



## How WarnerMedia is -very carefully - bringing advertising to HBO

*Next in Marketing – Season 3, Episode 06*

Mike:

This week on Next in Marketing, I spoke with Todd Braverman, SVP of WarnerMedia's Portfolio Sales & Client Partnerships. Todd and I talked about why advertisers are taking an entirely new approach to advertising in streaming services, which is born out of his company's high stakes launch of HBO Max with ads this past year. Todd and I also spoke about how brands are clamoring to reach people in real life events this summer as hopefully the pandemic starts to subside. And we talked about the challenge of calculating ROI for big tent-pole events. Let's get started.

Speaker 2:

Everything we know about the media, marketing and advertising business is being completely upended thanks to technology and data. We are talking with some of the top industry leaders as they steer their companies through constant change. Welcome to Next in Marketing presented by AppsFlyer.

Mike:

Hi, everyone. Welcome to Next in Marketing. My guest this week is Todd Braverman. Todd is the SVP of WarnerMedia Portfolio Sales & Client Partnerships. Hey, Todd, thanks for being here. How are you?

Todd:

I'm great. How are you? Thanks for having me.

Mike:

I'm good. I excited to talk to you. It's a good time to chat with you. You're kind of coming off of CES a couple weeks ago. Very different one than you're... And it's



already sort of upfront season or talk about upfront season, so lots to discuss in our world. But why don't we just start with that your job sounds like it's the... You do the kind of stuff that isn't just day-to-day, but those are big sweeping partnerships or that involve a lot of parts of the company. That's my guess, at least, where I hear portfolio. Tell us about your gig.

Todd:

Yeah. So, it's awesome. Yes. To answer your question. The CES part of it definitely was a little different this year and we are 100% right in the middle of upfront season, which continues to be all the time. But I'll give a little background on myself. I started on the agency side, working at MediaCom back in the day, did that for a few years, figured I wanted to make a move over to the publisher side. And it was great, I got great experience on the agency side, learned how that business worked, made a move over to TV Guide, which at the time was-

Mike:

TV Guide. I don't think you,

Todd:

Yeah, exactly, a name you don't hear very often.

Mike:

Once couldn't have been more dominant in my life at some point.

Todd:

Exactly. And while we had the magazine, we also had a TV Guide channel before digital was digital, where people would actually sit at their house and watch a scroll go round and round before they actually figured out what was on television. But it was a cool experience. I was there for almost eight years and I always say we were a little bit ahead of our time, because we actually had the abilities to do addressable, a one-to-one conversation, because every cable system was different.

Todd:



So, if you were in LA, NBC might have been a different channel than you were if you were in New York. So, it was that one-to-one communication that we had the ability to do, which was truly amazing. But then made a move over to WarnerMedia, which at the time was Turner, Turner Broadcasting. And it's been a great role and definitely things have evolved, no question about it.

Todd:

But yeah, my job today, it's a wild one, like everybody's job these days. Working from home, coming into the office every now and then, but yeah, we oversee, the team oversees the entire portfolio of WarnerMedia. So, I like to say it's kind of the cradle to the grave. So, when I say the cradle, we've got networks like Boomerang and Cartoon Network, and then we have everything from TBS to Adult Swim, to TNT, CNN, Headline News, and then obviously our digital platforms with HBO Max obviously being the bright, shiny object, I'm sure we'll get into it a little bit.

Mike:

Yeah. Definitely want to ask you about that one. It's a topic of great interest. So, I guess, how much of your life is brands that want to target an audience and use a bunch of your different properties as part of one big buy, that involves digital, and Boomerang, and sports. How much of it is I want to create a special custom event using a bunch of DCIP and never been done before, and I want it to be in the metaphor, or whatever, I'm exaggerating, but how much of it is the big custom deals versus just cross-channel packaging kind of stuff?

Todd:

Yeah, it's probably split. It just depends on the advertiser. But those types of partnerships have truly evolved over the years. When you think about what a big portfolio deal would've been, it would've been maybe some on-air billboards, maybe some other things that went. But it was mainly primarily on television, on the screen. Those have definitely changed over the years. It's fascinating how we bring these programs together from both the internal standpoint, but also from our clients standpoint. They're definitely different based on the program.



