



news release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

motum b2b's Willingham sees roles of agencies and media owners blurring over next several years

Shelton, CT July 6, 2011 – The traditional roles of media owners, agencies and advertisers will continue to blur over the next few years, as each focuses on generating marketing revenue streams instead of advertising dollars, noted Richard Willingham, CEO of motum b2b, as he spoke at a recent Association of Medical Media event.

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Willingham, the newly-elected Chairman of the BPA Worldwide Board of Directors, was on hand with BPA President and CEO, Glenn Hansen, to share his views on the future of the media industry and the role BPA should play at the AMM's June meeting in New York City.

Many of today's agencies are now creating content, Willingham noted. In fact, "My agency provides more original content to publications than we get from them," he said. At the same time, media owners are offering creative design services since, at the b-to-b level, much of the media buying is being done direct and advertisers are looking for design assistance.

"I have had a lot of conversations with media owners who sit on the BPA Board," Willingham said, "and we're very honest with each other that we're now in competition." He adds that the difference between media owners and agencies is that agencies "look after the strategic competitive positioning of our clients--something that a media owner can never do at the same time they serve the interests of their advertisers' competitors."

Moving further into the media owners' realm, Willingham reported his agency builds databases of qualified marketing contacts for its clients. One day the agency could move into building its own databases. "When those databases are fully integrated, there is the potential for an agency to serve many different clients as effectively as a media owner," he said.

Willingham noted that while most current efforts are on the digital side, content is delivered across all channels. "It can be long content or short content. My agency writes white papers all the time."

As a result, the traditional three-legged model of media owners, agencies and advertisers may lose a leg as media houses provide the "total solution" of content, design and databases, and ad agencies offer the same service package.

"This is partly the reason I am advocating [BPA] becoming a marketing-focused organization rather than a media-focused organization. because marketing is what we all three groups (publishers, agencies and advertisers) have in common.

And while Willingham sees print ad dollars diminishing, by no means is he calling for the death of print advertising. He stressed, however, that print will be part of a larger, integrated plan. “Do we still believe in brand advertising and buying pages in print? The short answer is yes,” he said. “To me, brand is always at the top of the pyramid and the bottom of the pyramid. Any way you look at it, brand is still very strong.

“But we don’t buy print alone,” he continued. “Everything we pay for is fully integrated. We’ve developed an RFP process to media owners who understand integration and we say, ‘Recommend integration of all your channels and tell us how we are going to maximize access to your unique audiences.’”

Audit organizations too, including BPA, which have traditionally provided services to print media owners, must also morph their focus toward marketers if they want to remain in the mix, Willingham explained. “This is all about marketing dollars. I’d like the whole concept of audience measurement and proof of access, proof of engagement, to be for marketers and about marketers,” he said. “It’s not to downplay or disrespect the media owners—after all, they are they are the ones who are providing access to audiences. But, when we acknowledge why BPA exists—to protect the marketing dollar and, we hope, increase the marketing spend which benefits all parties—then we will be more relevant and more truthful about why we continue to exist.”

To listen to the entire session with Richard Willingham, [click here](#).

About BPA Worldwide A not-for-profit organization since 1931, BPA Worldwide is governed by a tripartite board comprised of media owners, advertising agencies and advertisers. Headquartered in Shelton, Connecticut, USA, BPA has membership spanning more than 30 countries. Worldwide, BPA audits 2,600+ media properties—including business publications, consumer magazines, newspapers, web sites, events, email newsletters, databases, wireless and other advertiser-supported media—as well as 2,700 advertiser and agency members. Visit www.bpaww.com for the latest audit reports, membership information and publishing and advertising industry news.