



## MEDIALINK

# The New Creativity

STARCOM MEDIAVEST GROUP AND MEDIALINK EXPLORE THE TECHNOLOGY FUELING THE INDUSTRY'S BEST WORK

By Julie Liesse

Success in marketing increasingly sits at the intersection of creativity, data and technology—as real-time information about consumer preferences and behavior inspires creative solutions that are enabled by cutting-edge technology and innovations in media.

“When looking at what’s next, it’s experiences with unique, real-time, contextually relevant content,” says Laura Desmond, CEO of Starcom MediaVest Group. “Technology fuels creativity, enabling brands to become storytellers, sensing and responding to consumers’ needs.”

Michael Kassan, CEO of MediaLink, agrees. “We are in a world where art and science increasingly are aligned,” he says. “In this world it is not enough to understand how to use technology; using it for maximum impact requires the input of creatives—at the beginning of the strategic process.”

Nowhere is that intersection more apparent than at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, where in the next week the world’s best marketing work will be on display.

“The broad context is that in the last few years the impact of technology has dramatically increased in marketing. In nearly all the big winners of the Cannes Lions, technology has become a really critical component,” says Philip Thomas, chief executive of the Cannes Lions Festival.

“In the modern marketing mix, understanding technology, and having the capacity to use technology to unleash creativity, has become really critical,” Mr. Thomas says. “It is becoming almost impossible to create the types and quality of winners that Cannes honors without understanding technology.”

In addition to honoring creativity in marketing, Cannes also has become the place where brand marketers, agencies, media companies and technology experts come together to share and explore what’s new in media and technology platforms and how these developments can spur ever greater consumer experiences.

Allen DeBevoise, CEO of Machinima, will be among dozens of technology mavens on hand, helping marketers understand the role his company’s online video entertainment channels can play in the marketing mix.

“Technology has created opportunities for consumers to experience content in a lot of ways—from smartphones and tablets to connected TV. We are creating completely new experiences for people,” Mr. DeBevoise says. “Technology is turning so fast—there are so many opportunities, new developments and new types of experiences—that this is really creating sort of a Golden Age of creativity.”

After exploring the creative work and partnerships on display at Cannes, SMG’s Ms. Desmond says, “In putting the consumer first, we’re helping clients navigate the landscape to create the right solutions.

“Technology can help us extract data and meaning, giving brands a remarkable opportunity to play a meaningful and useful role in people’s lives like never before.” ●

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—Laura Desmond, CEO, Starcom MediaVest Group

# Data Power

## HOW SMG TURNS TECHNOLOGY INTO CREATIVITY

Planters was looking for just the right moment to talk to consumers about healthy snacking. Some nuts, such as cashews and almonds, have cemented a healthy image with consumers. At a critical moment where people were having conversations about snacking decisions, Kraft Foods' Planters needed to educate and remind people that peanuts are a nutritious snacking option as well.

Using the internal process it calls link.d<sup>3</sup>, Starcom MediaVest Group helped its client zero in on the opportunity.

link.d<sup>3</sup> is all about real-time, always-on marketing. The link.d<sup>3</sup> structure harnesses the power of data, allowing clients to respond quickly with marketing content that reflects consumer insights. Steve Simpson, exec VP-global managing director, data and analytics, says the process is built on three D's: defining the territories where consumers are looking for information or help, designing content to meet consumers in those same environments and delivering personalized content on a broad scale.

link.d<sup>3</sup> is powered by SMG's partnerships with a growing list of technology companies, including Flite, Kontera, Twitter and ShareThis. These partnerships, says Lisa Weinstein, president-global digital, data and analytics at SMG, help the agency's client brands increase marketing agility and connect with consumers at meaningful moments.

In January, SMG content partner Kontera noticed online users searching and chatting about healthy snacking—at bedtime. Words such as *nutritional value*, *healthy* and *serving* were trending in consumer searches late in the day. To the Starcom/Planters team, it became clear that a few weeks into their New Year's resolutions, people had been eating healthy all day, but were hungry at night and trying to find a way to have a snack without ruining their weight-loss resolutions.

