

Healthcare Marketer's

Exchange

"Where Healthcare Marketers Connect"

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Everything Digital 2.0



"Do We Work From Home or Live at Work?"

Dora P. Shankman
DPS Strategic Media Enterprises, LLC

Should Medical Marketers Worry About the End of the Third-Party Cookie?

Zach Gursky, Healio Strategic Solutions

In Pursuit of a Personal Connection

Steve Tulk, closerlook

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¹ The Essential Journal Study for Primary Care, The Matalia Group, 2019

² KANTAR, December 2019 Medical/Surgical Readership Study, Primary Care (Office Based)

³ KANTAR, December 2019 Website Usage and Qualitative Evaluations, Primary Care

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Dear Healthcare Marketer,

Wow! Let's give a round of applause to our industry stepping it up with three vaccines thus far, more on the way, and the collaboration of competitors to make vaccine production faster!

Getting the vaccine appointment is like getting concert tickets for BRUCE. You need to be on that computer and phone simultaneously or get on that line early. And the criteria to be eligible for the vaccine seems to be different everywhere.

I am lucky to live in Essex County, New Jersey. Well...lucky for the vaccine distribution, which I can't praise enough. Not lucky when it comes to death rates for COVID, however, because we are one of the leading counties in the nation. It's been quite scary. At this point, I would say pretty much everyone in our area knows someone who has died from COVID. Hopefully, that's over. Our job now is to get the anti-vaxxers to believe in it. It's a lifesaver. I got the Moderna vaccine and I feel a tremendous sense of relief! I had a half a day of chills and aches, but I'll take it. I am here, protected from death or hospitalization – YIPPEE!!

We all need a boost after a year of craziness. I watched **Jamie Kern Lima's** *Becoming Unstoppable* Free Live Virtual Event the other day. Did any of you tune in? It was attended by over 215,000 people around the world. I have to say I got a lot out of it. Jamie is the founder of IT Cosmetics, which she sold for over a billion dollars and became the first female C.E.O. of a brand in L'Oréal's more than 100-year history. She just wrote a book called *Believe It – How To Go from Underestimated to Unstoppable*, which I bought. At the virtual event, which lasted nine-plus hours – yes that's *nine hours* – she had many speakers including motivational coaches and famous personalities. They spoke about success, how to cope with anxiety, rebuilding confidence, how to become the person you were born to be, and tips for getting out of the rut of the past year. It was inspiring!

Some of the speakers included **Robin Roberts** from ABC's *Good Morning America*, **Tony Robbins**, **Jay Shetty**, **Mel Robbins**, **Ed Mylett**, **Glennon Doyle**, **Chrissy Metz** (*This Is Us*), and **Sara Blakely** (Spanx founder). One tip I got from **Mel Robbins** was "Give yourself a high-five every morning in the mirror and be kind to yourself." More powerfully, to remind myself that I am alive and worthy to live the life of my dreams. And to affirm – I am okay, I am safe, I am loved – before I get out of bed. Other tips – the five-second rule of counting backwards and letting go of worries. Stop being afraid of what could go wrong and start being positive about what could go right. I joined the Facebook page which is inspiring in itself. Life will never be the same but it can be better! We need to overcome the things that set us back. Hope you check it out. I am UNSTOPPABLE...well I am working on it.

Jamie's virtual event was made possible because of the digital age we're living in. And, clearly, there is a lot more to come. Our Everything Digital theme continues this month with more reviews on favorite apps and series from **Alya Sherman**, **Charles Hyde**, **John Palshaw**, **Michael Minakowski**, **Stef Stendardo**, **Kara Baekey**, **Kate McBreen**, **Desiree Ng**, and **Brandon Buttrely**. Plus, **Dora P. Shankman** shares how to navigate working from home well. **Zach Gursky** helps us understand the impact of the elimination of third-party cookies. And **Steve Tulk** gives us insights on how to pursue the personal connection with patients in this virtual age.

The digital world has brought many changes on both a professional and personal level. I am encouraged to see so much happening that's impacting lives for good!

P.S. Congratulations to **Kate McBreen** – The winner of the \$100 Amazon Gift Card!

Here's to being Unstoppable,

Nancy



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONWARD & UPWARD

promotions • additions

AbbVie has announced the appointment of **Adam Remiszewski** to Associate Director, Customer Experience. He can be reached at adam.remiszewski@abbvie.com.

BD has announced the appointment of **Bridget Bagnato** to Vice President/General Manager, Infection Prevention and V Mueller, Surgery. She can be reached at bridget_bagnato@bd.com.

closerlook, Inc., has announced the appointment of **Gregg Geider** to Managing Director. He can be reached at gvg33g@gmail.com.

Fingerpaint has announced the appointment of **Beth Beck** to Office Lead of the Saratoga Springs, NY, office. She can be reached at bbeck@fingerpaint.com. **Laura Yoars** has been appointed Lead Account Service in the Cedar Knolls, NJ, office. She can be reached at lyoars@fingerpaint.com.

Fishawack Health has announced the appointment of **Justin Perry** to Account Director. He can be reached at Justin.Perry@fishawack.com.

