

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## New World: HR Embracing Tech, Prepping for More COVID Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic sparked innovation across every department and unit in every organization, including human resources.

During the opening session of the **C2HR** CONference Tuesday, *Dayana Falcon*, **Disney/ESPN's** manager of talent mobility and development, said the implementation of remote work forced HR professionals to embrace technology more than ever before. That means everything from implementing chatbots that can answer common employee questions or examining mixed reality technologies that could allow employees to have deeper connections no matter where they choose to work.

"We have to create these virtual environments so that if somebody is at home and then somebody is in person, there's a hybrid and they're all having an incredible employee experience," Falcon said.

ESPN vp, talent acquisition *Lynn Matthews* agreed that HR departments will forever have an increased focus on technology and its abilities to support culture-building. In addition to embracing new tools and platforms, executives need to also continue to focus on building a workforce that is agile and high-performing when business isn't as usual.

"Sadly, I don't think the pandemic is done disrupting our lives or our businesses. We'll need to emphasize and exercise increased flexibility. We'll need to listen to the needs of our employees as we move into what I guess is what will

become our new normal," she said. "Technology... it'll be at the forefront of how content is created, curated, distributed and consumed."

For **Vyve Broadband** evp/COO *Andy Parrott*, embracing technology is nothing new. But the concept of being future-focused when it came to innovation and customer service took on a whole new meaning once everyone was forced to stay home. He and his team had to immediately find ways to enable self-installations for customers in an effort to keep field technicians safer. That meant giving them additional tools to diagnose problems on the phone and drafting screening questions for customers that could determine what help they needed and if it was possible to avoid interactions between a customer and a team member.

Though those were huge issues to tackle, one of the hardest to manage was more emotional in nature. "Some of our best friends and family members are the people that we work shoulder to shoulder with and in this virtual space, it's hard to have that connection about trying to get through the tough days and celebrate and get the pat on the back for the successful days," he said

Parrott has always been ready and willing to take constructive criticism, especially if an established process isn't meeting the mark or if something new needs to be implemented to meet employee and consumer needs. But a lack of face-to-face meetings has also dramatically reduced the amount of negative feedback he and others in his company are receiving,

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## 2021 CATEGORIES

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cutting down on the opportunities he and others have to grow.

“For whatever reason, on a Zoom or group meetings or anything else, people just aren’t comfortable pointing out your weaknesses on a digital platform,” he said.

That’s why Parrott has decided to hit the road for the next three weeks to visit Vyve offices and have face-to-face meetings with as many employees as possible, as safely as possible.

“That’s a commitment I’m making because I feel it is so valuable just realizing how much we’re missing, even though we’re getting the technology and we’re leveraging those things, what are we doing to look stupid,” he added.

And while **Discovery** svp, global employment legal *Fabienne Clermont* is more than ready to get back to seeing her team back in the office, she warned that nobody should expect that workforce interactions won’t return back to what was viewed as normal prior to the pandemic. Employees will need time to get comfortable, and executives also need to be prepared to meet them halfway if they are struggling.

“The pandemic has changed people’s view of safety, even if it goes away,” Clermont said. “What does that mean, how do we support those anxieties that have built and that may never go away? That’s something that we’ll have to address in 12-18 months.”

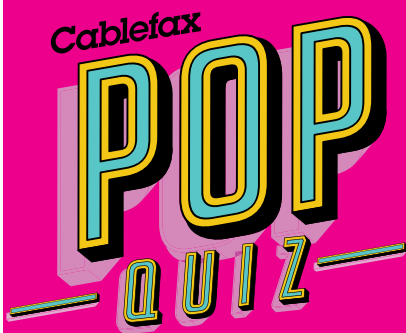
#### FUBOTV SCORES 2Q21 TOUCHDOWN

**fuboTV** is holding its head high, delivering more than 91,000 net additions in 2Q21 for a grand total of nearly 682,000 customers. Total revenue rose 196% YOY to \$130.9 million thanks to massive growth in its advertising division. Ad revenue rose 281% YOY to \$16.5 million. Engagement numbers are also on

the rise, with fuboTV customers streaming 245 million hours of content in the quarter. The company continues to believe that customers will shift back to bundles and products that aggregate content in the near future as customers become more frustrated with the ever-increasing amount of individual streaming services. It feels like it has the right personalized and interactive viewing experience to win them over. “The broader industry has followed our lead on both fronts in recent weeks, repeatedly pointing to consumer fatigue as a consequence of actively managing numerous subscriptions, and with certain industry players also announcing plans to expand their existing portfolio of product offerings,” the company said in a letter to shareholders. fuboTV is now raising its FY21 revenue guidance to \$560-570 million and its year-end subscriber guidance to 910,000-920,000.

