



## Matt Spiegel of MediaLink: The Ad Automation and Programmatic Confidantes

BY JAY SEARS

JULY 19, 2016

[RUBICON PROJECT ARCHIVES](#)

In a series of conversations with the leading confidantes and consultants in the ad automation and programmatic area, Jay Sears, Senior Vice President Marketplace Development of Rubicon Project, discusses trends and issues of the day impacting advertisers and media owners. Here, Sears speaks with Matt Spiegel, Senior Vice President/General Manager Data and Technology Solutions at MediaLink. Spiegel was founder and former CEO of Resolution Media, Omnicom's search marketing agency, and as Omnicom Media Group's global digital CEO, he launched its Accuen trading desk. [Editor's Note: Be sure to read the first two installments of this series: Jay's interviews with [Joe Weaver of Promatica Consulting](#) and [Matt Prohaska of Prohaska Consulting](#).]

**JAY SEARS: What do you read to keep up with politics, art and culture?**

**MATT SPIEGEL:** Wall Street Journal, CNN, Politico, Wired, Rolling Stone

**SEARS: What do you read to keep up with friends?**

**SPIEGEL:** Facebook, Instagram (there is some reading involved)

**SEARS: What do you read to keep up with the advertising technology industry?**

**SPIEGEL:** Wall Street Journal, AdAge, AdWeek, AdExchanger, Business Insider, Re/code, Beet.TV

**SEARS: What's your favorite commercial of all time?**

**SPIEGEL:** I have to give some love to my home town and go with the Gatorade “**Be Like Mike**” commercial -- the original of course.

**SEARS: With regards to advertising automation, what are the three biggest trends you expect to impact companies in 2016?**

**SPIEGEL:**

1. Use of audience intelligence for optimization and addressability in linear TV
2. Ability to understand consumer behaviors across devices
3. Faster feedback loop of media performance tied to business metrics -- including “offline” metrics

**SEARS: With regards to advertising automation, what are the three most overblown topics that you wish would just go away?**

**SPIEGEL:**

1. Importance of open exchanges/marketplaces: This is not where the action really is or will be.
2. Mass media with one-to-one targeting: Scale still requires segmentation, more granular and adaptable segments, but segmentation is still the answer.
3. Marketers bringing media buying in-house: The vast majority of the time, clients are and should be taking a bigger role in their media strategy and planning processes, but rarely is that actually about “pulling the levers” as the trade-press suggests.

**SEARS: Please describe your firm.**

**SPIEGEL:** MediaLink is a strategic advisory firm that works at the intersection of media, technology, entertainment and finance, or as we like to say – we connect Wall Street, Madison Avenue, Silicon Valley and Hollywood. Our clients turn to us because as ex-operators ourselves we marry our strategic thinking with operational excellence.

QUESTION	ANSWER
How many employees does your firm have?	125
Where is your headquarters?	New York
Where are you located?	Chicago
When was your firm started?	2003
Approximately what percentage of client engagement dollars are spent to address ad automation and related issues?	15%
Do any markets outside your home market account for more than 10% of overall billings?	No

**SEARS: What are the three most common issues you help clients on regarding automation and programmatic trading?**

**SPIEGEL:**

1. A marketer's need to update their media management model to include greater influence of data and enabling technology, the related skills development and process updates (across departments and partners), and the selection of enterprise technology providers.
2. A media company's need to move past the word "programmatic" and towards the need to have a granular understanding of their audience as well as the technical capabilities to monetize their audience across channels and buying processes (both manual/automated and guaranteed/non-guaranteed).
3. Digital innovators' (ad-tech, data/insights and similar firms) need to identify their product-market fit and truly understand the expectations of marketers and their agencies.

**SEARS: The majority of ad technology companies (relatively small, unprofitable or both) have struggled. Of the poor performers, what are the commonalities between them that have contributed to this weakness?**

**SPIEGEL:** A couple of very common issues:

- Their company offering is at best a product, or even only a feature of a product, instead of a stand-alone solution.
- There is little appreciation and understanding for how the media and advertising business actually works.
- There is an inflated sense of delivered value (relates to the first two points) that weakens potential collaboration with clients.