H4B Chelsea has announced the appointment of **Daniel Plansky**, **Rick Peets**, **Becky Phillips**, and **Haley Fulop** to Senior Vice President, Creative Director.

Havas Health Plus has announced the appointment of **Jennifer Korngut** to Vice President, Account Group Supervisor. She can be reached at Jennifer.korngut@havas.com.

HealthSTAR Strategic Engagements has announced the appointment of Thomas "TC" Sweeney to Chief of Staff. He can be reached at tcsweeney@healthstar.com.

Henry Schein One has announced the appointment of **Mike Baird** to Chief Executive Officer.

Inova has announced the appointment of **Claude Basset** to Chief Product Officer.

J. Knipper & Company, Inc., has announced the appointment of **Eric Johnson** to Chief Commercial Growth Officer. He can be reached at eric.johnson@knipper.com.

Klick Health has announced the promotion of **Ari Schaefer** and **Greg Rice** to Co-Presidents. Also joining the company are **Keri Hettel** as Senior Vice President, **Meredydd Hardie** as Vice President, Intelligence, **Tim Mitchell, Ph.D.**, as Senior Vice President, Scientific Innovation, **Brandi Hight Bank** as Vice President, Policy and Public Health, **Randi Goeckeler** as Vice

President, Stakeholder Coalitions, **January Coyle** as Senior Vice President, Strategy, **Jonathan Arsenault** as Vice President, Technology, **David Albini** as Vice President, Marketing Analytics and Integration, **Brandon Grant** and **Peter Kulupka** as Vice President, Technology, and **Lenni Kwan** as Vice President, Technology/CRM.

McCann Health New Jersey has announced the appointment of **Jennifer Dee** as Senior Vice President Director, Creative Services. She can be reached at Jennifer.dee@mccann.com.

McCann Worldgroup has announced the promotion of **Jeremy Miller** to Executive Vice President, Global Chief Marketing and Communications Officer.

Mediabrands has announced the promotion of **Kaitlyn Holden** to Media Director. She can be reached at Kaitlyn.holden@healixglobal.com.

MediaRadar, Inc., has announced the appointment of **Jaci Hoffmann** to Vice President, Marketing and Public Relations. She can be reached at jaci@mediaradar.com.

Ogilvy Health has announced the appointment of **Abigail Fredenburg** to Vice President, Client Services, and **Reilly Dugery** as Account Executive.

Publicis Groupe has announced the appointment of **Helen Lin** to Chief Digital Officer.

Syneos Health has announced the appointment of **Rob Roth** to Senior Vice President, Account Director. He can be reached at broth518@gmail.com.

TBW\WorldHealth has announced the appointment of **Holly Moscatiello** as Associate Managing Partner. She can be reached at holly.moscatiello@tbworldhealth.com.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

awards • mergers • approvals

HMP Global, a healthcare event and education company, has announced its VRTX (vertex) virtual event platform, developed and used to produce more than 250 events online in 2020, is now commercially available for third-party use. For more information, visit www.hmpglobal.com.

SLACK Incorporated has published a special issue of its *Athletic Training & Sports Healthcare* journal exploring injury rehabilitation. The issue is free to readers for the next several months and establishes practical techniques specialists can utilize that will minimize the risk of re-injury for their patients. For more information, visit healio.com/atshc.

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“Do We Work From Home or Live at Work?”

BY DORA P. SHANKMAN

The New Normal,” is published everywhere. What does this mean to us though in Healthcare Marketing, Advertising, and Media? There is no normal any longer. It is what works for each one of us. Each business has set up its own procedure and we all need to adapt so we can be as effective as we were before. Self-motivation and discipline are key.

SO MANY CHANGES

2020 is a year many of us want to put behind us, with challenges and COVID lockdowns we could not even imagine. This year changed us in many ways – how we work, how we socialize, how we survive. Survival is not optional. I always say it is mandatory. In order to survive, we have to be flexible. Our 2020 plans were completely modified, both personally and professionally.

Although the pandemic has taken the focus away from many news items and health issues, wearing a mask to prevent the spread of a highly contagious disease became controversial. In order for business to survive, we had to embrace the new way of communication. Instead of live meetings, we are now on various applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, FaceTime, etc. If we go out, we must protect ourselves and others, and nobody knows how long that will last.

VIRTUAL MEETING REALITIES

Do you remember when in the past if you were on a conference call, and a dog barked or baby cried, you would be apologizing? Now it is normal to have our children, significant others, canine colleagues, or pet of your choice walk right by the virtual screen. Oh, and multitasking? That does not exist, since you are on video and need to be attentive. If you are on audio only, you will be challenged as to why you are not showing your camera. Clients and colleagues want to see us all. Bedhead is no longer an excuse.

We socialize with virtual coffee klatches and happy hours. We can pick the app of our choice. I have seen it all, from the first few weeks of corporate suits in Zoom meet-

ings, to sweatshirts, leggings, and jeans. Holiday happy hours became the norm. If we can keep this momentum going, we have found the balance of work and home. The big question we are now asked is whether we work from home or live at work? That saying has been around a long time. I did not make it up. But the meaning is truer than ever and has become a reality.

