

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Q&A: Spectrum Reach Leans on Seamless Entertainment, Data

It's no easy task filling the shoes of someone who spent nearly five decades in the cable world. That's the situation Jason Brown inherited when he became the head of Charter's ad sales unit **Spectrum Reach**, climbing to the top of the company ladder after first arriving in 2023 as SVP/Chief Revenue Officer. Fortunately for Brown, his predecessor *David Kline* was able to provide clarity during a transition period. Kline also helped Brown fully grasp the magnitude of products his company can offer, enabling his team to hit the ground running and shape how advertising opportunities will come to the market.

Brown, who now oversees a business that employs nearly 3,000 people and spans 91 markets in 36 states, previously spent time at **DirecTV Advertising**, **WarnerMedia** and **AT&T/Xandr**. That experience helps him steer a company that's partnered with 23,000 local, regional and national clients to provide customizable and scalable ad solutions. However, with Brown's one-year anniversary since becoming EVP coming up, **CFX** wanted to hear his early readings and what Spectrum Reach is focusing on—in addition to what 2026 may have in store in the political world. An edited excerpt of our conversation with Brown is below.

**What were your top priorities coming into the job, and how have they evolved?**

Our priority is always to drive new growth opportunities and also to remain the provider of choice by delivering solutions that perform for your clients. But I would say it was a little bit

more on ensuring that our workflow was seamless and that the speed of execution was equivalent to the expectation in today's automation-driven world. Over the past year, our teams have been very focused on embedding AI and automation into our workflows. For example, we launched an internal planning tool called Architect earlier this year. It brings together both our owned-and-operated streaming and linear inventory, and all the third-party linear streaming inventory that we represent, into a single platform for both planning, optimization and reporting. The algorithm is very performant. It deduplicates overlapping exposure. It creates the most effective plan for any audience segment at the optimal scale for each campaign that uses the tool. There's a really cool feature within the tool where if you decide to manipulate the algorithm—you might choose to pull out some inventory—the product actually shows the impact on reach. It's only been a few months since launch. The first couple of weeks were slow on the adoption, frankly, but it's now accelerating. The teams are using the tool. It's enabling more effective campaigns for our clients, faster speed to market and definitely more efficient workflow for our teams.

**2026 is expected to be a busy year with midterm elections. What are you seeing in the early innings of this political ad cycle?**

For the most part, campaigns are focused on reaching very specific viewers, voters, specific geographies, so that could be anything from statewide down to a congressional district. And frankly, that's what makes cable and broadband distributors so

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valuable to this category, because we have the ability to reach these precise audiences for them. Year-to-date, it's been very active. We've seen early spending in states with later primary dates. Investments, particularly cable news networks, to reach base voters, I would say is more similar to the last several primary cycles, but where we're seeing a lot of growth is in our CTV products, whether it's direct IO or programmatic transactions.

#### How does Charter's Seamless Entertainment initiative translate into tangible opportunities for Spectrum Reach?

It fully integrates this experience that brings all the content that you love into one place, and it makes content discovery simple, hence why we call it Seamless Entertainment. And that experience for customers definitely translates to advertisers as well. We're helping brands engage audiences across an expansive portfolio of livestreaming and direct-to-consumer apps first, so we just have a wider portfolio of inventory now. Then, we're using our unified data. It all sits on a known subscriber, right? So unified data, which allows for targeting and measurement, which delivers higher levels of performance for our brands. In our world, we see a ton of what I'll call aggregators that are kind of stitching together impressions from a lot of fragmented sources. I would look at us as an integrator. We start with the strength of our owned-and-operated video environment and we integrate it with high-quality supply from our trusted partners that participate. So when we go to market, we call this to brands and agencies, the total Spectrum Reach universe. It's just not more inventory, it's better inventory because it's delivered at scale, it's fully transparent with all of our reporting and it's growing.

#### Could you talk more about how data is used to make Seamless Entertainment work?

What we do is we provide holistic measurement reporting to our clients for multi-screen reach. And I'm underlying multi-screen because that's a differentiator. We provide multi-screen reach and frequency, multi-screen attribution. We do this at scale. We allow advertisers the view of their campaigns and how they're performing—many times in flight. But also post-flight, we offer recommendations to improve the campaigns in the future. That's all coming off of that privacy-focused, first-party data. And then we go beyond our data with, I think it's over 70 third-party data partners at this point, which further assists us in finding and reaching advertisers, audiences. The advantage of working with a distributor is really we provide clarity in a world where it could get kind of muddled. When we're in front of clients and agencies, we're typically asking them the same questions we're saying. What do you want when you work with a media partner? What is the source of your media partners' inventory? Is the inventory guaranteed? Is it brand safe? How transparent is the reporting? What insights

do you get from that reporting? What kind of data matching or audience aggregation is available? We're proud that we're able to provide clarity against all those questions.

