

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Back to the Office? Employers Figuring Out Post-Pandemic Workplace

As the COVID-19 vaccine rollout ramps up, employers are trying to disentangle what a return to the office will look like. Or whether everyone even needs to return.

“We surveyed our employees and said, ‘what would you like?’ And most of our employees, 65% of our employees said, ‘I’d like a mix,’ [where they] don’t want to work remote 100%. About 28% or so said they’d like to work remote fully. Very few said they want to be the opposite,” **Discovery** chief people and culture officer *Adria Alpert Romm* told **CFX**. “That’s perfect. We’re going to be able to deliver that.”

Discovery has already started consolidating real estate. It acquired a new HQ on Park Avenue South in NYC pre-pandemic, but didn’t think it would be able to house all of its employees in the space. Now, it believes it likely will. In Maryland, Discovery expects to transition from two facilities to one. And as leases come up in other cities, like L.A., it expects to reduce office space.

The company has set September 1 as its tentative day to open US offices. “We decided to move to September 1, predominantly, because we felt number one, the vaccine distribution will be far into its availability around the world by then, and that employees who are now homeschooling or doing a mix will likely have their kids back fully in September,” Romm said.

Discovery’s not alone in looking for ways to revise normal workplace operations. At an investor conference this month,

**Comcast** CEO *Brian Roberts* said he expects the company will probably take a hybrid approach to remote and in-office work. “Our company will continue to have many employees able to work from home, and that’s more efficient,” he said. “We will try to be one of the innovators in being a great place to work.”

**Charter** never really closed a location during COVID, instead adopting CDC guidelines. But due to density and regulations, it does have some people working remotely. Some are on schedules where they may be in the office for a week and remote for two. Some call center employees are fully remote and some are on site.

“We made sure, and will continue to make sure, that our employees are safe. Masks are required. Social distancing is required. Offices are clean, sanitized, PPE is still ordered on a regular basis and supplied to our employees in all locations,” Charter evp and CHRO *Paul Marchand* said. “It’s a very dynamic workforce across the 96,000 employees that we have, and many different jobs require many different places and ways in which they work. And to me, that will continue. We think it’s been the right way to work and it’s been successful for us.”

Charter’s also been heavily engaged in the vaccination process, with its employees providing essential broadband services that move some of its workers up in the line for the vaccine, depending on state rules. It’s working with national organization **Matrix Medical Network**. “We registered over 50 to 60 mega sites for Charter across our footprint. Those mega sites will be registered with the states and the counties

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# The FAXIES Awards Recognize Talent Early and Often!

*These Winners' Careers Continue to Dominate.*

## 2014 Affiliate Sales Person of the Year (Below VP level)

LINDSAY LIBRAMONTE



**THEN**

**Sr. Director, Content Distribution, Sales**  
NBCUniversal Media



**NOW**

**VP, Content Distribution, Sales**  
NBCUniversal Media

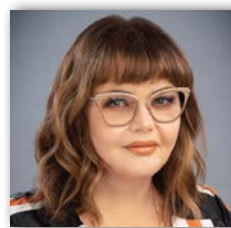
## 2014 Marketer of the Year

LARA RICHARDSON



**THEN**

**SVP, Marketing**  
Discovery Channel



**NOW**

**Chief Marketing Officer**  
Crown Media Family Networks

## 2015 PR Executive of the Year

CATHERINE FRYMARK



**THEN**

**SVP, Communications**  
Discovery Communications



**NOW**

**EVP, Corporate Communications**  
Mattel

## 2016 PR Executive of the Year

RITA COOPER LEE



**THEN**

**EVP, Communications & Publicity**  
WGN America



**NOW**

**Head of Communications & Publicity Worldwide**  
Apple TV+

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and the health departments,” Marchand explained.

Charter also partnered with Matrix to stand-up an 800-call center operation where nurses and experts can take phone calls from Charter employees with questions about the vaccine. If the supply comes in, Charter believes it can potentially use the mega sites to give shots to thousands of its employees in places like Charlotte, NC. “We’re all geared up. It’s just about now getting the states and getting the timelines and getting the production out so that we can get our share, our allocation,” Marchand said.