COMMUTING AND TRAVELING

Now, in the colder months on the East Coast, virtual remote working has taken away snow days. No more delayed subways, or traffic. No excuse for being late. Advantages are we are more productive and probably work longer hours and harder than ever before. Our downtime though, our commuter drives that could refresh our minds, are a thing of the past. Even if we do get to go back to the office or travel to our client across coasts, this will become the exception not the norm.

Remote work is a major shift from business as usual. Many companies have announced that employees can permanently work from home. The flexibility has been adapted in the mainstream. More options now exist for employers and employees with multiple choices on both sides. In our industry, we are used to having web meetings, since many of us work on different coasts, but we are still dominated with in-office meetings, sales calls, and client presentations.

DRAWING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LINES

Remember when nobody believed how hard we worked from home? Now it's a common experience. Isn't it true that you start earlier, you end later, and many times you have to remember to take a break? I am sure you can all relate to this. One email turns into 100, then the calls, then the deadlines, and before you know it, it is 3 p.m. and you are thinking, should I get dressed for the day? That mostly may be an exaggeration, but it's a reality at times as well. So, we really do have to be strict with our schedules and respect the boundaries between professional and personal life since this impacts our families and friends.



Dora at work in home office: Compartmentalize your work space both physically and psychologically if you can.

(Continued on page 9)

SHOULD MEDICAL MARKETERS WORRY ABOUT THE END OF THE THIRD-PARTY COOKIE?

BY ZACH GURSKY

The digital advertising industry is about to be upended by elimination of the third-party cookies that are the targeting identifiers that programmatic technology depends on. In January 2020, Google announced its Chrome browser would be phasing out support of third-party cookies by the end of 2021. Google is following the other large browsers (Microsoft/Edge, Apple/Safari, and Mozilla/Firefox) who have already started to eliminate third-party cookies. The deprecation of third-party cookies, and upcoming changes to Apple's iOS that will eliminate mobile IDs that facilitate the targeting of ads in mobile apps, has advertisers, agencies, AdTech vendors, and publishers scrambling to figure out how digital advertising will work in the future.

PHARMA'S AT LESS RISK

Pharmaceutical marketing's slower adoption of programmatic technology leaves it less exposed to the dislocation risk that has general market advertisers and publishers in a panic. According to eMarketer, 85% of digital advertisements are bought and sold programmatically, but the Programmatic Healthcare Council estimates that programmatic market penetration in healthcare is about half of that in the general market. A conservative approach to managing reputational and regulatory risk delayed pharma's adoption of programmatic advertising.

Pharmaceutical marketers are careful about when and how they use AdTech to target ads to consumers who might have sensitive medical conditions. Some publishers do not want to pass through the substantial fees that programmatic marketplaces charge for facilitating transactions, and they do not think programmatic lends itself to the custom programs that are becoming an increasingly large part of nonpersonal promotion. Pharmaceutical marketers and publishers have existing partnerships that are not dependent on programmatic marketplaces to execute campaigns. Similarly, pharma marketers are well positioned to absorb the end of cookie with relatively little disruption and adopt the advertising technologies that emerge over the next couple of years.

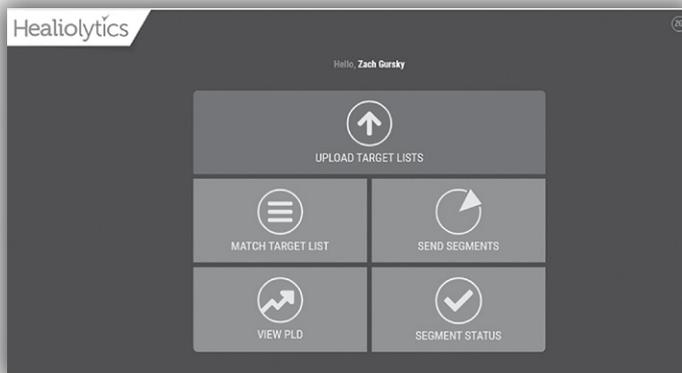
Many of the programmatic tactics and technologies pharmaceutical marketers are already using to buy ads will be insulated from the effects of cookie deprecation. Because of privacy concerns, a lot of direct-to-consumer pharma

campaigns use contextual targeting strategies or inferred proxies for behaviors that do not rely on cookies. In HCP channels, some AdTech vendors have created purpose-built platforms that use their own proprietary identifiers to target physicians when they are on medical websites.

GENERAL INTEREST IMPACT

The most impacted programmatic tactics used by pharma will be campaigns that are targeting specific HCPs or behavioral segments of consumers when they are viewing general interest websites. This tactic has become popular because banner ads delivered to a doctor when she is viewing a website like *The New York Times*, are an order of magnitude less expensive than ads reaching the same provider

on a medical website. In the nonmedical market, AdTech platforms are planning to replace cookies with targeting IDs based on hashed email addresses passed from websites. The amount of targeted ad inventory available will be reduced because mass-market publishers will not have registrations for a large portion of their users, and smaller tech platforms will not have data integrations with enough publishers.