"After a day of making really strong choices, they were hungry and didn't know what to eat that wouldn't undo all that hard work," Ms. Weinstein says.

The Starcom/Planters team rapidly responded by creating content around the theme "Nighttime snacking that won't break your healthy diet." The stories offered consumers a list of healthy options to eat before bedtime. The content ran across planters.com and was

also distributed through display media leveraging SMG partner Flite.

"We don't build static media plans, we build experiences," Mr. Simpson says. "Today creativity, and the creative experience, is the sum of ideas plus data."

He says the SMG process reflects a broader shift in the way technology and data collection have changed the creative process in marketing. "Data always used to be tactical and at the end of the process," he says. "But now, as we get to a point where the way a consumer experiences brands can be tracked and measured, we are putting data at the center of the business. Nowadays, we are using data to inspire and personalize how we build experiences for our clients. Increasingly, we are starting to use data as the instigator for creativity."


Mr. Simpson says the Planters story exemplifies how the link.d<sup>3</sup> process can improve marketing agility. "We were able to place relevant content in the hands of those consumers at the right time—when they were hungry at night, seeking a healthy snack, we were able to suggest they grab a handful of peanuts. And as we focus on agility and personalization, link.d<sup>3</sup> actually makes this meaningful experience possible," he says.

"The role of data is to ignite creativity in new and meaningful ways that can be proven to build our clients' businesses. When you start to use data to drive insights based on actual behavior, then you can create content in very creative ways, delivered at the right time and with the right message."

Being "always on" also means continually refining the content as new insights emerge. Midway through the Planters effort, the analytics team noticed that consumers were honing in on a heart-health message featured in one of the ads. The team responded by applying that message to all the content; the Flite technology made that process easy and seamless.

SMG has about 10 clients now using the link.d<sup>3</sup> process, including Kraft and Procter & Gamble Co. Ms. Weinstein believes that number will grow quickly. "Today you cannot celebrate success as a marketer in creating meaningful experiences if you have not harnessed technology and data to make your marketing more profitable," she says.

Ms. Weinstein adds, "Not too long ago, we might have thought about data and technology as separate from creativity. But today, at the center of the consumer experience is the convergence of all this. The way that consumers are discovering brands has converged across platforms in a totally seamless way. And that is all made possible by technology, and the experience made more meaningful through data." •



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# What's Next

A CONVERSATION ON CREATIVITY, LEADERSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY

With the Cannes Lions Festival just around the corner, executives from Starcom MediaVest Group, MediaLink and Kraft Foods got together to discuss the impact of new technologies on creativity with Ad Age writer Julie Liesse. The participants, three leading thinkers in the industry, together represent a spectrum of perspectives in marketing today: those of client, media agency and strategic consultant with insights into technology and new media.

#### THE PARTICIPANTS:

**Michael Kassan**, CEO, MediaLink

**Bob Rupczynski**, senior director-media and consumer engagement, Kraft Foods

**Lisa Weinstein**, president-global digital, data and analytics, Starcom MediaVest Group

**Ad Age:** Looking at creativity as the industry prepares for its global creative showcase, has technology changed the creative process?

**Mr. Kassan:** Technology is fueling creativity in marketing today, and the personification of this idea is the mashup between the CMO and the CTO or CIO.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** It's true—technology has dramatically changed the creative process. At Kraft, we love the way it has changed that process, because it's opened a lot of doors and improved our ability to connect with consumers. Social media allows us a view into consumer reactions to our brands and allows us to put messaging out there. Then the reaction and the real-time momentum of the audience is transparent to us. It gives us vastly better insight into our brands.

**Ms. Weinstein:** I agree completely. It has changed the process, and I think it's changed it both, as Bob said, for consumers as well as marketers. You take platforms like Tumblr that easily enable anyone to be a storyteller—consumers and marketers alike—and then, by doing that, create new opportunities for marketers to engage with consumers on their terms. It's truly connecting data and storytelling in real time.