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## NEXSTAR, TEGNA SAY PARTS OF MERGER 'CANNOT BE REVERSED'

Nexstar and Tegna told a federal court they "cannot implement certain provisions" of the 14-day temporary restraining order (TRO) issued last week "because of actions already completed at closing and legal obligations that cannot be reversed." The broadcasters, which announced the close of their merger on March 19, added that the TRO "creates immediate operational harm" to the companies as well as regulatory conflicts and a "governance vacuum," as they already "took many typical steps that may not have been apparent to the Court when it issued its TRO." Among the issues Nexstar and Tegna noted is the matter of carriage of Tegna stations by MVPDs, which became governed by Nexstar's existing retrans agreements when the transaction closed. "This creates an internal contradiction" as the TRO requires that Tegna personnel must maintain control of decision-making, even though its stations are now contractually governed by Nexstar. "News of the TRO has already created confusion of its impact on the applicability of the Nexstar agreements to the Tegna stations, and Nexstar has begun to receive questions from distributors that will accelerate in volume and urgency as Nexstar approaches the end of the month billing cycle," the companies added, citing "operation chaos" and "accounting complexity" caused by the TRO. The companies argued that the TRO would also cause regulatory conflicts with the FCC, including by preventing actions Nexstar agreed to take to get the Commission's approval. That includes an agreement to offer MVPDs that have an existing retrans agreement with Nexstar that expires after the Tegna merger close and before Nov. 30 an extension at existing rates through Nov. 30. But, the companies said, "if Nexstar speaks for Tegna to honor the FCC's rate-extension commitment, Nexstar would appear to violate the TRO." The broadcasters are requesting modifications to the TRO, including the ability to continue to handle existing retrans agreements as well as fulfill FCC commitments. "The proposals, however, do not fully address the harm and are not sustainable beyond the preliminary injunction hearing set for April 7, 2026," the companies concluded. "Additional proposals and clarifications may be required in the coming days to forestall further material harm associated with the TRO"

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## COMCAST-SCRIPPS FIGHT TEES OFF

Another carriage dispute emerged Tuesday evening, this time between Scripps and Comcast. Just before 6pm ET, Scripps stations



A Cablefax feature highlighting industry doings spotted in the real world.

### Corning, Meta Work to Lead AI Race

Google, Anthropic, OpenAI, Microsoft. They're among the behemoths taking over the AI space and the research and development that's being poured into the technology. However, while those companies are making technological strides, they need the backbone to support their AI ambitions.



That's why fellow AI leader Meta partnered with Corning on a multiyear collaboration that could be worth up to \$6 billion. The two will work on building more advanced data centers throughout the U.S. to support Meta's AI-related apps, experimentation and technologies, starting with a significant expansion of Corning's optical cable manufacturing facility at the company's campus in Hickory, North Carolina. Corning will also provide optical fiber, cable and connectivity solutions designed for the density and scale demands of AI data centers, while Meta will serve as the anchor partner for the Hickory site upgrade.

"As America advances its lead in AI, the infrastructure we build today will determine whether we stay ahead tomorrow. High-performance connectivity is at the heart of this work," said Dan Sachs, Meta's VP, Public Policy–State and Local.



The groundbreaking of Corning's new optical cable capacity took place Tuesday, marking another checkpoint as the manufacturer strengthens its roots in a state it first arrived in nearly 50 years ago. It's also the second major expansion in recent years for Corning. The company unveiled a new campus back in March 2023, which was part of a series of investments that climbed north of \$500 million.

–Noah Ziegler

were dropped from Xfinity lineups after the two's distribution agreement expired without a renewal. The blackout impacts 19 Big Four stations across Comcast's footprint in addition to 21 independent stations. That includes South Florida's WSFL and WHDT, which were in the midst of broadcasting the **NHL's** Panthers-Senators game when Scripps' networks went dark. While Comcast said it's made "a number of reasonable offers" that haven't been accepted, Scripps maintains that it's been negotiating in good faith for a fair deal. "We hope Comcast recognizes the critical value we play for our communities and restores our stations' signals so we can continue to serve their customers," Scripps said in a statement to **CFX**. In an online webpage, Scripps pointed customers to CTV streaming apps such as **Roku** and **Amazon Fire TV**, as well as other distributors such as **DirecTV** and **YouTube TV**. Plus, it reminded folks they can receive Scripps' signal through an antenna, referencing **Table** and **TheFreeTVProject.org** as guides to obtain an antenna.

