watching Trace Adkins... PLEASE do another season..." - Joleen D.

"...Sure hope to see you on season 2. Trace Adkins is awesome." - Boyce

"...I hope you do a series of it..." - W.

"This show was so addictive I want more..." - Karen

"...I love each episode. Love it!" - Paula L.

"...LOVED watching... PLEASE do a..."

"I love... and I hope they do more of it..."



ULTIMATE
COWBOY
SHOWDOWN
WITH TRACE ADKINS



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ad-supported apps on the platform, which includes some 40 SVOD and AVOD apps. Buys through Vizio are powered through Inscope's automated content recognition (ACR) data, and Vizio Ads and Inscope will work closely together. "We got a lot of work done to make sure that we have the most transparent consumer option in the space, so that consumers and advertisers alike understand what data we're collecting and how we're using it," said O'Donnell. "We're working together to just drive more data-driven advertising." As part of Vizio Ads, the company has opened a new office in NYC, led by O'Donnell. It plans to hire more than two dozen ad sales execs across the US next year.

NBCU Chief Steve Burke Stepping Down in 2020, Reports: NBCUniversal CEO Steve Burke is expected to step down from his role when his contract expires in August, with current chmn of NBCUniversal Film and Entertainment Jeff Shell expected to take over. The news was first reported by *Variety*. In January, an executive shakeup saw Burke reorganizing his direct reports, with Shell and Mark Lazarus, chmn of NBCUniversal broadcast, cable, sports and news, both in the running as successors to Burke. According to reports, Lazarus could still end up with Burke's job. As part of the Jan reorg, Bonnie Hammer moved from running NBCU's entertainment cable nets to heading direct-to-consumer and digital products (including upcoming streamer Peacock), before again shifting in October to the role of NBCUniversal Content Studios chmn. Burke was named CEO in Jan 2011, after Comcast closed on its initial acquisition of a majority stake in NBCUniversal from General Electric, but he has overseen NBCU since Comcast's agreement with GE in 2009. NBCU did not respond to requests for comment.

AT&T 5G Live in 10 Markets: AT&T lit its 5G low-band network in 10 markets across the country on Friday. The initial launch included Birmingham, AL, Indianapolis, L.A., Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Providence, RI, Rochester, NY, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose. The company said it plans to launch service in Boston, Bridgeport, CT, Buffalo, Las Vegas, Louisville and NYC "soon" and is working "toward offering nationwide coverage in the first half of 2020." Customers need either AT&T's Unlimited Extra or Unlimited Elite plans for 5G. Using 5G data will count toward the plans' throttling caps.

Fuse and NTRWK Strike E-Commerce and Ad Deal: Fuse Media and youth-culture e-commerce and content platform NTRWK announced an e-commerce revenue sharing, cross-promotional advertising partnership. The two companies will offer viewers of Fuse's content a first look at NTRWK's product launches, which are then available for purchase on the NTRWK app. Revenue will be split between the two companies. The partnership launched Friday, with a hoodie from apparel brand Talentless featured on an episode of Fuse's digital series "Bust It Open."

Protect Press Freedom: The Committee to Protect Journalists has added new partners to its Protect Press Freedom

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Campaign, including **Fox News**, **ABC** and **Google**. **CBS**, **CNN**, **Comcast NBCUniversal** and **Sinclair** are already members of the campaign, which launched last month to create awareness about “significant threats” to press freedom.

Distribution: **DirecTV** adds 24-hour English-language channel **NHK World-Japan** to its basic lineup on Dec 16. The move comes ahead of the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. -- **Frdly TV** is debuting its live/on-demand TV streaming service on **Apple TV** with the public launch of its beta app. In addition, **UPtv** joins the service for no additional fee. With UPtv, Frndly now has 13 different channels including **Hallmark Channel**, **The Weather Channel**, **Game Show Network** and more. The streamer starts at \$5.99 a month, and can be watched on all major streaming devices including **Roku**, **Amazon Fire**, **Chromecast**, **iOS** and **Android** mobile apps.

Programming: **ESPN** premieres “Roger Federer: Everywhere is Home” Dec 17 at 8pm. The half-hour show follows the tennis star as he travels through Latin America during his week-long journey in November. -- **CuriosityStream**’s annual show “Top Science Stories” returns Dec 19, highlighting another year of scientific discoveries. -- **MTV Studios** and **Quibi** have reimagined “Singled Out,” hosted by *Keke Palmer* and *Joel Kim Booster*, for the short-form mobile video platform set to launch in spring 2020.

Cablefax Dashboard

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Up Ahead

Dec 13: [Cablefax Work Culture 2020 Entry Deadline](#)

Jan 7-10: [CES 2020](#); Las Vegas

Jan 21-25: [NATPE Miami](#)

Jan 27-30: [Realscreen Summit](#); New Orleans

Feb 16-18: [NCTC Winter Education Conference](#); Las Vegas

Research

- 6 in 10 CEOs think enterprise risk management (ERM) is extremely important, but 66% of CEOs want more involvement in ERM.
- Cybersecurity is ranked 1st most often for the 1 in 3 CEOs who are most concerned about operational risk. However, employee misconduct and insurance costs have higher concern.
- The risk arising from key business partners is most frequently ranked first by the 1 in 3 CEOs that see the biggest potential in strategic risk. Evolving customer demographics ranks in the top 3 most often.

(Source: [LogicGate](#))

Quotable

“We want to see the C-band go forward with a public auction. We think this is critical to 5G deployment... We want to see STELLAR into law, the Judiciary Committee still has to do its part on distance signal... We have to get mapping right... What you’re going to see in 2020 is an effort to finish all the work that we’ve teed up in 2019 that hopefully we have most all of it out of the House, and then just push to get this into law and work with our Senate counterparts.” – **Rep. Mike Doyle** in an [interview](#) for C-SPAN’s ‘The Communicators’ series

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