Then a technology platform like Flite, which we have partnered with, underpins the ability to deliver an agile product for a client like Kraft—to truly leverage real-time consumer insight, to distribute

content at scale through paid media. So on both of those levels, for consumers and marketers, I think it's an unprecedented time of change and there is probably a lot more coming.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** I'll build on that a little bit, too. The technology has really allowed us to see those stories more accurately and to have different stories for different consumers. So whether it's reduced cost of production, or the speed of production, or the dynamic content we're able to put out there, or the microtargeting we're able to do—the way we're able to tell those stories, and tell different stories to different consumers at the same time, is a huge advantage that we're experiencing right now. Technology is going to continue to be a catalyst for that differentiated storytelling in the future.

**Ms. Weinstein:** Michael calls it a “mashup”; we tend to use the word “convergence.” Historically, digital and data came at the back end, and it was about reporting and optimization. Today it's about how you use what used to be at the back end—that data—to actually inspire. That has been enabled by technology. It drives the process, and inspires creativity and unlocks the personalization Bob is talking about.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** Kraft and Starcom together are starting to use those insights to really spawn ideas with more of an edge, more power in terms of connecting with the consumer. So I don't think we talk as much about technology as that bright, shiny object but as more of a way to tell stories—a way to evolve where we were historically. Given all the technological advances that have come over the last 10 years and how they've redefined how we communicate, it's all about sight, sound, emotion and connection, the deeper connections with friends and fans. So I think it just is a way for us to embrace telling stories in a deeper, more meaningful way.

**Ad Age:** What do clients and agencies need to do to make the most of this convergence of technology and creativity?

**Ms. Weinstein:** First of all, they need to realize that it requires some rethinking. Importantly though, in this world that's technology-led and inspires creativity, it doesn't mean that marketing 101 no longer applies.

We talk about agility and personalization being the two big, important capabilities being unlocked in this converged world; but it doesn't mean that you no longer have a marketing calendar or you no longer have new-product development. An always-on world means that organizationally and structurally, you have to be prepared to harness



Michael Kassan



Bob Rupczynski



Lisa Weinstein

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opportunities proactively rather than reactively. For us there are kind of three things that I think about. It's really about people, it's about process and it is about, for us, technology.

*"A completely transformative approach is what these last couple of years have allowed us to put in place. We have to be willing to walk away from things we've done historically."*

—Bob Rupczynski, Kraft Foods

**Mr. Rupczynski:** From a client perspective, I think the biggest thing is we have to be open to new ways of thinking. Kraft is a huge company and we've been around a long time, but we are changing that mindset to be open to very new ways of approaching our consumer. A completely transformative approach is what these last couple of years have allowed us to put in place. We have to be willing to walk away from things we've done historically.

**Mr. Kassan:** The challenge is keeping the dialogue open to the technology. A lot of it is education and making sure your people are trained. These days you can't just know how to do a media plan; you have to understand how it lives and breathes. The truth is, when you look at