Todd:

So, like you said, we have traditional bias, people just want to reach mass scale, have the big reach with our GRPs, like a TBS and a TNT. We'll continue to do those things. And we can do big programs around that. So, we have the SAG Awards coming up airing on TBS and TNT in a few months. We do great things on air with our sponsors, but it's definitely evolved and it's definitely morphed into something bigger.

Todd:

It could be events. We do the Adult Swim festival, which is a huge event, tying everything with Adult Swim. We'll bring partners in, so there's an on-air component, there's a digital component. And that digital component isn't just our O&O anymore. It could be, what are we doing on TikTok? What are we doing on Instagram? What are we doing on Facebook?

Todd:

But then, obviously, now consumers can feel and touch this thing. They can actually go to LA, go to this festival in this huge stadium, have all these different touch points, have brands associated interacting with them. And it truly becomes a little bit more valuable to the advertiser, because not only do they still get the scale across Adult Swim on air, and then obviously the digital extensions that come along with it, but they actually get to feel and touch with their brands. So, it truly is pretty remarkable how the portfolio evolution has changed over the years from being sponsorships on TV, brought to you bys, to this now really extending with no limits.

Mike:

Well, it's interesting, you and I were talking offline about doing more things in person. I wonder, there seemed to be, around last summer, there was a real fervor among brands that I want to do experiential stuff, because people are going out again, and then obviously things have been up and down and up and down since. But I'm just reading a lot of the festivals this summer are going to have fewer COVID restrictions. We feel like we're turning a little bit of a corner, maybe. Is there big renewed interest among brands of like, "I want to be at places where people are going to be out,



people are going to be dying to get together again." Are you seeing that? Like the Adult Swim's events type just blowing up right now?

Todd:

Yeah, absolutely. I think you nailed it. I think there's that pent up demand to actually be with other human beings and be with these brands. So, absolutely, we always bring brands. So, the big ones for us, for our younger brands are San Diego ComicCon, we have South by Southwest coming up where we will have a pretty big presence there with CNN+, which we can get into a little bit later, as well as HBO Max. They'll both have a presence at South by Southwest.

Todd:

So, yeah, those footprints and how we can interact with our brands, but also with the consumers. It is tremendous. So, yeah, we definitely see pent up demand. We've also had success though on the virtual side of things. So, when COVID first hit, we had a virtual DC FanDome, which was huge, it was global. It wasn't just in the US. And people were able who maybe potentially couldn't have gotten to whatever that may have been, were able to experience the brand there. So, yeah, I think any way that the consumers can touch the brands is definitely something that our brands are asking for.

Mike:

It's interesting to think about that. I don't doubt that there's a huge appetite for that among advertisers. But it's weird to match that up or to think about how, in the past couple years, the push towards data being more data driven and accountability just accelerated like crazy, thanks to the pandemic. Are those judged in a very different way? And are they treated as a different category with goals or brands putting more pressure on you? I want to tie this together with all the other stuff I'm doing on with retail media and [inaudible 00:07:49], things that are much far more inherently trackable. Is that a push and pull you're seeing? Or is it really different?

Todd:



It definitely is. And I think being held accountable by our brands and by our customers is gotten to a fever pitch. There's no question about that. We are definitely being challenged to show something works. I mean, at the end of the day, there's the expression, 50% of the advertising works. I just don't know which 50% it is. But from this standpoint, we definitely are willing to do deals, guaranteed deals, on different types of measurement. There's no question about that. And again, we can dive into the measurement conversation, which is definitely a hot topic right now.

Todd:

But as it relates to some of these bigger partnerships, attribution, and it's funny, we had probably, it might have been four upfronts ago, we announced what we called provable ROI. And in essence, that was attribution at the time. And we've always been on the forefront of guaranteeing on things beyond just Nielsen, age, sex demo ratings. We want to guarantee on results and we're willing to do that.

Todd:

And I think the key to that is to make sure that all the right people are in the room and we are literally all working off the same horizon. So, it's very difficult to go to an event and be like, "How many cheeseburgers did Wendy's sell at the Adult Swim and festival?" Or, "How many hot fries?" Which is what their product was for the Adult Swim festival a couple years ago, in doing that. So, we truly just need to make sure that everybody's on the same page, whether it's the agency, whether it's the client and whether it's our team and the research team, to truly be able to understand what's the baseline and what's the KPI that those brands want to [inaudible 00:09:19]. But absolutely they do want to make sure that there is success.

