

Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

Rap Session: HR Pros Weigh in on Hopes for New Administration

With a new administration coming in, HR professionals have their own wish lists of issues that they hope will receive attention in 2021 and beyond. They include everything from privacy rules to pay transparency to even marijuana usage.

As employers adjust to California's Privacy Protection Act, there are other states preparing to enact their own legislation—all of which has an impact on employee privacy standards. "When you talk about data protection, that is absolutely something that should be nationalized. I don't mind a higher or more difficult standard, but when there are going to be multiple ones that are all nuanced and different, it's very hard to bring systems against them," **Bill Strahan**, **Comcast** evp, HR, said during **C2HR's** virtual conference Friday.

A more federal approach overall is high on Strahan's list, with even the patchwork of marijuana rules across the US causing HR headaches. "I'd like to see more federalization on rules around marijuana usage. We end up having to bucket states into what's legal here, what's illegal there. We have to enforce it over there, but here if we enforce it here, we're actually committing a new violation," he said.

Nearer term, there is desire for some sort of stimulus bill. "Small- and medium-sized businesses need help. They are an important part of our customer base, but more importantly, they are part of the fabric of the society we live in... We need those restaurants and local businesses and local shops to exist and

flourish," **Charter** HR evp **Paul Marchand** said. "And we have an unemployment issue. Thankfully, we're hiring, thankfully we're continuing to drive positive business results, but there are people out there who are struggling, and we need to figure out how to help them. They are our customers or potential customers, and we want to do right by them."

On the programming side of the business, there's a need for consistency around COVID standards. It can be very hard to navigate production around various state and county-level standards, according to **Karen Gray**, evp, HR for **A+E Networks**.

Between the pandemic, Black Lives Matter movement and an extremely contentious presidential election, human resources departments across the industry are being called on like never before. "I think if people didn't understand why HR existed, this year they do," said Gray.

HR was always an important partner to various departments, but now it is finding itself in more of a leadership role. "We became not only the group that got a lot more calls and knocks on the door, but [there is] a little bit more of stepping into the role of quarterback, starting to help run the play," Marchand said. "That means we have to tie closer to the facilities organization. Work and tie closer to the government affairs group. Find out what's happening with PPE, what is the early staging of vaccinations, what are all the governmental rules and regulations by state, by county, on the federal level."

At A+E Networks, HR is being called upon by even the content side of the business, particularly for social justice

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conversations. “They’re looking for some feedback from how do we roll out programming, how does this resonate,” Gray said, crediting the remote work environment with getting people to talk more to others not on their office floor. “I don’t think we ever would have been involved in programming discussions prior to all of this. What an exciting way to work in media and actually be at the heart of those discussions.”

CABLE OPS APPROVED FOR C-BAND

Some 57 bidders have qualified for the **FCC’s** December 8 C-band auction, including **Comcast, Charter** and **Cox**. The list also includes a number of wireless mainstays like **AT&T, T-Mobile** and **US Cellular**. The FCC’s announcement means the bidders’ short-form applications are complete and have been deemed to be in compliance, and those bidders have been automatically registered for the C-band auction, which will offer up 280MHz of spectrum in the 3.7-3.98GHz band for 5G. The remaining 200MHz will be reserved for incumbent C-band users. Some 17 applicants did not qualify for the auction.

COMCAST VENTURES SHIFTING FOCUS

Comcast Ventures is being folded into Comcast’s business development division, according to a **CNBC report**. The corporate venture capital firm will continue to operate under Comcast chief business development officer *Sam Schwartz*, but will move away from investing in a larger array of companies. Instead, it will focus only on startups that could support Comcast initiatives.

MINIM AND ZOOM TELEPHONICS MERGE

Zoom Telephonics, a creator of cable modems and other

Internet access products under the **Motorola** brand, has signed a definitive merger agreement to acquire **Minim**, the developer of an AI-driven WiFi management and IoT security platform for homes, SMBs and service providers. Under the terms of the deal, the pair will merge in a non-cash, stock transaction valuing Minim at \$30mIn. The merger was unanimously approved by a special committee of independent members of Zoom’s board. The transaction is expected to close by the end of 2020.