Compensation consulting firm **The Croner Company**, which works with industry HR group **C2HR** on its annual compensation survey, is trying to get a better grasp on what the new work environment will be. “Our next study... is going to be on where are you now on thinking about ‘virtual permanent,’ that’s what they’re calling it, and in relocation and geographic pay differentials,” said president/CEO *Hali Croner*. “What’s been fascinating about geographic pay... on one level philosophically you say you’re committed to pay equity, and pay does differ by region, and you’re looking for like pay for common work... There’s a lot of things at play.”

#### CABLE TO SEE BENEFITS FROM STIMULUS

Cable operators have been warning investors and analysts about a slowdown in broadband activity in 2021, saying levels will likely return to those seen in 2019. The third federal stimulus package could be an unexpected boost that will help increase household formation and broadband adoption. “New stimulus measures are aimed for the first time not just at rural broadband expansion but also at urban broadband affordability. These stimulus measures target precisely those subscribers who were unable to continue service after the expiry of the **FCC’s** [Keep America Connected] Pledge,” **MoffettNathanson** wrote in a Tuesday note. The firm also examined the \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, which it said would be enough on its own to significantly shift expectations for 2021. “If all of the program’s funds were to be spent in a single year, and all of it for service only (rather than for equipment), then at

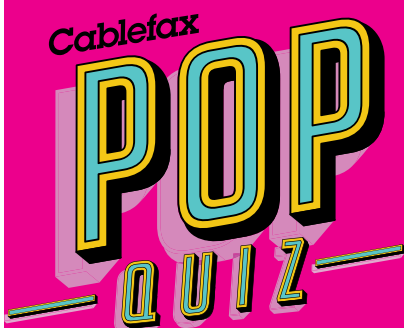
\$60 per subscriber, it would support service to 4.4 million households,” **MoffettNathanson** said. “That’s approaching the entire industry’s subscriber gain in 2020 (5.4 million). At lower priced service tiers, the numbers would be even larger.” Other factors that will change the outlook for 2021 are Rep *Jim Clyburn’s* (D-SC) Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act, legislation that would designate \$94 billion for the expansion of affordable broadband to underserved and unserved communities, and the Emergency Connectivity Fund allowing schools and libraries to use E-Rate funds for connected devices and the provision of broadband to students, staff and patrons. The firm upped its target price for **Comcast** to \$68 from \$56. **Altice USA’s** target was upped to \$55 from \$50 and **Cable One’s** was updated to \$1,640 from \$1,575. **MoffettNathanson** kept **Charter** at a target price of \$761.

#### CTV TAKES GREATER HOLD OVER AD MARKET

Connected TV is growing in its influence over the advertising marketplace. Nearly half (46%) of consumers are more inclined to research or purchase a product or service they saw when streaming TV than when watching traditional TV. That’s according to the latest findings from **Valassis**. Consumers aged 35-44 are most willing to view ads when streaming for a lower monthly subscription cost (69%) followed by those aged 25-34 (64%) and 18-24 (59%). They’re also willing to do what it takes to get personalized ads, with 68% saying they’re willing to share data with brands to improve their ad experience when streaming.

#### FCC CREATING CONSUMER MAPPING TOOL

The **FCC** will soon launch a tool for consumers to let the agency know where broadband is (and isn’t) in their area. The tool will include information for those interested in learning more about the agency’s mapping efforts and provide more data for the agency to work with as it creates more accurate broadband maps. “Opening communication with consumers early in this process is so important because the best broadband map won’t be built in Washington, it will be built



Who was the original host of MTV’s first game show?

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by all of us, with input from everyone, everywhere,” acting FCC chair *Jessica Rosenworcel* said in a Tuesday update. One of Rosenworcel’s first moves as chair was to form a Broadband Data Task Force to expedite the design of systems for collecting and verifying the data needed to create the new maps and assess the status of mapping efforts. “What I learned was that we had a lot of work to do and hadn’t yet begun many of the steps required to actually build a collection system,” she said. New broadband maps are expected to be completed next year, but FCC commish *Brendan Carr* has pushed for them to be finished in the fall.

## RATINGS

**Fox News** won out as the most-watched cable network last week in both total day and primetime. In total day, Fox delivered 1.3 million total viewers, followed by **MSNBC** at 1.09m and **CNN** at 865,000. The three news nets took the same places in prime, with Fox notching 2.517 million viewers, MSNBC 1.9m and CNN 1.3m. Rounding out the top five nets in prime were **HGTV** 1.137m and **ESPN’s** 1.043. – **Telemundo Deportes’** coverage of Liga MX’s Super Clásico, simulcast on **Telemundo** and **Universo**, scored 1.7 million total viewers and 969,000 adults 18-49 during the match window. Sunday’s Chivas de Guadalajara vs. Águilas del América is the most-watched Liga MX of the Clausura 2021 season to date, across all networks. – **Univision’s** Sunday night premiere of “Mira Quién Baila Univision All Stars” delivered 1.8 million total viewers along with 597,000 18-49s. Following at 10pm was “Sal y Pimienta,” which saw its highest-rated telecast of 2021. The talk show delivered 1.4 million total viewers and 511,000 18-49s.