Todd:

Because look, these things aren't getting cheaper. You want to go to one of these big events, whether it's a festival, whether it's virtual, whether it's in person, they're definitely expensive.

Mike:



Yeah. And brands are not inclined to just be like, "Well, it was cool. So I'm good with that." Like they're going to want to have some kind of ROI attached to things. Coming back to where we started talking about, it's mid, late February, CES was obviously really different this year. Because it was a last minute scramble to decide people are going to go or not. Historically, it's been like a tone-setter for the industry, where their clients talk about their big goals, you look at the big trends coming out of the air, consumer electronics, technology, stuff like that. Was there like a big theme coming out of there or a big message, even though it was so just unusual and kind of atypical?

Todd:

Yeah. I mean we've had what we'd like to either call top-to-top meetings with all of our agency partners, with all of our clients, we're in the process of doing them right now. But what's coming out of them is definitely, from our standpoint, everybody wants to talk about HBO Max. It has just been a product and platform that has exploded onto the market, and it's been extremely successful for us. Folks want to talk about our IP. If you look at the breadth of what WarnerMedia is, it's a hundred years of history. Actually, this year is the 100th birthday anniversary, however you want to look at it, of Warner Bros. So, all the IP that we have across the board is amazing. So, that is definitely something folks want to talk about. And then the thing that the entire industry is talking about is alternative measurement.

Todd:

Measurement has become a hot topic, had already two conversations this morning about it with some of our agency partners and clients. And it is something that everybody wants to dive into, wants to get a better understanding. Panel data has been something that we've done, but there's definitely some imperfections there. And I think us as publishers and as our advertising partners and our clients, we just want to get smarter and we want to be able to deliver results across screen, not just on television and isolation, not just in streaming platforms in isolation, not just on folks' digital O&O, but how does it look across all of those screens together and really measure for both reach and frequency. And then taking it a step further, attentiveness.



Mike:

So, it sounds, on the one hand, the way, at least if we're talking about television and multi-platform television, it's obviously getting far more interesting and you're going to be able to sort of prove your worth in a variety of different ways, but it seems inherently, it's just really complicated. It seems like it's going to be... Last year seemed like a return to normal maybe. With the upfront this year seems like it's going to be increasingly challenging or complicated and you're going to have like five different currencies in the market or something potentially. How do you guys balance all that and figure out... Because it doesn't seem you can go in one direction this year and just have a way of doing things, everything's going to be different.

Todd:

Yeah, we announced several new measurement partners recently, if you've been keeping up with the WarnerMedia data and research side. Comscore, iSpot, and VideoAmp are those three alternative measurement companies that we are going to test with. Really just to test at this point. We've spoken to all our agency partners to get an understanding of what they want to learn in addition to what we want to learn. Because we don't want to just go out there and say, "Hey, these are our three partners. This is how we want to do it."

Todd:

The way we look at the entire market and then not just when it comes to measurement, but when it comes to everything is, what do you as an advertiser want out of us? And then let's figure out how that partnership works. So, we're going to take a pretty prescriptive approach to exploring those measurement partners across the industry. But at this point, we're looking to test. And as we get into the upfront, I really don't see a world where 90% of our business is being done on alternative measurement. Nielsen is still there and we will use it, but we will also lean into those partners and those agencies that want to lean into [inaudible 00:13:14].

Mike:





So, there was an interesting Digiday piece recently on this topic. It seems like the consensus going in and it's going to be evolving is that a lot of companies are going to use alternative measurements almost as like a backup, like they'll still buy the majority of their inventory on Nielsen, because it's still the standard currency. And then they'll sort of double check everything else with an iSpot, or with somebody else. Is that how you imagine it going or is it going to really vary?

Todd:

Yeah. Yeah. I think they're going to vary, again, depending on what the advertiser wants or what the agency wants. We don't really want to take a look back. We want to look forward and I think that's a big difference from some of the publishers out there. But yeah, I think it'll be a handful of advertisers, and a handful of agencies that want to do this and they want to learn... There's two sides of that. So, you've got like kind of the counting side of reach and frequency and measuring that. And then you have currency. And I think, figuring out what the advertising partners want, that's where we're going to lean into and we're going to put together the best thing for our partners while getting a better understanding of the overall measurement marketplace. Because we want to be leaders there.