Healiolytics is a programmatic advertising tool built for healthcare marketers that offers targeting and reporting.

CONTINUING TO REACH ACROSS THE WEB

At Healo, we are approaching the coming changes with humility, believing nobody knows precisely what the post-cookie AdTech ecosystem will look like. However, we are confident our direct relationship with physicians, and our Healiolytics technology that connects our data with the largest programmatic platforms, will allow us to reach physicians efficiently across the web. Healiolytics also connects our targeting data to digital channels like Facebook and Connected TV that have never depended on cookies for identity resolution and targeting.

Direct media buys independent of mediation by programmatic marketplaces will continue to be the tentpole of medical advertising in 2021 and 2022. However, agile programmatic vendors will offer pharma advertisers efficient reach to supplement their traditional channels.



Zach Gursky is Senior Vice President, Digital and Innovation, Healo Strategic Solutions. He can be reached at zgursky@healo.com and 415-290-8581.

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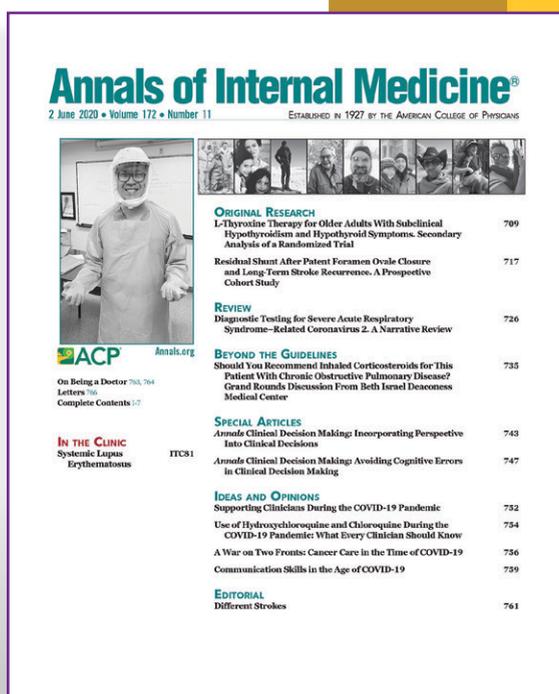
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Kevin A. Bolum, Director, Advertising Sales, at 215-351-2440 or kbolum@acponline.org

*Source: Kantar, Medical/Surgical Media Measurement, Fall 2020.



IN PURSUIT OF A PERSONAL CONNECTION

BY STEVE TULK

This past year has been tough. The COVID-19 surge has left patients and healthcare professionals exhausted, defeated, and stressed. In the absence of physical and face-to-face interactions, people are seeking new ways to connect with each other.

CHANGE IN DIGITAL TRENDS

closerlook, which has been tracking digital trends occurring in the pharmaceutical space, is noticing a change in the type of engagement and content people are seeking. Patients, it appears, want brands to respond with empathy. Healthcare professionals (HCPs) are more cautious about content they receive and may not engage as quickly or as easily.

EMERGING EMPATHY

These changes in online behavior are unlikely to change after COVID-19 is finally defeated. Biopharma is, dare we say it, at the cutting edge of a new digital frontier – with the utilization of advanced analytics including personality detection to produce more personal and empathetic content. What once took years for healthcare marketers to adopt, suddenly is now being integrated as quickly as possible.

Most of us understand the importance of empathy. When we acknowledge how patients feel about their health conditions, they're more likely to:

- Trust their providers
- Adhere to their treatment plans
- Improve their health outcomes
- Develop loyalty to specific brands.

RARE DISEASE AND EMPATHY

The need to express empathy is more acute in the rare disease space. Patients with rare diseases often feel alone and misunderstood. They will seek out others like themselves, often finding these individuals in online communities. In these social platforms, they are responding to each other with concern and care. Their condition may have

brought them together, but their desire for empathy is what's keeping them united.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE FOREFRONT

Biopharma companies are now paying attention, creating content uniquely designed to respond with compassion and understanding. It wasn't so long ago that pharma CEOs admitted to not understanding the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in healthcare marketing. Today, many are pushing their brand marketers to explore the analytics behind behavior. A lot has definitely changed.

Brand marketers are asking more from their digital agencies, seeking new ways to connect and engage with patients. One way is to embed empathy into patient-focused sites, supporting them with additional content designed to demonstrate their commitment to patients. In the area of rare disease, an online resource platform can include not just

information, but also videos, documentary films, chats, and events in real time.

