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Dahn Burke, Director of Digital Sales and Operations, Cumulus | C-Suite Digital Solutions

The Washington DC Market Challenge

Prior to becoming an AffinityX client, Cumulus Media worked with different vendors for digital marketing services as part of its C-Suite Media solution. Many of the company's competitors have been in the digital space for some time, so Cumulus needed to gain ground quickly. However, using multiple providers with different system was becoming chaotic and difficult to manage.

When AffinityX built a corporate-level relationship with Cumulus Media, a few markets already had relationships with demand side platforms (DSPs) for programmatic advertising. Washington DC was one of those markets and Director of Digital Sales and Operations Dahn Burke had the option to stay with Simpli.fi or to augment what the DSP could deliver by adding other services they needed to increase sales success.

Dahn had clear expectations of what was needed to drive business success — a sales management dashboard, campaign reporting and significant attention and care for ad campaigns on the back-end. She also wanted transparency on how campaigns are optimized to ensure the best performance for her accounts.

To provide a complete offering in the Washington, DC market, Dahn knew solutions for pay per click (PPC) and search engine optimization (SEO) were essential. She explained, "I challenged AffinityX to show me what they could do based on what I wanted. From the moment I met with their team, I knew AffinityX was worth partnering with due to all the systems that they have in place."

AffinityX Solution

Cumulus Washington DC launched with AffinityX AudienceX in January of 2018. The relationship included:

- **Complete Array of White Label Services.** With AffinityX AudienceX, Cumulus was able to roll out marketing services including: programmatic advertising, HTML5 display creative, video, native, mobile, Google pay-per-click, Facebook and Instagram ads and landing pages. All the media planning and buying, creative, trafficking, optimization and reporting is now handled by AffinityX. And AffinityX works with Simpli.fi and a range of DSPs so Dahn still benefits from the features she valued. On top of that, she notes, "The salespeople feel strongly about some of the assets they can offer now. And we are seeing better results with AffinityX than we did before."
- **Sales Enablement.** AffinityX provides an ongoing sales training program, both in person and through weekly virtual courses. A member of AffinityX's client success team is assigned to work with the Cumulus Washington, D.C. sales reps, participate in joint sales calls and help achieve revenue goals, while a key account sales director contributes to larger, longer-term opportunities. Custom proposals are generated by the AffinityX team (in by 7:00 p.m. and back by 7:00 a.m.). There is even a sales help desk available 24/7 via Zendesk to ensure fast answers are provided, day in and day out.

Washington DC Market Challenges

- Established competitors for digital services in the market
- Need for a full range of products and services
- Multiple vendors with different processes and systems

The AffinityX AudienceX Answer

- Complete suite of advertising products and end-to-end trafficking platform
- Design, copywriting, ad operations and optimization at scale for all marketing services
- Ability to work with a trusted DSP but leverage a single provider and system for greater efficiency across all products
- Thorough and ongoing strategy consulting, sales training, in-market support, sales collateral and custom sales proposals

Wide Array of Solutions

- Comprehensive programmatic advertising program, including display (HTML5), video, native, mobile, Google pay-per-click, Facebook and Instagram ads, and landing pages
- Media planning and buying, creative, trafficking, optimization and reporting
- Made to order, customized, client-ready proposals delivered within 24 hours of account managers' requests that include programmatic, Facebook & Instagram advertising, Google PPC, native advertising and owned and operated digital media as companions to radio
- Partner portal/cloud-based access to sales and marketing collateral and online sales training
- IDEA Titan Digital Marketing Hub for order management, business intelligence and sales reporting
- Sales enablement and client success team, including an assigned client success manager and a sales help desk

Results

▶ **In the first six months working with AffinityX, revenue almost doubled over the previous six months**

- Able to go to market with more marketing services, including PPC and SEO, to increase sales and improve competitive position
- Expanded market presence and ability to target new verticals
- Improved advertiser satisfaction and retention due to thorough reporting on campaign metrics and AffinityX's optimization
- Business insight and control from one powerful order management system

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As Dahn explains, “I went with AffinityX because there were so many layers of people and accessibility to those resources. A significant benefit of the AffinityX solution is sales support. We work with the same client success manager. He has contributed to several calls and is helping to launch SEO campaigns. We think he is excellent and very accessible.”