Mike:

Right. Aside from the measurement conversation, it's obviously that we've seen viewership change radically or just consumption patterns overall the last couple years, more streaming, more gaming, just more time on with digital properties, more on demand uses overall. Anything that you can share that might be surprising or interesting going into this year that you're emphasizing with clients with different demographics, different viewership patterns you're seeing?

Todd:

Yeah, I think in the beginning of COVID, everybody's traditional television rating skyrocketed. Everybody was home, they didn't know what to do, they put the television on, and we went from there. The linear traditional television marketplace has kind of settled back into reality. I think, if you look at last year's upfront, we



actually had on some networks more supply because our ratings were up. I think that has now come back into reality.

Todd:

But from an ad sales perspective, we also added new supply with HBO Max in the AVOD, in the AVOD form. So, a year ago we didn't have AVOD, we just had the SVOD, so subscription only, the 14.99 for HBO Max. Then, last June, we launched an AVOD product and that gave us an enormous amount of supply. Look, as the product launched with zero subs, we eventually have grown that over the last, I guess, we're now eight months in and it's been extremely successful.

Todd:

So, what we've seen is that ad-supported content on those streaming services are really popular. It's actually dominating the top 10 shows that people are consuming right now.

Mike:

Interesting.

Todd:

So, from that standpoint, it's been really good. We're seeing tremendous amount of engage on HBO Max. But our linear networks, we're still chugging along. Linear is definitely not dead. It is the way that we are going to reach a ton of people in a very short period of time. It's just now we have this beautiful complement of HBO Max with different types of content as well.

Mike:

All right. So, let's talk about HBO Max, again, it's pretty early, there's obviously lot of demand for it. There was a time, a couple years ago, if you go back, the thinking was, generationally, you're seeing a shift that younger people especially they grew up on Netflix. There's no tolerance for advertising. Interruptive is never going to work. And now you've seen AVOD explode, but this was a very carefully executed calculated way of, bringing advertising into HBO was almost unthinkable 10 years ago. Can you



talk about what you've seen so far? How intensive and deliberate you've been there and maybe what brands are experiencing?

Todd:

Yeah, absolutely. And you nailed it. This was not like, "Hey, let's just start a streaming service and see what happens." HBO is a brand that has, to your point, been super protected, super premium. And the fact that we're now being able to bring advertising into a platform that has HBO content was really important. From the ad sales team, the product is continuing to scale, like I said, and our top priority really is to unlock bigger and greater opportunities for the agencies and the marketers to connect with fans in this premium environment.

Todd:

So, we're doing it right, but we have by far the lowest ad load across any streaming product. So, you're never going to see more than two spots in any ad break. And the ad product is really, I think, what has driven the AVOD product, because, again, it's dynamic. So, if there's two 15s, your break is only 30 seconds. If it's two 30s, your break is only a minute long. We're never going to be longer than a minute in any break. So, I think the way that consumers are interacting with the product, the advertising aspect of it is reciprocal. They're like, "All right, I get it." We want to give consumers choice. [crosstalk 00:17:57].

Mike:

Especially as we've seen people get bombarded and driven crazy by the frequency of things, as this medium is really taking off.

Todd:

100%. So, I think the ability that we are going to have, that we've had the lowest ad load in the market, in the streaming space, that has been the appetite for consumers to say, "Look, we want to give them choice. You can get the SVOD product and pay \$15 or 14.99, or you can get the AVOD product and pay a little bit less. Once people try that. And now we have content parody. So, as we went into 2022, everything that is on the AVOD product is also on the SVOD product. So, it's been a huge success for us.



And again, it opens up different conversations with our agencies and our advertising partners.

Mike:

And can you get into, because I know that you guys have very... There are some somewhat standard units in HBO Max with ads, but then you have some very customized placements. Can you talk about the menu right now?

Todd:

Yeah. So, we launched in 2021, a lot of testing, trying to understand what formats, foundational formats are going to work. And that's kind of what we talked about with the dynamic ads. But HBO approach that we've taken is really paying off. People like the experience. So, we wanted to make sure that whatever ad products we bring to them, the experience still meets their expectations and they continue to stay on there.