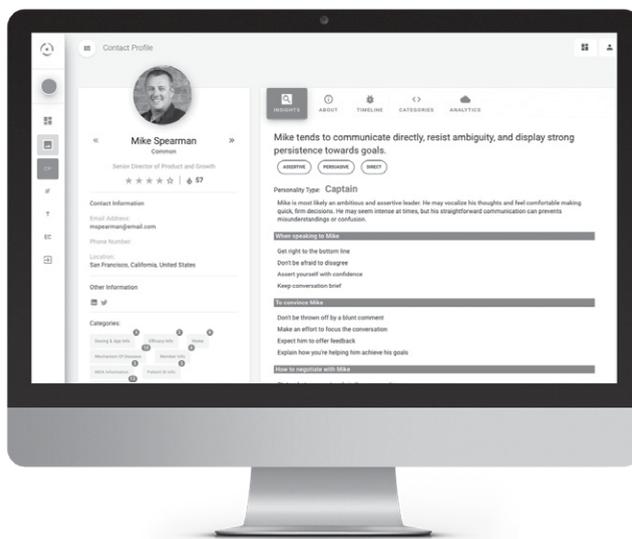
THE SUPERPOWERS OF AI AND EMPATHY

Machine-learning systems recognize these activities as data patterns that are associated with empathy. An AI with the capacity for empathy not only delivers opportunities for natural interactions, but also helps patients feel supported, cared for, and loved. In pharma, empathy powered by artificial intelligence is like giving brands superpowers.

One of the reasons why empathy is so difficult to duplicate is because everyone experiences it differently based on one's personality. For example, people who tend to be agreeable are more likely to be highly empathetic, whereas someone who has a sense of self-importance is less likely to be concerned for others.

DETECTING PERSONALITY CHANGES THINGS

With personality detection, we can uncover which types of traits will most attract certain customers. The implica-



Advances in machine learning enabled closerlook to develop a personality detection software that can predict how HCPs will respond to messages that are personalized just for them, enabling the agency to deliver the right message in the right channel at the right time. The first time.

Personal Connection *(Continued from page 8)*

tions are powerful. By understanding HCPs through this persona, marketers are able to deliver content to HCPs that is personalized just for them.

The concept underpinning personality detection is based on the idea that every individual has unique characteristics that shape his or her behavior and decision-making process. Advances in machine learning enabled closerlook to develop a software that can distinguish the receiver's preferred way to be communicated to by identifying their personality type.

This unique personality detection software can predict which HCPs are more likely to:

- Respond to certain subject lines
- Prefer to view details and references before making a prescribing decision
- Scan messages presented in bullet points
- React to conversational tone positively.

Ultimately, personality detection can deliver the right message, in the right channel, at the right time. The first time.

Work From Home *(Continued from page 5)*

TELEHEALTH PRACTICES

Before 2020, telehealth was not standard and, now, we have that option of seeing our doctor on our laptops or devices. The HCPs prefer this, since they can spend more time with a patient and still collect their payment. However, chronic conditions still require in-person visits, but virtualization is growing and growing. It is not going away. Telemedicine, another media tactic, is now born and we can advertise to the HCPs and patients through our consultation. This is being perfected, as we identify the Physician Level reporting data and doctor offices for list matches our clients want and require for reach.

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR IN PERSON

Regardless of what our future holds, there is value in having contact in person. That communication cannot be replaced by a virtual screen. I do hope we can find another "New Normal" of meeting in person again after COVID. Virtual hugs are just not enough for me.

Despite a tough year, digital media increased significantly in 2020, and is continuing to grow rapidly. Virtual meetings, Telemedicine, and working remotely are here to stay. It

TAKING MESSAGING PERSONALLY

Understanding how HCPs consume clinical content to make treatment choices and deciding which channels they favor could be seen as the holy grail in pharmaceutical marketing. Personalized messaging that evokes empathy may be the next best thing – certainly during the pandemic era – to face-to-face relationship building.

Once society begins to reopen and medical offices allow pharma sales visits again, digital agencies can play a role in helping sales reps reconnect with their HCPs by utilizing platforms that integrate empathy, journey, and personality detection to recommend the best and most relevant way to engage. If this pandemic has taught us anything it is the idea that people still believe in the importance of personal connections. Thankfully, pharma is finally ready to serve.



Steve Tulk is Chief Technology Officer, closerlook, 212 West Superior Street, #300, Chicago, IL 60654. He can be reached at 312-640-3700 or STulk@closerlook.com.

will be up to us to find the right balance within our lifestyle. Digital Video and Connected TV is going to continue to drive ad spend growth as well.



Dora and Heather Shankman share a Virtual Happy Hour with colleagues in Media and Sales.

My recommendation is work from home, don't live at work. Find a place in your home, whether it is a corner of a bedroom or kitchen, and make that your work space. If you cannot physically compartmentalize this space, so when you are done for the day or evening, you are done, then psychologically compartmentalize the space. This is how I have to separate my work and home life. Otherwise, I will be living at work 24/7. It can work, but takes mind conditioning.

Those who know me, know I have worked on that balance and it can be done. We must find our own happiness and balance.

Wishing you all a safe, happy, and healthy 2021.



Dora P. Shankman has rebranded herself and company. She is President and CEO of DPS Strategic Media Enterprises, LLC, Long Valley, NJ. She can be reached at doras@dpssme.com, 908-470-0413 (o), and 908-296-0556 (c).

The Q Binge-Watching

BY ALYA SHERMAN

The word “binge” first appeared in English in the mid-1800s meaning “to soak.” Around the time of WWI, the term “binge” was used to refer to eating or drinking in excess. The term binge-watching didn’t come into common usage until around 2012.