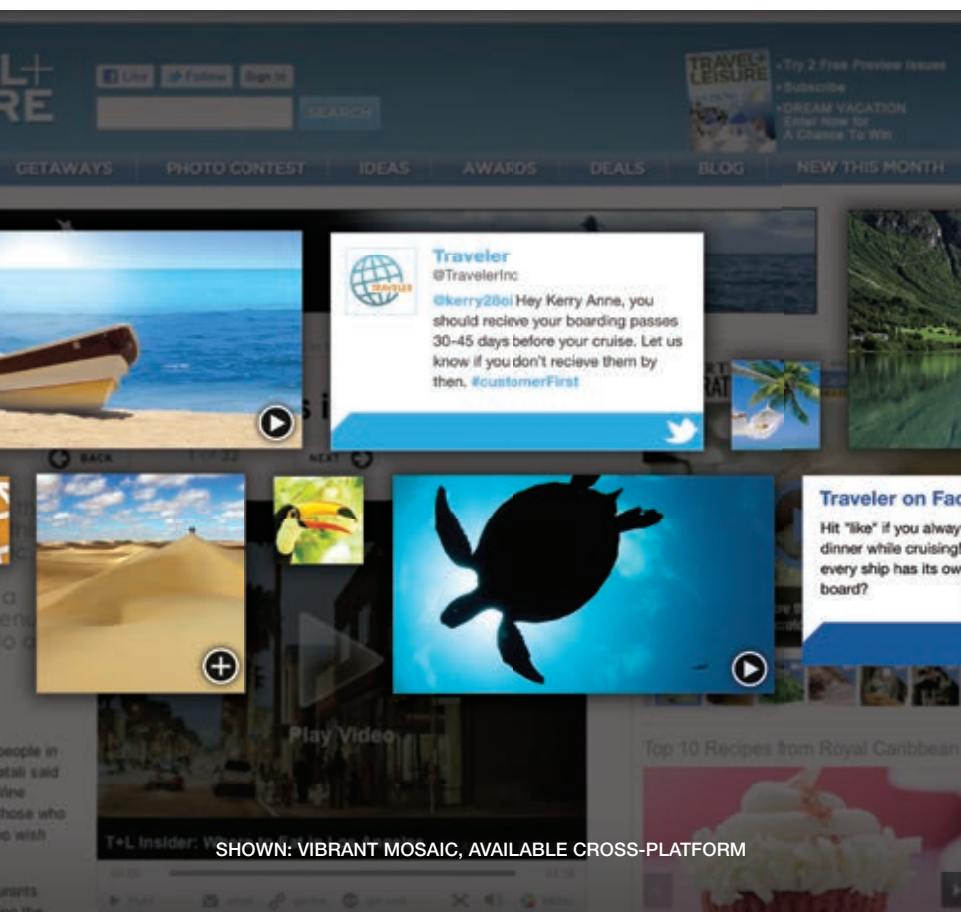
the vendors in the space, there seems to be a clearer path for the tech vendors to break through at the media agencies. Too often creatives are still living in silos and are not platform-agnostic, but platform-specific.

**Mr. Kassan:** Two of our clients speak well to this: Coca-Cola and Unilever. In both cases, technology has been a driver for their businesses because they have embraced it in a big way, supported digital literacy and gone on the digital journey with us. When we did the first digital journeys at CES, and brought client CMOs and CIOs together, these companies really talked the talk and walked the walk. To quote my grandma: "Don't read their lips, watch their feet." In the early days of online content, for instance, Unilever was producing webisodes for Dove—and then using true 360° marketing to promote the effort.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** Food companies have led the way because consumers have emotional attachments to our products because they use them every day. That is why you see a CPG company grasp this quicker than some of the other categories. It allows us to leverage the emotional attachment in the real world and to activate it in the digital world. It's a huge advantage for a CPG, and we're taking advantage of it.

**Ad Age:** As you approach this new creative-technology world, is it also the people—the kind of people, the mindset that you're developing and the skill set—that's important in harnessing all of this and making it work?

**Ms. Weinstein:** Yes. The agency business has been historically a service business, a service model, and that model lives and dies on people. Technology is taking us into a space that is a bit product- and tech-led. Service is still core, but to really differentiate, it's service wrapped



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around the right technology and building the right products to solve our client partners' challenges.