## AT THE COMMISSION

The **FCC’s Wireline Competition Bureau** is seeking comment on how to ensure that the FCC and **Universal Service Administrative Company** effectively oversee the \$7.1 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund. Established by Congress as part of the American Rescue Plan Act, the fund will provide elementary and secondary schools as well as libraries with WiFi hotspots, modems, routers and internet-enabled devices to students, staff and patrons. The bureau is also seeking comment on how to best measure the FCC’s and USAC’s performance in efficiently administering the fund. “Should the Commission adopt specific broadband adoption goals for students, school staff, and library patrons? If so, what should those goals be?” the Bureau said in the public notice. Other areas for comment include the implementation of minimum system requirements for connected devices supported by the fund and if those devices should be WiFi-enabled and have video and camera functions. – The Wireline Competition Bureau also opened the eligible locations adjustment process filing window to allow CAF Phase II auction support recipients an opportunity to seek a reduction in their deployment obligations where the number of eligible locations is less than the number of funded locations in their winning bid areas. All required information must be submitted during the four-

month filing window beginning April 1 and ending August 3.

## LIBERTY LATIN AMERICA SHIFTS ORG CHART

**Liberty Latin America** announced changes to its executive team last week, including the elimination of the role of COO. Moving forward, the business leaders for its cable & wireless, VTR and Liberty Puerto Rico segments will report directly to CEO *Balan Nair*. Two new roles will also be added to the executive team: svp, south-central markets and chief customer officer. *Guillermo Ponce*, previously CEO of the VTR segment, will take over the svp, south-central markets role. *Vivek Khemka*, the company’s CTO will become general manager of VTR. Liberty Latin America has initiated a search for a new CTO. In the interim, chief information officer *Christine Weber* will assume his duties. COO *Betzalel Kenigsztejn* will now serve as executive director/general manager of Cable & Wireless Panama, replacing *Julio Spiegel*. Spiegel will stay within the company, transitioning to vp, government affairs.

## DISTRIBUTION

**Kinetic Wholesale by Windstream** added access to 60,000 new wholesale fiber locations in 1Q21 across its 18-state footprint. The company is in the midst of its \$2 billion initiative to expand its fiber footprint and gigabit internet service. Last May, Windstream reached a wholesale data services agreement with **NCTC**, giving the co-op’s member operators access to preferred pricing and terms on transport connections through Windstream’s nationwide data network.

## PROGRAMMING

**Fox News’** *Maria Bartiromo* will interview former President *Donald Trump* tonight at 7pm ET. – **Showtime** ordered drama series “Shaka: King of the Zulu Nation,” centered around one man’s personal journey from stigmatized childhood to warrior king. – **AMC Networks** series “Killing Eve” will end after its eight-episode fourth season, which begins production this summer and will premiere in 2022. – The **MotorTrend Group** greenlit “Kevin Hart’s Muscle Car Crew,” an eight-episode series to debut on the MotorTrend App in 3Q21. – **Epix** and **Blumhouse** will partner to bring eight new Blumhouse movies to the network. The first film, “A House on the Bayou,” will begin production in late spring and premiere in December 2021. The rest of the slate is set to debut in 2022. – **TBS** greenlit dating competition series “The Big D.” – **HBO Max** ordered “The Hype” for an eight-episode season. – “The Challenge: All Stars” will debut exclusively on **Paramount+** April 1. The nine-episode season will give the fiercest competitors from the original “Real World” and “Road Rules” the chance to win a \$500,000 grand prize. – **Nickelodeon** announced the premiere of mockumentary-style comedy series “Drama Club.” The show premieres digitally on the Nick app and Nick.com on Mar 13 followed by an encore presentation aired on Nickelodeon Mar 20 at 8:30 pm. – **MAVTV Motorsports Network** will be the broadcast home for the Mid-West Drag Racing Series in 2021. All eight events will be shown live on the new MAVTV Plus platform.