Todd:

So, the ad breaks are shorter. We're reaching new audiences with the AVOD and the goal is to really maintain that satisfaction level. So, the formats that we have right now, the signature product is something we call the brand block, it features sponsored content takeover. So, basically a takeover of some sort of content that we have. This product definitely works. We've done a ton of research around it. Almost three-quarters of the folks that we've asked when we did some of this research appreciate that the brands made their ad experience shorter and it didn't interrupt the content. So, from that standpoint, it's really important that, again, any product we bring matters. So brand blocks is kind of the key, we've had that up and running.

Todd:

Content sponsorships, that's going to be something that is new in 2022. This is going to provide marketers an exclusive opportunity to sponsor select HBO Max original series. So, whether that's The Flight Attendant or a different show, that's going to be able to bring brands closer [crosstalk 00:20:10]-



Mike:

So what, they'll own a whole season, or this episode is brought to you by Ford or something like that, how would that look?

Todd:

Exactly. We can do season, we can do shows. But yes, they would own that content, that typically we've never let anybody really own. Look, we're not going to have an ownership of Euphoria right now, because that's an HBO original, but an HBO Max original, those are the things that we're going to be able to do. What we want to accomplish is fan engagement. We want people, in this research we've showed, is that people who see a brand with their favorite show have a higher affinity for them. It's pretty simple and that's what we really want to dive into.

Mike:

You kind of hinted to this when you mentioned your tenure at TV Guide and how that company was kind of ahead of its time. As we're seeing these more thoughtful approaches to CTV advertising, do you think we're going to see interactivity on television take off at some point? There's been attempts at this for a long time and consumers have been sort of not sure if they want to interact with brands with their remotes or their voice, but I wonder if you think that's changing anytime soon.

Todd:

Yeah. So, look, I agree. We started with that ACR technology and voice recognition. At WarnerMedia, we created something it as a much more, a better name now, excuse me, than what we initially called it. But we called something called an on-air bug, which basically we started it with Adult Swim. The Adult Swim logo was always on in the bottom right-hand corner. And for the first time we changed that Adult Swim logo to an actual brand logo.

Todd:

And again, it was just the logo at the time. It was actually measured by Nielsen, so we could give metrics back to our advertising partners. And what's evolved there is we now run that across all of our networks and we can do QR codes. So, it can be an



advertiser X and then it shifts to a QR code, a person can scan it and they can say, "Hey, I like what they're wearing on television for Inside the NBA. How do I get those sneakers? How do I get that shirt?" So, from that standpoint, interactivity becomes a bigger part. We're seeing it broader across, as you mentioned, the CTV space, where we can do more things.

Todd:

I think that, yes, there is an appetite to do more there, whether it's couponing, whether it's being able to purchase things. But again, we just haven't seen it in scale across the entire marketplace yet. But I do think, as technology continues to evolve, that that product and that brand product will continue to evolve with it.

Mike:

Yeah. I mean, you're asking consumers to adopt a different behavior, which takes time. But I wonder if we'll start seeing that more as people use more voice search and different interactions on the screen, stuff like that. You mentioned earlier, the number of deals you're doing that involve stuff that is not necessarily really on your owned-and-operated properties, you'll have a partnership that brings in things on TikTok and other platforms. How often is that coming to fruition? And then, are those a challenge to execute and manage from a measurement standpoint, ROI standpoint, when it's not all the stuff that you necessarily control, there's a lot of players in those deals?

Todd:

Yeah. It definitely makes it a little bit more challenging from a measurement standpoint. But again, our goal is to make sure that the marketer reaches their consumer wherever that is, whether it's on our O&O or whether it's on one of our branded channels within TikTok or within YouTube. So, yeah, I would say that most of our marketing deals have those legs or extensions that, everybody likes to use the word omnichannel like, "Oh, it touches all those things." I think it's a little bit of a dated word, but at the end of the day, we do want to make sure that our advertising partners are reaching those consumers. Because if you just try to reach the



consumers that just sit in one platform or product, you're missing out tremendously, especially because some of those products and platforms are younger.

Todd:

So, while television typically reaches a little bit of an older audience, HBO Max, definitely a younger audience, obviously any of our channels that exist across some of those other platforms usually, typically are younger. So, again, anywhere where we can reach those consumers, that's where we want to be. And that's where we want our advertisers to be.

Mike:

Let's jump back to where we were talking earlier about how your career started and you started on the agency side, a lot of people make that move where they start out in media buying, planning, and then jump into the ad sales world a little bit. What was different about the agency business back then and today, if you could think about that? How did that pay off in your career learn, that education early on?

