

Headline: Audience-Based Targeting Provides More Flexibility to Reach Sports Fans: Effectv's Melanie Hamilton

The temporary suspension of live sports last year dramatized the importance of audience-based targeting for advertisers. As sports leagues resumed operations without fans attending games during the pandemic, viewership jumped in the second half of the year and marketers sought to reach them more effectively.

"There became huge pent-up demand for these loyal sports viewers," [Melanie Hamilton](#), head of enterprise sales at Effectv, the advertising sales division of Comcast Cable, said in this interview with Beet.TV. "The conversation for the advertisers' planning and investment around sports changed in a good way, because it pivoted to audiences and our set-top box data."

Total viewing among Comcast households rose about 18% a year to 20 billion hours during the second half of 2020, according to the "Effectv TV Viewership Report." Comcast serves 17 million households in 65 local markets, and each household boosted viewing time by an average of 160 hours.

'Sports Viewing Matrix'

Effectv created a "sports viewing matrix" to identify how fans of one sport migrated to other programming when live sports were suspended. The audience-based approach gave advertisers more flexibility in reaching those consumers.

"Sports does have a role, but the role is not as prominent, now," Hamilton said. "The marketing and advertising community understands that there are so many ways to reach this audience."

Still, live sports have the power to reach a broad audience, making them a key part of the media strategies for mass marketers.

"We know that campaigns including sports deliver an average household reach of 34% higher than those that do not include sports, but marketers have adjusted that 'tent-pole' aspect of sports in many cases," Hamilton said. "We see that having ripple effects to the buy side community and to the planner."

Dealing with Disruption

When the NCAA Mens Basketball Tournament was canceled last year, Effectv worked with advertisers to reach those viewers in other ways with an audience-based approach on the local level. She found that digital ad platforms, namely Google and Facebook, have conditioned advertisers to adopt a data-driven strategy for targeting.

"We are an audience delivery company, not a local cable company," Hamilton said. "That conversation continues to resonate across all layers and all siloes on the buy side because we have a cross-platform solution."

You are watching "Live Sports 2021: What's Next on TV," a Beet.TV + VAB leadership video series presented by Effectv, a Comcast company. For more videos, [please visit this page](#).