It didn’t become part of my vocab until what I will refer to as **The Q**, a.k.a., Quarantine. Yes, I binged shows like *Sex and the City*, *Seinfeld*, and *Friends* and still do mostly to rock myself to sleep. But, **The Q** took my binging to a whole new level.

It feels like it took me longer to compile the list of shows and movies I watched during **The Q** than it did to get through them all, but here it is. My top 5 are organized by pre-pandemic, during, and in the process of watching. For the full list, please check out my blog, AlyaBuzz. Let me know if I’ve missed any worth binge-watching.

TOP 5 DURING THE Q

- The Crown*
- The Great*
- Mad Men*
- The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*
- The Undoing*
- Honorable mention: *Bridgerton*



TOP 5 PRE- THE Q

- Dexter*
- Homeland*
- Jojo Rabbit*
- Once Upon a Time...in Hollywood*
- Sherlock*



TOP 5 THAT REMAIN TO BE WATCHED/FINISHED

- Billions*
- Killing Eve*
- Riviera*
- Sex Education*
- Your Honor*



Alya Sherman is Group Vice President, Media and Investments, Publicis Health Media, 100 Penn Square East, 11th Floor, North Philadelphia, PA 19107. She can be reached at alya.sherman@publicishealthmedia.com, 856-237-4465 (c), or 215-399-3444 (o). Check out her lifestyle blog at www.AlyaBuzz.com.

Favorite App and Series

FAVORITE APP

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Charles Hyde is Director Strategic Accounts, Lexicon Pharmaceuticals. He can be reached at Chyde@Lexpharma.com or 616-638-6038.

FAVORITE SERIES

SILENT WITNESS: LASTING CRIME DRAMA



Over the course of this pandemic, I’ve found wonderful distraction in the British TV series, *Silent Witness*, about a team of forensic pathologists who tend to outperform the cops in solving crimes. The first nine seasons starred a terrific actress, Amanda Burton, but I’m now watching season 13, which doesn’t include her, and it’s still very good. I believe that at least 23 seasons are now available on Amazon.



Also recommended for viewing are the Australian series, *Doctor Blake Mysteries*, and the very well done British series prequel to *Inspector Morse* called *Endeavour*. Both are available on Amazon Prime.

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Favorite App and Series

FAVORITE APP

FACEBOOK



While I had been an active user of Facebook before COVID-19 hit last March, my usage of it since then has become much more far-reaching, literally.

VIEW FROM MY WINDOW

In the beginning of the pandemic, I became aware of a group on Facebook called View From My Window. The group is dedicated to photos posted by people from all over the world, specifically views from their windows from wherever they are quarantining. Every day, there are posts from people ALL over the world: Florence, Italy; Tasmania, Australia; Cairo, Egypt; Helsinki, Finland; Whitefish, Montana. Images include impressive high-rise angles, backyard snaps, and local street views. The posts are meant to be simple examples of fellow world citizens doing their part to help stem the scourge of COVID-19 by staying home. Not only are there hundreds of new beautiful images posted on a daily basis, but it serves as a reminder that we truly are all in this together – at least all 2.2 million of the View From My Window group's members, at a minimum!



GARDENING

A couple of months after we started the lockdown in March, as the weather in New England warmed and the soil began to loosen, I stumbled upon a local gardening community Facebook group. While I'd always done my annual flower bed clean-ups and flowerpot plantings, I'd never really considered myself a gardener. The CT Gardeners group allowed for me to ask questions of other more experienced gardeners, get ideas for my garden, and make local connections. I was inspired by the group, and my garden never looked better than it did in 2020!

In addition to the two new groups that I joined on Facebook, I continue to use Facebook as a platform to stay connected to friends and family, near and far. It's allowed for these last several months of semi-quarantine to not feel so isolating. I'll take that as a #CovidWin!

Kara Baekey is Account Director, SFC Group. She can be reached at kara@sfcgroup1.com.

FAVORITE SERIES

FAVORITE SERIES AND LIFE WITH KIDS DURING COVID



Quarantined with three daughters and a husband, I recently realized I had become Julie from *The Love Boat*. For those of you who don't know what the Love Boat is, first, "WHAT?" Second, watch it. You won't regret it. As the COVID Cruise Director for my household, Netflix has been an integral part of my arsenal. From guilty pleasures like *Tiger King* and *Virgin River* to Brit-based series like *The Crown* and *Call the Midwife*, we've discovered the joy of binge-watching. But even that got old, so crafting, baking, and puzzling joined our repertoire. Round and round we went until we realized we're stuck like Bill Murray in *Groundhog Day*. Then my 10-year-old daughter struck on an idea that gives us all a weekly dose of happiness.



She asked for a load of poster board. I gladly purchased a jumbo pack from Amazon. Anxiously awaiting this new project that would keep my daughters from bombing my Zoom calls, I prayed this might entertain them FOR A WHILE. Turns out, it also keeps the neighborhood entertained. We live on a road that is a popular path for those whose pandemic pursuit has become walking. So, my brilliant offspring decided to post messages from a second-story bedroom. From the profound to the inane to anything to do with puppies or sloths, my daughters create these weekly missives as a creative outlet for their boredom. I'm happy. They're happy. And it makes my neighbors smile. So, thank you makers of poster board and markers!