Todd:

Yeah, we're north of 20 years now, back when I was on the agency side, and it was way different. There was no streaming services. There was not these different platforms that exist today.

Mike:

You weren't talking about programmatic a whole lot probably.

Todd:

Exactly. Exactly. So, from that standpoint, it was way different. I mean, your day parts were where you had prime time, you had cable, you had syndication. That was pretty much the extent of it. I was fortunate enough to work on a myriad of different brands, which gave me different exposure and different experiences, buying sports, buying syndication, buying cable

Mike:



And buying was very distinct from planning, if I remember those days.

Todd:

Absolutely. You had your buyers and you had your planners. The way we interact with our agencies is, we love to get the buyers and the planning teams and the strategy teams in the room together. Because what typically happens is a lot of times is the strategy teams and the planning teams knows what's coming way down the pike, where the investment teams are like, "All right, I know what's happening today. I don't know what's happening in six months from now." So, the more we can bring them all together, usually the more successful the partnership becomes.

Mike:

Right. Okay. And then, when you find your way, I know we're jumping past TV Guide here, but when you come over to Turner, obviously that feels like 20 different waves in the industry ago. What was the ride like when you start there? And then, where things have ended up today in terms of the way that business is done, the way that the industry operates?

Todd:

Yeah. It's amazing. I've been here 14 years now. It's been an unbelievable ride. I've had a lot of different "jobs" or experiences here. Whether it's dealing with our network partnership, our network partners, folks at the networks, whether that was Adult Swim or Cartoon Network, which is kind of where I started. But also the way we went to market. We were very siloed. We had our kids and family, which was Cartoon and Adult Swim. We had our news group, we had our sports group, like these were all different. Now, we've approached it way differently from a portfolio standpoint, because an advertiser wants to come in, and back then, they would say, "Okay, I want to touch sports. I want to touch news. I want to touch entertainment. And I want to touch kids." You had to talk to four different people.

Todd:

Now, we have the opportunity where we have the ability to really kind of thread the needle throughout the entire portfolio. So, that's been the biggest change. But this





place, it's amazing, because we're always evolving. We want to know, what's next? We always want to be the leaders when it comes to new things. So, whether it is those in-program graphic ads that we had on air, whether it is attribution provable ROI. I love this place, because we're always looking, what's the next thing? What's the next thing?

Todd:

But also maintaining our core and being very successful at that. So, it's been an amazing ride, but there's no question over the last 14 years, there's definitely been a lot of change in regards to, A, what we have to sell and the products that we have to sell and, B, just the brands that we have within the portfolio to sell, which is awesome.

Mike:

How do you figure that out? You're right, you always want to be on the next thing, but right now you're going through this monster transition of your core business, and you're talking about these alternative currencies. You got to sit there and say, "Okay, we got to get that right. Do we need to have a presence on TikTok and on Discord and every other emerging channel? Do we need to invest in the metaverse right now? Do we need to build something or do we need to wait?" How do you guys balance those things and figure that out over time?

Todd:

Yeah, I think, we do a cost analysis where you obviously have to maintain the core. Tony Goncalves, who runs the entire group, he says that the core fuels everything else. So, as long as we continue to be successful with our core business, that will fuel different opportunities where we can test, we can learn, we can measure, we can get involved into different things like the metaverse, which, again, different brands want to be involved at different stages.

Todd:

And Adult Swim was very early into gaming, very early into virtual reality. Whereas maybe a TNT may not have been. And again, it just depends on what the content is on those brands. But at the end of the day, we will continue to keep the core driving



forward, but also make sure that we're not missing things, because at the end of the day, we have amazing IP that lives everywhere. And wherever that IP is, we want to be, because we know the consumers are there and that's where advertisers want to be.

Mike:

You brought up gaming a couple of times. Obviously, it's been a humongous category for a long time, but it's really blown up in the last couple years. Brands, I still feel like they don't exactly know how to enter that space, not all of them know how to get started. It's not that very easy to just buy a bunch of ads in huge gaming titles. You guys have been in and around that world with e-sports and presence on different platforms. What are you telling brands? What are brands talking about right now with you in terms of how to get into that space the right way?