- **Cloud-Based Digital Marketing Hub.** As part of the program, AffinityX provides Cumulus Washington DC with access to IDEA Titan, a comprehensive system for ordering, proofing and tracking digital services. It also serves as a central database to track the businesses that are pitched and store important information about them, streamlining future orders. “That was a major upgrade to have the IDEA Titan as part of the solution,” says Dahn. “With AffinityX, we get a whole hierarchy of support, including visibility to the campaign optimization, the dashboard and the IDEA Titan system for a complete, turnkey solution.”

Client Benefits

- **Increased Revenue:** In the first six months of the partnership, Dahn feels that working with AffinityX has been instrumental to the success of the sales team. “The revenue is almost double what it was with a digital services vendor we used previously and we are just getting started!”
- **More Complete Offering:** The large variety of services Cumulus can now offer as a client of AudienceX enables the market to reach new customers in existing and new vertical market categories. Dahn reported, “Definitely — with an exclamation point — we are selling to businesses we could not sell to before. We needed a full-blown PPC program and SEO and I’m thrilled. These solutions paired with the great AffinityX delivery makes customers celebrate.”
- **Expanded Market Presence:** Cumulus has been able to target additional types of local businesses, thanks to the variety of advertising tactics, tracking, optimization and reporting. Dahn notes, “We have huge numbers of dentists, doctors, shopping centers, casual dining restaurants and real estate agents as clients. None of them want awareness campaigns. They all want their cash registers to ring — to sell more products and services! We’ve also had much success with property management companies, housing (multi-family units), etc. Any multi-location retailer is a great opportunity. We’re even working with a bowling alley right now.”
- **Campaign Tracking, Optimization and Reporting.** Because of the detailed monitoring of campaigns and the ad operations team making optimization decisions for each campaign, along with the thorough reporting capabilities, Cumulus is able to not only drive results but to prove them.

Dahn cited this example: “We have an important education client and went from losing almost every dollar they spent with us to saving the relationship because we could attribute the phone calls made to their two campuses back to our campaigns. That customer only wanted to know if people enrolled in the schools (versus caring about impressions or social media buzz). We were able to provide that intelligence with AffinityX’s AudienceX.”

- **Greater Efficiency:** AffinityX’s technology drove efficiency — in contrast to the chaos from multiple vendors that existed before. Plus, Cumulus gains more visibility to the sales activity and insight on customers when all orders flow through IDEA Titan. As Cumulus Digital Marketing Strategist Bryson Riley commented, “The more detail you provide, the more you get back in terms of results. IDEA Titan is effective. The level of depth — where you can build an entire cart of products — would be hard for anyone else to duplicate.”

For other companies considering partnerships with AffinityX, Dahn would tell them: “You have to work with vendors that are completely transparent. There has to be processes for consistent communication. There must be accountability across all services with campaign performance reports. Ultimately, there has to be a good dashboard, as well as layers of support.”

Dahn believes the success of the program is built on the foundation of the partnership she has with AffinityX.

“The collaboration, consultation, strategy, brand safe environment and fraud protection — all of these are important reasons for customers to work with us. This is how we provide value and we sell the services this way. AffinityX is the white label engine behind Cumulus.”

Dahn Burke, Director of Digital Sales and Operations
Cumulus | C-Suite Digital Solutions

About Cumulus Media

A leader in the radio broadcasting industry, Cumulus Media delivers premium content to 245 million people each week through 441 owned-and-operated stations broadcasting in 90 U.S. media markets (including eight of the top 10), approximately 8,000 broadcast radio stations affiliated with its Westwood One network and numerous digital channels.