#### CABLE HALL OF FAME SHIFTS TO NOVEMBER

**The Cable Center** has rescheduled its Cable Hall of Fame virtual celebration to November 15. “As we continue to navigate the world of Covid and the necessary rescheduling of various industry events, we made the decision to move our Cable Hall of Fame celebration to a later date,” president/CEO *Jana Henthorn* said in a statement. The seven leaders to be honored at the event include **Baker Media Inc** CEO *Bridget Baker*; former **Charter** evp, IT and engineering *Jim Blackley*; **Urban One** founder/chair *Cathy Hughes*; Urban One CEO and **TV One** chair/CEO *Alfred C Liggins III*; cable pioneer *Jeff Marcus*; **Comcast Cable** president/CEO *Dave Watson* and **WarnerMedia** News & Sports chair *Jeff Zucker*. The Bresnan Ethics in Business Award will also be presented to *Ted Turner*



One winner will be selected each week for a Starbucks gift card

Last week’s answer: The theme song on HBO’s “The Sopranos” was “Woke Up This Morning” by Alabama 3.

Kudos to last week’s winner: Lara Maerz, DISH Network

What record-breaking number of Emmys did “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” win?

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during the celebration. The event will premiere on **C-SPAN 3** at 8pm ET and be available for view simultaneously on C-SPAN.org. The program will also be featured in the C-SPAN Video Library and be available for on demand viewing immediately following the event.

#### CABLE ONE'S M&A GAINS

**Cable One** grew 22.4% YOY in total revenues, going from \$328.3 million in 2Q20 to \$401.7 million. The company added 124,000 residential data PSUs in the quarter. Approximately 110,000 residential data PSUs were acquired when Cable One completed its acquisition of **Hargray** in May. Company chair/CEO *Julie Laulis* said on the company's 2Q21 earnings call Monday that existing customers who have adopted the **FCC's** Emergency Broadband Benefit Program are upgrading their plans at three times the rate of a non-EBB customer. The adopters who are new customers to Cable One come in at just under 10%. "Likely, part of that is getting the word out and quite honestly, the process to enroll is a bit onerous right now. So, it will be interesting to see as we pivot to a longer-term program, what we can bring on with that," Laulis said. Fixed wireless providers are promoting their services in Cable One's footprint, but the provider isn't terribly concerned that folks like **T-Mobile** will prove a major threat. "Competition will make us better in the long run. We're not seeing anything from T-Mobile at this point in time. Again, I think as long as we're focused on taking care of our customers, I really don't see them coming out with something that meets our customers' needs better than what we already provide for them," Laulis said.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE BILL PASSES SENATE

The infrastructure bill is one step closer to becoming a law. The Senate voted 69-30 Tuesday to pass the package, which includes \$65 billion for programs and initiatives aimed at expanding broadband internet access. We likely won't hear any more about the legislation's progress through Congress

until later this year. The House is currently on its August recess, and Speaker *Nancy Pelosi* (D-CA) has said that she will have the chamber examine the bill until the Senate passes a separate reconciliation package.

#### CURIOSITYSTREAM GROWS SUBS

**CuriosityStream's** factual content is continuing to turn heads, with total paying subscribers up 40% YOY to reach approximately 20 million in 2Q21. The company's total revenue grew 27% YOY to \$15.3 million in the second quarter, up from \$12.0 million in 2Q20. The entertainment company says it still expects revenue of at least \$71 million for the full year 2021, which would make for an 80% YOY growth.

#### WEEKLY RATINGS

**Fox News Channel** topped primetime and total day ratings yet again last week, with 2.095 million total viewers and 1.193 million total viewers, respectively. **USA Network** took second in primetime, with 1.245 million total viewers ahead of **MSNBC's** 1.041 million total viewers. **HGTV** and **INSP** rounded out the top five in primetime with 979,000 total viewers and 934,000 total viewers, respectively. MSNBC followed FNC in total day ratings with 675,000 total viewers, while USA Network took a close third with 673,000 total viewers. HGTV and **CNN** closed the top five in total day ratings with 580,000 and 528,000, respectively.

#### PROGRAMMING

**CNN** revealed *Kasie Hunt* as the first official anchor for its upcoming SVOD, **CNN+**. Hunt is joining CNN as anchor and chief national affairs analyst. She will host a daily show on CNN+ and report for CNN U.S. She joins from **NBC News** where she most recently served as anchor of "Way Too Early" and "KasieDC" and was a regular contributor to "Morning Joe." – **HBO** renewed docuseries "100 Foot Wave" for a second season. The net also renewed limited series "The White Lotus" for a second installment.