With all the sitting and baking, the one online group I joined was Weight Watchers. Not that extra pandemic pounds are a big deal, but I was desperate for meal options that weren't based on bacon and tater tots. I really did try, but adding points for my nightly glass(es) of wine depressed me, so I became a Weight Watchers dropout. It wasn't a total loss. Along with a solid future as a COVID Cruise Director, I think I'm becoming a fairly accomplished quarantine cook.

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Favorite App and Series

FAVORITE SERIES

WHY I LOVE THE MANDALORIAN



This live-action show has an enormous fan base. I am a sucker for good storytelling and, like many, a *Star Wars* fan. In nearly every episode, I've been intrigued with Jon Favreau and

Dave Filoni's combined vision and loving devotion to the *Star Wars* canon. Favreau has experienced success with *Iron Man* and Marvel movies. Filoni continues drawing on his experience from the *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* animated series and continues his story, transitioning to live action. Both of them collaborate with guest directors for designated episodes to keep things fresh and draw on their filmmaking strengths.

This is a story of a space bounty hunter, Din Djarin, who is the Mandalorian, with a rigid code, who transitions to a father figure to a child. The bounty hunter eventually finds his purpose is to get this child where he belongs. In the meantime, they go through many adventures, encountering different creatures and characters and evading the main villain, who wants to get hold of the child's blood for experimentation.



Throughout the two seasons so far, there are episodes where the Mandalorian performs a service in exchange for information, so he can continue his mission. During these times, we come to see him build allies and friendships and we are introduced to new characters, some of whom we are familiar with from movies, animated TV series, comic books, and video games related to *Star Wars*.

Lastly, the Mandalorian's costar is "the child" (a puppet), whose real name, Grogu, we finally learn during the second season and who is just so darn cute! He is a toddler (50 years



old for his species, same as Yoda) who is very observant and we learn early on has special powers. In almost all episodes, we get little glimpses of him and his antics. We watch him learn and interact with his temporary foster father as their bond grows stronger - it's very emotional in the Season Two

finale. So, week after week, there is a legion of fans waiting to see what happens in Season Three.

The reason I selected this show is that it kept my spirits up when going through very long and stressful days preparing for our first virtual SCCM Congress.

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FAVORITE SERIES

THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT



I have been watching *The Queen's Gambit*...such a fun show! It takes me back in time and allows me to learn about chess, a game I didn't know much about. The characters are engaging and the story is very well written. I've been using Netflix to watch. It's been great for me and my wife to watch together.



FAVORITE APP

ZOOM

I've really enjoyed utilizing Zoom as it's made my job much easier.

I am able to communicate with my team, my clients, and even begin doing prospect calls through Zoom. I am loving this new-to-me app...something I didn't use prior to COVID.

Brandon Buttrey is Director of New Business, Underscore Marketing. He can be reached at Brandon.buttrey@underscoremarketing.com.



Favorite App and Series

FAVORITE SERIES

DEXTER



Dexter was a Showtime series that ran for eight seasons ending in 2013. Dexter Morgan (Michael C. Hall) is a forensic technician who analyzes crime scenes in order to catch perpetrators, but Dexter has a darker, more insidious side. He is a vigilante serial killer who tracks down violent criminals who have evaded traditional law enforcement. Dexter tortures his victims after recounting their horrible crimes. Then, after ending their lives, he neatly disposes of all of the evidence and the bodies.

A friend recommended *Dexter*, so my wife and I gave it a try. While we had no intention of binge-watching it (in fact, we weren't sure if we'd get past the first episode), we couldn't turn it off. Dexter's sister Debra (Jennifer Carpenter), Angel Batista (David Zayas), and Maria LaGuerta (Lauren Vélez) are all officers in the homicide division of the Miami PD. They are masterful in their acting and development of their roles. As we later found out, they brought real-life experience to them. Zayas was an NYPD officer for 15 years, Velez's father was a NYPD officer, and Hall and Carpenter were married for several years during the series.



The magic of the show lies in the general premise. We found ourselves rooting for a serial killer because he was bringing bad people to justice. At every step, we were on the edge of our seats, hoping he wouldn't be caught. We had this perverse, good feeling that he was righting wrongs. In the end, it made us think about our own morality.

As with any series, some episodes and years were better than others, but it was consistently solid over the eight seasons. Apparently, others agreed with our assessment. The final episode aired on September 22, 2013, and drew Showtime's largest overall audience. And, premiering in late 2021, *Dexter* is returning with an all-new season.

FAVORITE APP

WAZE AND OTHER GPS APPS

GPS apps changed the world of the traveling salesperson. Printed maps and MapQuest became a thing of the past. The efficiencies created can't be underestimated – from the time spent purchasing a book of maps or a single map to printing out MapQuest directions to running into an unexpected traffic accident/jam. No longer is any of this necessary. Most sales representatives did all of these things on their own. Time spent in these areas meant less time selling. And, reading a map or MapQuest directions while driving (alone as is the case with most sales personnel) was maddening and dangerous.