It is interesting if you think historically about the talent and skill sets in this business. I grew up in this business doing spreadsheets. Those people who grew up as I did were also the people, I would argue, closest

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*“At the end of the day ... the truth is that technology has made creativity sexy again.”*

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—Michael Kassan, MediaLink

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to the customer over time because of how close they were to the data. To me it's a really exciting time, and I'm really glad that I grew up in the media agency business doing those spreadsheets because it's opened up in the world that we live in today to a really great balance of people—those who have really excelled and succeeded—who have been able to do both right-brain and left-brain thinking.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** I'll speak to that, too. First, the client has to be willing to pay for it and invest in it—and know that this is where things are going. I think that has changed, and we are investing in the future. The second point is Starcom has a great ability to do some of these things, and they are on the forefront of what's possible. I think we've now staffed our account, and gotten the right people and really are looking at the future with a lot of excitement when we start to marry those skill

sets on the creative-agency side with the skill sets on the media-agency side, where we're investing in that on both sides.

We have great partners on the creative side that are investing in this. There are some great people, and our media agency, Starcom, has invested in some great people who are moving our business forward just as well.

**Ad Age:** How do you see all this in evidence at Cannes, the way that technology has changed creativity?

**Mr. Kassan:** Looking at Cannes, I think you see that technology both forces you to be creative and allows you to be creative.

**Ms. Weinstein:** When you think about the winners at Cannes, it's technology that really separates the winners from the other players. The winners harness—and take advantage of—the best new technology and seize the opportunity.

**Mr. Kassan:** Cannes started as a playground for creatives. The media guys started to get involved, and then the digital folks got involved. It's now the one time everyone in the marketing industry comes together from all sides of the equation. The creatives may feel like we encroached on their space, but it's worked well to bring it all together. When you think about it, the first Digital Newfront was Cannes. At the end of the day, when you consider what technology is doing now, the truth is that technology has made creativity sexy again.

**Mr. Rupczynski:** I definitely agree. Technology has enabled storytelling to evolve to the next generation of storytelling that's enabled by the technology. I absolutely think it's made it sexier. ●

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# TechTalk

## MEDIALINK HELPS BRANDS EXPLORE TECHNOLOGY

The most exciting thing in marketing today—prominently on display at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity—is “the mashup between technology, marketing and creativity,” says Michael Kassan. But for many brand marketers and agencies, figuring out how to be a part of that mashup is a daunting task.

“We built TechTalk because the intersection of technology and creativity is so critical,” says Mr. Kassan, CEO of strategic advisory firm MediaLink.

TechTalk, created last year by MediaLink in partnership with the Cannes Lions organizers, is a weeklong program designed to help brand marketers and agencies explore the cutting edge of marketing technology. It brings to the stage leaders and speakers from innovative companies, displaying and discussing the latest in forward-thinking technology.

Set in the event area of the Palais des Festivals, TechTalk is bringing about two dozen companies to Cannes to participate either as presenters and panelists or with booths and displays. From June 17 to 20, two hour-long events will be held daily at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m., with each day featuring a lead topic—content, for instance, or screens. On Friday morning, June 21, the program will review festival happenings in a wrapup session.

“Cannes is all about creativity at its soul,” says Philip Thomas, chief executive of the Cannes Lions Festival. “But the importance of technology can’t be denied. So we wanted to make sure that in the rich-content program, there is a dedicated stream just about this subject. Working with MediaLink, we put together a program that will show the way forward for many of our attendees.”

“MediaLink is invested in helping marketers understand technology’s opportunity and the application of technology to marketing challenges,” says MediaLink Senior VP Dee Salomon. “With so many technology solutions being developed and the high velocity of change, it can be challenging to cull the opportunities that are worthy of investment and then partner with and implement them to best effect and competitive advantage. This is just as true when it comes to advertising creative and storytelling as it has been in the media and marketing services areas.”

Ms. Salomon says the creative work on display at Cannes last year inspired the program for TechTalk. “After seeing the campaigns that won last year, it was apparent that there was relevancy for TechTalk at the festival. Almost every one of them had a technology component that made it stand out. In this environment, clever use of technology can be as important as the creative idea. We are in a world where art and science increasingly are aligned.”