# Cablefax +

*"While this magazine is hefty, even more Q&A content is available online, or as we nicknamed it—Cablefax 100+—because adding a PLUS to end of your brand is the trendy thing to do." —Amy Maclean*

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# C2HR AWARDS

Content & Connectivity Human Resources (C2HR) is once again recognizing some of the best and brightest in the world of HR. Read on to learn about the 2021 Aspiring Leader Award Winner, Employee Engagement Award Winner, HR Innovator Honoree, Workplace Wellness Award Winners and the Social Impact Award Honorees.

## ASPIRING LEADER AWARD



**Amanda  
Kirschman**

**C2HR** is honoring *Amanda Kirschman*, senior director, talent management at **Comcast Business**, with its Aspiring HR Leader award. Over the past 18 months, Kirschman has put in the leg work to launch and implement Year of the Leader, an inclusion-focused learning program. It aimed to raise awareness, reduce bias and develop implementable, measurable strategies to create an inclusive company culture. She also developed an Ally Coaches program and a new Comcast Business Allyship Teams Page that offered a central location for employees to connect and create a stronger ally network within the unit. In addition, Kirschman has created the Who to Know Roadshow, a program where senior leaders are introduced to high performing diverse talent, and the Comcast Business Career Bar, a series of weekly workshops.

Kirschman will take part in a C2HR CONference session titled "All Eyes on You: Making Your Presence Known" on August 13 at 11am ET.

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AWARD

**Red Digital Cinema** quickly realized in the COVID-19 lockdown that the only thing the company could control was how it treated its teams. The company set out to find a place where its employees could connect, recognize victories and share important milestones. It partnered with **Bucketlist** to launch a reward and recognition platform for employees to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, promotions and more. Employees have been able to use earned points to receive everything from gift cards to experiences. Since the platform's launch, there are an average of 20 posts per day recognizing employees. The company's turnover rate dropped from 13% to 2%, and its **Glassdoor** rating has gone from 2.8 to 3.8 since the launch.

## SOCIAL IMPACT AWARD

The C2HR Social Impact Award recognizes outstanding corporate social responsibility initiatives. This year's honorees are **NBCUniversal**, **Mediacom** and **ESPN**.

NBCUniversal kept its employee volunteering program, NBCUnites, going strong amidst the pandemic. From March 2020 to May 2021, NBCU employees shifted to volunteering virtually to support their communities through video greetings, mentorship programs and more thanks to the company's connection to local volunteer opportunities. During this period, over 8,000 employees engaged in over 260 projects, resulting in nearly 12,500 hours of virtual service.

**Mediacom** worked to spread the love in 2020 through dona-

tion commitments and by connecting more low-income neighborhoods to high-speed broadband. The company announced a plan in December 2020 to donate \$100,000 to a network of community food banks and \$10,000 to a shelter for survivors of interpersonal and sexual violence. Beginning in March 2020, Mediacom also doubled its efforts to help low-income families with K-12 students receive home internet service through its Connect2Compete program. It has provided affordable broadband services to more than 14,000 low-income families since the start of the pandemic.

**ESPN** launched its #oneteam employee engagement campaign during the pandemic. The program used partnerships with **Feeding America**, the **CDC** and **American Red Cross** to feed families and run PSAs to keep communities up-to-date on COVID-19 guidance and resources. The company also launched a partnership with DoSomething.org to launch the #oneteam challenges, keeping kids active and giving them sports-themed activities. ESPN's partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs allowed them to launch a Speaker Series designed to keep kids stay positive. The #oneteam campaign involved 50 separate projects that virtually allowed employees to give back to their communities.

## WELLNESS AWARDS

**Charter Communications** and **Comcast** took their commitments to keeping their employees safe one step further last year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Charter needed its field technicians on the ground to operate as normally as possible in emergencies, so it set up a program management office to focus on employee benefit policies, facilities, obtaining PPE, communications and recruiting. It responded quickly in cases of employees with COVID-19, setting up contact tracing and protocols to ensure quick testing for people showing symptoms. A COVID-19 Tracker was set up to monitor cases across the company and a daily health check in determined if employees should go to work or stay home to protect their colleagues. The company also implemented a tool to gauge employee interest in onsite vaccination events, schedule onsite vaccinations and send the company proof of vaccination.

Comcast quickly shifted to effective and efficient work-from-home operations for 90% of its employees and worked closely with frontline workers to enhance health and safety protocols for all customer-facing employees. It also established a cross-enterprise team with **NBCU** to create a COVID-19 testing, case management, tracing and national support model to keep infection rates low. Health literacy was a priority among employees with regards to available vaccinations, and the company provided additional paid time off for employees to make their vaccine appointments. It also worked to establish onsite COVID-19 clinics. Employees that needed to take care of infected or at-risk family members received an additional two weeks of PTO. A Family Care PTO program was also created to provide an additional 40 hours for those who were dealing with childcare issues or caring for a high-risk household member.