Todd:

Yeah. I think you nailed it. You got to get in it the right way. Nobody playing gaming wants to see a 30-second spot. That's not the way that you're going to be successful interacting with gamers. So, we, again, try to tie things around our IP. So, Rick and Morty is the number one show, it's amazing. We created a Rick and Morty game and we figured out ways to get brands integrated into those games in the right way, where, again, it goes back to the consumer experience. We want to make sure that we're putting the customer first and we want to make sure that we don't want advertising for a lot of-

Mike:

You're not going to shove that into Call of Duty or something. It doesn't make sense.

Todd:

Exactly. It has to make sense for the advertiser obviously, but it has to make sense for the consumer. We don't want people to go be playing one of our games and have a disruptive experience because of a brand or because of an advertising marketer. We want to make sure that experience is additive in everything that we do.



Mike:

I want to ask you, there was a... My kids and I were getting excited the other day, watching this DC kind of... It was like a multi-property trailer for all the big events coming up this year. I imagine that like between The Batman and there's a Flash movie and the Black Adam, which features The Rock, I imagine there's a ton of interest right now in like, "I want to do something with DC. I want to be attached to that universe." What are some things coming up that we should talk about event-wise and what are brands, how are brands coming to you trying to attach themselves to that IP and that event that you got going on, or series about that?

Todd:

Yep. The DC FanDome has been a huge success for us. Like I said, the first one that we did recently was virtual. That we now want to do some not just virtual, but maybe hybrid and do some more things. So, again, DC has the biggest brands and IP in the world, like you said, we have The Batman movie coming, which is tremendous and huge. So, again, we're trying to figure out ways that we can get brands and marketers to be associated with that. And we have a bunch of different opportunities that we can do across DC FanDome.

Todd:

One thing that we have done is, we've done kind of a franchise-first approach in bringing IP with The Milestone Initiative. This is a newer program that we collaborated with Allied Bank, which aim to identify support and elevate emerging diverse writers and artists with the comic book industry. The Milestone Initiative really launched at DC FanDome back in 2021. So, again, those are ways that we want to bring advertisers in and do it in a different way that is meaningful to, again, the customer, but also to the marketer.

Mike:

All right. This has been terrific. And I want to wrap on this note, are there any other huge events coming up this year that we should keep an eye on? Or are there bigger portfolio packages that are coming down the road that are going to define what success for you guys this year, the brands should be aware of?



Todd:

Yeah. I mean, IP will continue to be huge for us, as I mentioned earlier, this is Warner Bros. 100th anniversary, 100th birthday. So, if you think about all the IP that has existed over the last 100 years, we will be celebrating our birthday in a way, more to come on that, but there is no question that that's going to be a big thing. Adult Swim Festival will be something that we lean into, again, I guess this is probably now the fourth year that we're doing the Adult Swim Festival, third or fourth year. So, that will continue to be big. I mentioned the SAG Awards, which are coming up in a couple months.

Todd:

So, across the portfolio, we will have a ton of things to talk about. Obviously this is a midterm election year. So, on the news front, we will have that as well. So, whether you're talking about some of the things that we're doing on Cartoon Network, Teen Titans Go! was just announced at TCA, I think yesterday or two days ago. So, from the youngest stuff on Cartoon Network to the older stuff on the news side of the house. And then we have our premieres, we have amazing shows that are returning on our regular legacy, traditional portfolio of networks, but also a lot of things that are going to be continuing to show up on the HBO Max platform. So, again, whether it's Cartoon Network, Adult Swim, HBO Max, CNN, wherever it is, we definitely will have something that we'll be able to talk about with our advertising partners.

Mike:

There's a Wonder Twins movie in development, I read the other day, which blew me away. So, that I'll have to see what brands want to respond to that down the road.

Todd:

Yeah. Right?

Mike:

Todd, thanks so much for a great conversation. Hopefully, we'll chat again down the road, but great catching up here.



Todd:

Yeah. And I really appreciate you having me. I do appreciate that. So, thank you.

Mike:

Thank you.

Todd:

Have a great day. All right. Take care.

Mike:

A big thanks to my guest this week, Todd Braverman, SVP of WarnerMedia's Portfolio Sales & Client Partnerships. And of course, my partners at AppsFlyer. If you liked this episode, please take a moment to rate and leave review. We have lots more to bring you, so be sure to hit the subscribe button. We'll see you next for more on what's Next in Marketing.