Waze is my favorite (although not prohibitively so) among the GPS apps. The two features that put Waze slightly ahead of other navigating systems is the ability to report and receive information about road hazards, traffic, police, and more. The idea that other drivers are communicating to help one another is a positive, too.

Michael Minakowski was most recently Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Medical Indicators, Inc. He can be reached at minakowskimichael@gmail.com.

FAVORITE SERIES

THE WEST WING: THE BEST



The West Wing was my favorite TV show in its original run, and nothing has surpassed it! Although it was always a fantasy, it was also a reminder of what might (could?) be – a government staffed with intelligent, articulate people whose "boss" was fair and compassionate and admitted his own humanity. Watching it in the past four years has been bittersweet: The fantasy has seemed further from reality than ever, but the escape to another world, usually reserved for sci-fi shows, was most welcome. I think that after Aaron Sorkin left, the quality wasn't quite the same, but it's still great to hear adults speaking like adults and issues and psyches being explored.



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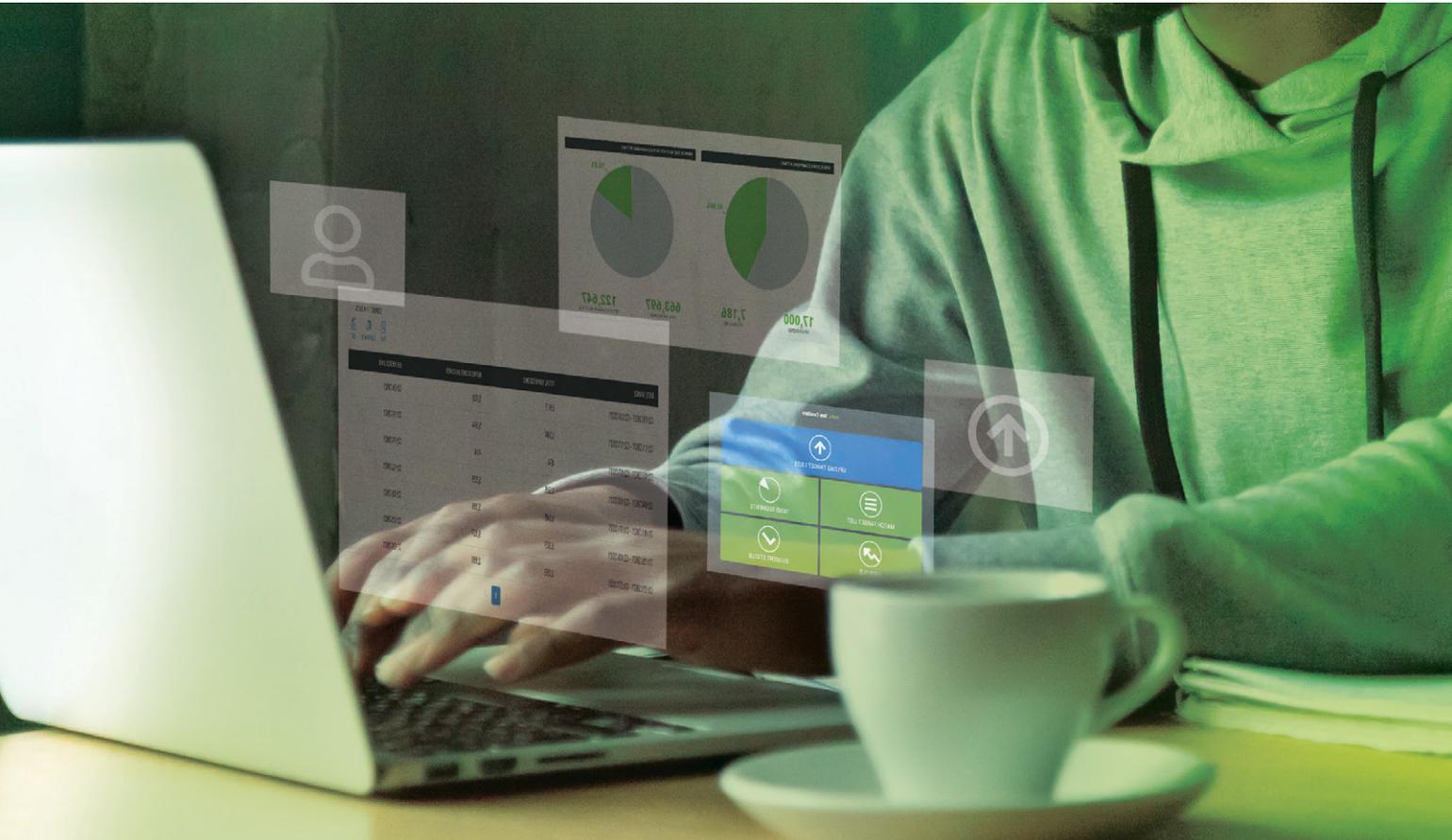
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