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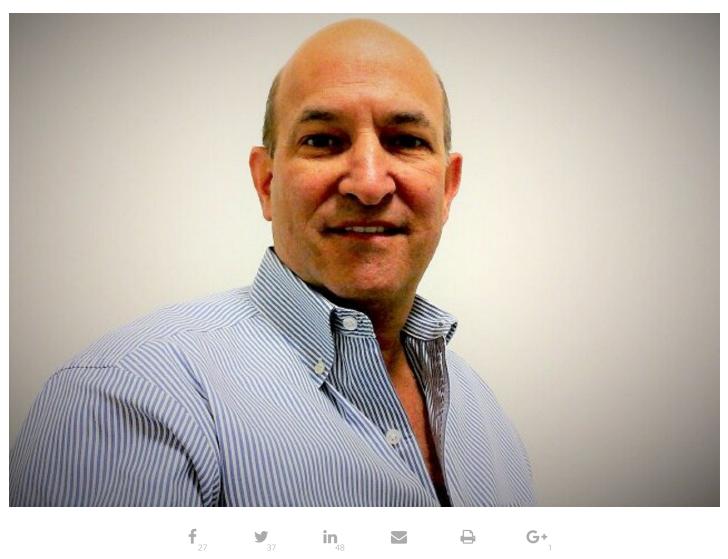
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Joe Lampert of Edge Technology Services: The Ad Automation and Programmatic Confidantes

BY **JAY SEARS**   JULY 21, 2016   **RUBICON PROJECT ARCHIVES**

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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 Joe Lampert, Executive Vice President Media Practice of Edge Technology Services. He has deep experience in backend agency and television systems with tenure at Harris Broadcast (now Imagine Communications), Mediaplex and Donovan Data Systems. [Editor's Note: Be sure to read the first three parts of this series: Jay's interviews with **Joe Weaver of Promatica Consulting**, **Matt Prohaska of Prohaska Consulting** and **Matt Spiegel of MediaLink**.]

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

JOE LAMPERT: Twitter, CNN.com, WSJ, MSN, Travel+Leisure, Wine Enthusiast, ESPN app (sports can cover art and culture, no?)

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

LAMPERT: Facebook, Instagram, e-mail and texts

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

LAMPERT: AdExchanger, Digiday, MediaPost, Broadcasting & Cable, The Drum, TV Technology, TVNewsCheck, Ad Age, AdWeek, Twitter and LinkedIn

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

LAMPERT: Alka Seltzer's "Spicy Meatball" commercial. A classic that combines humor with high brand recall.

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

LAMPERT:

1. The further automation of targeted creative within the order automation process to optimize campaign effectiveness.
2. Programmatic direct will begin to realize its full potential.
3. Next Generation DMPs will emerge to drive the infusion of data into the processes utilized by programmatic direct platforms for both buyers and sellers. Look also for DMPs to begin pioneering the fusion of panel-based traditional media data elements with consumer profile based data as a precursor to cross platform programmatic trading as the industry begins to coalesce around cross platform measurement standards.

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

LAMPERT:

1. Programmatic TV. We're likely 3 to 5 or more years away from programmatic trading at scale for linear TV, so let's stop using the phrase and realize the next few years will see iterative improvements to disconnected buyer/seller utilization of enhanced data and data management tools for better targeting and inventory management. Make no mistake, however -- the trading of all media via optimized automation tools is in our future.
2. The need to explain to premium publishers (in both digital and traditional media) that programmatic does not equal RTB, nor does programmatic direct displace humans.
3. The level of hype most players are comfortable perpetrating for various reasons. It only acts to add to the confusion and may impede much needed progress. We are talking adtech and not presidential politics, right?

SEARS: Describe your firm and then tell us the three most common issues you help clients on with respect to advertising automation and programmatic trading.

LAMPERT: Edge provides business and technology advisory consulting services to enable our clients to maximize their investments in infrastructure, revenue growth and people. Our principal consultants bring deep domain experience gained as senior industry practitioners across the ecosystem. Core practice areas include business management solutions, DAM/MAM, analytics and BI, and emerging programmatic solutions.

QUESTION	ANSWER
How many employees does your firm have?	80 FTEs
Where is your headquarters?	North Haven, CT
Where are you located? [Where is *your* home office?]	NYC
When was your firm started?	2000
Approximately what percentage of client engagement dollars are spent to address ad automation and related issues?	65%
Do any markets outside your home market account for more than 10% of overall billings?	No

SEARS: What are the most common issues you help clients with regarding automation?

LAMPERT:

1. We help traditional media clients understand the history, underpinnings, players and trends involved in programmatic advertising to then assist them in the development of go to market strategies based on market realities vs. the considerable hype present in the market.

2. Addressing the significant change management challenges required to pivot toward the utilization of sales/buyer automation tools.

3. Understanding and addressing the voice of the customer before designing and implementing new technology based initiatives.

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?

LAMPERT: Often, those who struggle exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

- A very narrow market focus, incapable of providing adequate revenue support

- Allowing sales efforts to get too far ahead of delivery capacity

- An inability to manage and cultivate strong performers

- A tendency to stay the course too long, regardless of result

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?

LAMPERT: The leaders in this category tend to have the following characteristics in common:

- Experienced founders with a track record of prior success

- Effective and measured marketing, business development and thought leadership

- Rabid focus on execution and delivery by putting the client first

- Attention to the development of a strong internal culture that rewards performance

- Fiscal restraint when required, but prepared to take appropriate risk and then quickly course correct when needed

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?

LAMPERT: Digitally speaking (this is certainly not the case at all in traditional media), I find this premise to be a bit overblown. Having said that, Google and Facebook certainly do possess outsized clout as publishers compared to the competitive set.

SEARS: Please answer the following statements yes or no.

STATEMENT	YES/NO	ONE SENTENCE EXPLANATION
Google will remain a dominant company for the next 10 years	Yes	
Google will remain a dominant company for the next 20 years	No	I find it difficult to project any tech/media company's performance beyond a 5-10 year horizon and expect challengers to emerge over this period.
Amazon is a data company	Yes	Duh!
Facebook will remain a dominant	Yes	Not quite as clear to me as Google, but

company for the next 10 years		likely over this period
Facebook will remain a dominant company for the next 20 years	No	See Google comment above
Chinese Internet companies such as Alibaba will become active buyers and/or investors in US based Internet companies in the next two years	No	Possible, but not a likely outcome over this period
Yahoo! is dead	Yes	Never say never, but I do think it more than likely the end is near for Yahoo! as we know it.
Less than 20 companies on the "Lumascape" are of a material size and these companies will behave as the consolidators of the group.	Yes, and No	I see a mixed bag for consolidation as a large number will wither and die, the more promising being acquired by dominant "Lumascapers" and others.
Ad technology is not well understood by investors	Yes	
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	
Ad automation will start to materially impact media trading in the $70 billion US television market in the next two years.	No	I see the next 2 years marked by experiments and stumbles with limited success in areas like addressable TV paving the way for later success.
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	Stress on "can improve". After all, humans need to make it all work ;-)

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?

LAMPERT: A windjammer cruise of the Mediterranean with my immediate family.

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

LAMPERT: The Simon Wiesenthal Center. The Center confronts anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promotes human rights and dignity, and teaches the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations.

SEARS: What is your favorite restaurant in the world?

LAMPERT: Eleven Madison Park. A perfect combination of outstanding cuisine and service in a beautiful setting.

SEARS: Thanks, Joe!

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

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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

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