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### APRIL FOOLS' IN THE HOT TUB

You can't make it through April 1 without a few pranks, even if you're a media or broadband exec. Former **FCC** Chair **Ajit Pai** turned **CTIA** CEO got our day off to a giggle with a social media [post](#) proclaiming he's ditching the wireless industry association to work with **Brendan Carr** again, this time in a reversal of roles as his wireless advisor. Carr played along, replying "Need some objective eyes on the **Comcast** mvno docket, so much appreciated!" On the tech side, it's hard to make amplifiers luxurious, but **AOI** pulled it off with the introduction of its Quantum18 1.8 GHz Hot Tub. It features two downstream soaking ports, field-upgradable diplex jets and a selectable high-split (204/258°F) temperature mode. You gotta check out the [LinkedIn post](#) to see this baby in action. Other jokesters that caught our eye: **Metro T-Mobile's** cologne "CALLoGNE," which delivers that new phone smell, and **IGN's** PlayStation Project Playmo-AI Copilot [trailer](#) for a controller that can beat a video game's hard parts for you.

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### CARRIAGE

**Hemisphere Media Group's** **WAPA+**, a FAST channel serving the Puerto Rican community, launched on **Dish** and **Sling Freestream**. The free channel features live news, entertainment, sports and lifestyle programming, including "NotiCentro America," a newscast specifically tailored to Puerto Ricans in the U.S. mainland.

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### IN SATELLITE INTERNET NEWS

Reports started to emerge that **SpaceX** confidentially filed for an IPO with the SEC. [Per Bloomberg](#), SpaceX's hope is to be listed for trade in June, and the IPO's valuation could be at or above \$1.75 trillion. – It's not quite space, but **Amazon** reached a deal with **Delta Air Lines** to add Amazon Leo WiFi to aircrafts. Starting in 2028, Leo will be installed on 500 planes, enabling free in-flight WiFi with download speeds of up to 1 Gbps and upload speeds up to 400 Mbps for all members of Delta's SkyMiles program.

## Think about that for a minute...

### Lots to Chew On

Commentary by Steve Effros

FCC and court decisions in the past two weeks have resulted in overload and an unavoidable, limited public understanding of their significance. I'm going to quickly run through all three, but don't expect a detailed legal analysis or consideration of the implications. That'll come in future columns.

Let's start with the Supreme Court's decision that Cox was not liable for contributory copyright infringement in the long-running suit with Sony. A \$1 billion penalty against Cox was thrown out last year in a lower court, but the underlying finding that Cox had some sort of liability for what its customers did (violate music copyrights) was upheld and went to the Supremes. They decided, unanimously, that for there to be secondary liability, there has to be either "contributory" or "vicarious" acts. The vicarious (they intentionally profited, in essence, from the illegal act) part had already been dismissed. The contributory part, the court said, "can be shown only if the party induced the infringement or the provided service is tailored to that infringement." Cox, they found, did neither.

This was a very important case for the entire broadband industry. It clarified where the line is between infringement and our obligation not to aid (or to police) individual violators. Just think of what Grokster was found guilty of years ago. They designed a program specifically tailored to download copyrighted music and trade it with others (an infringement) and they advertised the sale of the program to do just that. Enough said.

The second major set of court actions last week came from two separate juries finding Meta and YouTube (Google/Alphabet) liable for negligent and defective product design because their algorithms were intentionally built to be addictive. The companies were found to have acted in "reckless disregard" of the safety of minors, failure to warn parents of potential effects of their underlying product and malice. The plaintiff was a 20-year-old girl who used their social media products for many years and suffered from mental health challenges, including severe depression.

There's a whole lot to say about this one, but not here.

There's no question we have to deal with the impact that social media has had on society and specifically on kids. But whether this is the right way to do it is a long conversation. These cases will clearly be appealed and whatever happens will result in major changes in the concept of product liability. Just think of all the food companies which, for decades, have added sugar or salt to their products and the argument that they have knowingly contributed to diabetes and obesity.

Finally, we have the FCC Media Bureau, on its own, deciding that the statutory limit on ownership of broadcast stations serving no more than 39% of the American public was no longer necessary, waiving it and approving a merger of Tegna and Nexstar. The resulting company has broadcast licenses covering 80% of the country! The fog on this one is almost impenetrable because most folks confuse the public interest issue here with coverage rather than broadcast license ownership in discrete markets. The networks (which are not the same as their owned-and-operated licensed stations) already have almost 100% viewability in the country. This is not an issue of controlling speech. It's an issue of economic leverage in individual television markets around the country. But would you want to explain the leverage that we understand about retransmission consent negotiations or just write about big media? I don't have to explain retrans to this audience, thankfully. But obviously this is going to be a big case. A judge has already put the merger on hold, finding that it's likely to be determined to be an antitrust violation.

Whew! Lots to chew on.



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*(Steve Effros was President of CATA for 23 years and is now an advisor and consultant to the cable industry. His views do not necessarily reflect the views of Cablefax.)*

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