*“In this environment, clever use of technology can be as important as the creative idea. We are in a world where art and science increasingly are aligned.”*

*—Dee Salomon, senior VP, MediaLink*

Mr. Thomas agrees. “In the last few years, the impact of technology has become a critical component in nearly all the big winners at Cannes. In the modern marketing mix, understanding technology and having the capability to use technology to unleash creativity has become vital.”

TechTalk participants include a variety of technology companies—digital giants such as Salesforce.com; content creators such as Paramount and Maker; and content-tech companies with both creative and distribution platforms, including Shazam and Outbrain. The June 20 highlight is a version of a tech “speed date,” where Condé Nast brings seven creative-relevant emerging companies to the TechTalk stage. The media company has been investing in emerging technology companies for more than 10 years and has a portfolio that includes the social site Reddit.

“A large part of my motivation for creating TechTalk,” Mr. Kassan says, was that “emerging media companies needed a place and an opportunity to tell their story where they are not drowned out by the big guys. TechTalk is a great platform for these emerging media companies.”

Allen DeBevoise, CEO of Machinima, the No. 1 entertainment channel on YouTube targeted largely at young men, will speak about how the changing use-patterns of consumers demand a new type of advertiser interaction. “We are seeing in crazy numbers that people are moving along with the technology and, as the paradigm changes, the entire programming and publishing model changes with it,” he says.

Says Mr. Kassan, “It’s one thing to cite the statistics or state the buzzwords, ‘There’s disruption in the ecosystem.’ TechTalk is about the interdependent and productive relationship of creativity, media, marketing and technology—featuring the folks who are making it happen.” ●

### 2013 MEDIALINK TECHTALK AGENDA

At this year’s Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, MediaLink is working with a slate of technology and media companies to explore the intersection of technology and creativity for marketers. Here’s what’s on the week’s agenda, with the full schedule at [medialink.com/cannes](http://medialink.com/cannes):

#### June 17: Focus on Content-Tech

- Brands as Newsrooms
- Utility, Agility, Equity
- Native Creative

#### June 18: Focus on Content

- From Screen to Screen
- Maker’s Next Generation  
Media Company
- The Machinima Preview
- Content, Creativity, Conversation

#### June 19: Focus on Screens

- Creative Is the New Currency
- “Clickable” TV Ads
- Please Do Touch
- Intent to Thrill

#### June 20: Focus on Privacy and the Next Big Things

- Privacy and Data
- The First Global Technology Match-up

# Digital Solution

## ADOBE LOOKS TO DATA TO BUILD TRUST IN MARKETING

An episode of AMC's "Mad Men"—and its cast of con men and manipulators—reminds even longtime advertising executives why consumers don't trust marketers.

But the good news, Ann Lewnes says, is that digital marketing provides a multipronged opportunity to change that perception.

Ms. Lewnes, chief marketing officer of Adobe, will lead a panel titled "You Can't Trust Marketers" at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity. Joining her will be Steven Althaus, director-brand management for BMW and marketing services, BMW Group; Tina Brown, editor-in-chief of Newsweek and The Daily Beast; and Lisa Donohue, CEO of Starcom USA.

Ms. Lewnes will discuss Adobe research on consumer impressions of marketers, including their trust level, with one finding showing 53% of consumers say they feel that "most marketing is a bunch of b.s." "Our research unfortunately validated my longstanding belief: There is that feeling that marketers don't have a lot of credibility among consumers, that

they feel we don't add real value," she says.

Although the research showed negative attitudes toward both traditional and online advertising, Ms. Lewnes believes the answer to consumer distrust ultimately lies in the personalization, intimacy and two-way messaging of digital marketing. "It's not just the fact that we get more data digitally, but that the data tells us what customers want to hear about," she says.

"When you are getting valuable information from a company, you are more apt to be positively inclined to that information."

For marketers, she says, "Data is your friend. The insights that you can glean from customers should inform how you market to them—not only in a broad way, but granular as well. We have technology now that allows you to precisely send experiences to people based on what people have told you about themselves and what they want to hear. In order to respect them and make them more loyal to you, you need to leverage the information you have.


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