BYUTV, OPINE PARTNER

BYUtv joined up with **Opine**, the first-in-sports social, real-time opinion analytics platform. The groups say the partnership will change the way people watch live sports together. Opine developed a micro-moment social platform that roots socialization in the play-by-play activity of a live sporting event on a standalone mobile and web applications. It says that it provides streaming and broadcast partners, teams and fans an experience tied closely to the game with high engagement. Opine will work with BYUtv to bring in-game viewer perspectives about plays, calls and outcomes, as well as infuse original sports programs with the viewers’ perspectives.

DOING GOOD

Beginning Friday for World Kindness Day through Giving Tuesday (Dec 1) and ending Dec 4, **T-Mobile** is asking everyone to spread love and #CaptureKindness. The company is asking people to post stories and photos on social media, along with clicks in the T-Mobile app on Giving Tuesday, to translate into T-Mobile’s biggest commitment to Feeding America ever—up to 15mIn meals. For every act of kindness shared

CFX Cablefax PROGRAM AWARDS

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Cablefax’s Program Awards is continuing its long tradition of honoring the best programming in a particular content niche, regardless of where the content originated or how consumers watch it.

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QUESTIONS: Mary-Lou French at mfrench@accessintel.com

First Deadline: Nov. 30
Final Deadline: Dec. 11 (late fees apply)

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on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag, T-Mobile will donate \$10, the equivalent of 100 meals, to Feeding America, up to \$1mln. And on Giving Tuesday, for each customer that clicks on the Feeding America donation option on the operator's app, the company will donate \$1, up to \$500K.

PROGRAMMING

“Battlebots” returns to **Discovery Channel** on Dec 3 at 8pm. Production had been halted earlier in the year due to COVID-19. – **HBO** will debut the doc “Baby God” on Dec 2 at 9pm. The film dives into the work of a Las Vegas fertility specialist who guided women to pregnancy through use of his own sperm.

PEOPLE

Disney tapped *Ayo Davis* to the newly created position of evp, creative development and strategy, Disney Branded Television. She'll oversee all live-action programming created by Disney Branded Television for **Disney+** and **Disney Channel, Disney XD** and **Disney Junior** networks. She spent 18 years at **ABC**, most recently holding the title of evp, talent and casting, ABC Entertainment and Disney+. – **NAB** named *Téa Gennaro* as its new evp and CFO, beginning Nov 23. She most recently served as CFO of **Associated Builders and Contractors** (ABC National).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Don't miss out. **Cablefax's** Program Awards entries are due in the coming weeks. We're looking for the best programming in a particular content niche, regardless of where the content originated or how consumers watched it. New categories this year include remote production and live virtual event. Enter [online](#) today.

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Research

➤ Disney+'s US share of demand for digital original series peaked at 7.6% in December 2019 when “The Mandalorian” aired its series one finale.

➤ The series is still Disney+'s top original series debut. The next best release is “High School Musical: The Musical: The Series” at 19x the popularity of the average US TV show in the 60 days post-premiere.

➤ When tracking pre-release demand for 2021's “Wandavision,” Parrot Analytics found that the show has thus far managed to attract the equivalent of 64% of the pre-release demand for The Mandalorian.

(Source: Parrot Analytics)

Quotable

“[Reed Hastings] assured us all that he had no intention of producing his own content... it was clear where he was headed. If he didn't understand [yet], he would... I tried when I chaired DirecTV to acquire Netflix, and that was when [Hastings] was struggling with getting rid of his old mail platform. What I saw was global scale.”

– Liberty Media founder and chairman John Malone describing his interactions with Reed Hastings in the earlier days of Netflix at the Paley Center's virtual Paley International Council Summit