**SEARS: A smaller handful of ad technology companies has achieved scale and performed better than the rest. What are the commonalities between them that have contributed to this relative strength?**

**SPIEGEL:** The opposite of the above.

**SEARS: Do we live in a "tale of two cities" where Google and Facebook win almost everything, advertisers are dictated to and other media companies fight for the scraps?**

**SPIEGEL:** No, that's a very "digital centric" view of the world. Both Google and Facebook are extremely impressive organizations that are indeed key players in the industry, but I think the ~\$70B "TV" ecosystem has reasons to be counted as more than just "scraps."

**SEARS: Please answer the following statements yes or no.**

**SPIEGEL:**

STATEMENT	YES/NO	ONE SENTENCE EXPLANATION
Google will remain a dominant company for the next 10 years	Yes	Great mix of solutions and capabilities
Google will remain a dominant company for the next 20 years	Yes	Who really knows... but not going to bet against them at the moment
Amazon is a data company	Yes	All successful businesses of the future will be driven by data
Facebook will remain a dominant company for the next 10 years	Yes	Digital content consumption only increasing and they have a seat at that table
Facebook will remain a dominant company for the next 20 years	Yes	Again, who really knows, but also not going to bet against them.
Chinese Internet companies such as Alibaba will become active buyers and/or investors in US based Internet companies in the next two years	No	Believe most will continue to focus on their home market opportunity
Yahoo! is dead	Yes	At least as a stand-alone entity, but there is plenty of value within the organization
Less than 20 companies on the "Lumascap" are of a material size and these companies will behave as the consolidators of the group.	Yes	Let's hope this is true, consolidation is needed.
Ad technology is not well understood by investors	No	"Investors" too broad of a base to say yes to...
The impact of ad automation to date has largely been in digitally traded media, however impacts of automation will be felt across the entire \$600 billion worldwide media market over the next five years including the out of home and television markets.	Yes	100% no question.
Ad automation will start to materially impact media trading in the \$70 billion	Yes	Key is you said "start to" and that that's almost true now.

US television market in the next two years.		
Ad automation improves (or can improve) the direct trading relationship between a media company and an advertiser—by improving efficiency (workflow) and effectiveness (leveraging data).	Yes	These last few are easy, again, 100% no question.

**SEARS:** If you could go to the airport *right now* with friends or family and fly anywhere in the world for vacation, who would you take and where would you go?

**SPIEGEL:** Today's answer (because there are plenty of options and I might feel differently tomorrow): I'd take the wife and head to Machu Picchu.

**SEARS:** If you could create an endowment to fund any existing non-profit you designated, what lucky non-profit organization would that be?

**SPIEGEL:** Having lost my dad to multiple myeloma a handful of years ago, I'd support the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, which by the way is focused on big-data meets personalized medicine.

**SEARS:** What is your favorite restaurant in the world?

**SPIEGEL:** That's like picking a favorite child, you can't do that. On the top of my list: Fat Willy's Rib Shack in Chicago; Commander's Palace in New Orleans, and Nobu, anywhere!

**SEARS:** Thanks, Matt!

*Do know a leading ad automation consultant in the ad automation and programmatic area advising advertisers and media companies that I should consider interviewing? [Let me know.](#)*

*The opinions and points of view expressed in this commentary are exclusively the views of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of MediaVillage.com/MyersBizNet management or associated bloggers.*



### Jay Sears

Jay Sears was Senior Vice President Marketplace Development for Rubicon Project, where he worked with management and business unit heads across the company to expand Rubicon Project's market -- and across the media owner and adver... [read more](#)

## RELATED ARTICLES



Steve Lanzano of the TVB on the Impact of Ad Automation...



Nancy Hill of the 4As: Trade Leaders on Automation and...



Doug Weaver of Upstream Group: The Ad Automation...



Rob Rasko of 614 Group: The Ad Automation and...



David Kohl of Morgan Digital Ventures: The Ad Automation...



Joshua Koran on Issues Affecting Advertisers and...

ADVERTISEMENT

## EDITOR'S PICKS



Ten Top-Notch TV Shows of 2017, Part 2

By [Ainsley Andrade](#)