Business Insider Lays Off 21% of Staff, Citing 'Traffic Sensitivity'

The digital media company Business Insider laid off 21% of its staff on Thursday, according to an internal memo from chief executive Barbara Peng obtained by ADWEEK.

The cuts will affect every department, although the publisher declined to share how many employees were affected.

"Since returning to our roots as Business Insider, we've been building toward something new," Peng wrote. "This kind of transformation takes time—and it requires tough decisions along the way."

In the note, Peng cited declines in traffic as one of the primary reasons for the reduction in headcount. Around 70% of Business Insider's business relied on online traffic, and the restructure is meant to better position the publisher to thrive in an environment with fewer readers.

As part of the restructure, the publisher is also making a series of key shifts to its business.

It is scaling back on categories that "once performed well on other platforms but no longer drive meaningful readership" or are not areas where Business Insider can lead, according to the memo. A spokesperson for the company declined to comment on which coverage areas are affected.

The Axel Springer-owned outlet is also "exiting the majority of our commerce business," citing its reliance on search traffic, although it will maintain a few select verticals.

Finally, it is launching BI Live, a new live events journalism business. Business Insider has not historically had a robust experiential arm, even as other media organizations have flocked to that line of business in recent years.

In addition to shifting traffic patterns, Peng also cited artificial intelligence as a key factor in the restructuring.

Over 70% of Business Insider employees are already using its enterprise ChatGPT product regularly, according to the memo. The productivity gains being unlocked by the technology have spurred the publisher to reevaluate its labor needs, allowing it to operate more efficiently with fewer resources.

“Change like this isn’t easy,” Peng wrote. “But Business Insider was born in a time of disruption—when the smartphone was reshaping how people consumed news. We thrived by taking risks and building something new.”

Read the full memo below:

Team,

Today we’re making significant organizational changes that are part of the strategy we set in motion a year and a half ago: to be the essential source of business, tech, and innovation journalism for an audience determined to succeed and unafraid to challenge convention to do it.

Since returning to our roots as Business Insider, we’ve been building toward something new. This kind of transformation takes time — and it requires tough decisions along the way.

What happens today

We are reducing the size of our organization, a move that will impact about 21% of our colleagues and touch every department.

This will be a difficult day, and our first priority is to

provide clarity and support to those colleagues whose roles are being eliminated.

If your role is impacted, you will receive an email from the People & Culture team in the next 15 minutes. The email will include details for a meeting today in which a member of our P&C team will walk you through next steps and answer any questions. You will only receive an email if your role is affected.

We're also proposing changes that impact our UK team, but the process is a bit different there; separate communication will follow from Claire Shelton.

While today's changes are what we must do to build the most enduring Business Insider, it doesn't make them any easier. We are fortunate to have built a company filled with thoughtful, kind, and creative people around the world, and we deeply appreciate the positive impact they have made within the company and on our readers, clients, and partners.

The changes we're making today and why

Eighteen months ago we announced our new strategy: We went back to Business Insider and focused on delivering best-in-class business, tech, and innovation journalism to a smart, specific audience. That kicked off the beginning of our transformation from Insider — with its broad approach and appeal — to a more focused Business Insider.

Since Jamie Heller joined as EIC at the end of last year, we've made great progress — we've sharpened our standards and are shifting towards more reporting that is authoritative and matters deeply to the people who read it. We've doubled the amount of original reporting we publish and have substantially increased engagement in the past months.

This is a new Business Insider. It's more focused. It's intentional. And it's working.

More broadly though, the media industry is at a crossroads. Business models are under pressure, distribution is unstable, and competition for attention is fiercer than ever. At the same time, there's a huge opportunity for companies who harness AI first. Our strategy is strong, but we don't have the luxury of time. The pace of change combined with the opportunity ahead demands bold, focused action — and it's our chance to lead the pack.

Here's what's changing today:

1. We're aligning our coverage to match our strategic focus.

We're focusing where we can deliver unique, lasting value and serve our audience in ways only Business Insider can.

As Insider, we cast a wide net, covering a broad range of topics. Some of those still align with our strategy — stories that spotlight the smart moves (and mistakes!) people make as they actually experience the world.

At the same time, we're scaling back on categories that once performed well on other platforms but no longer drive meaningful readership or aren't areas where we can lead.

Our most loyal readers subscribe, engage, and consistently return for specific coverage — and we're doubling down on those areas with expanded reporting and key hires.

2. We're launching events and reducing our reliance on traffic-sensitive businesses.

We're at the start of a major shift in how people find and consume information, which is driving ongoing volatility in traffic and distribution for all publishers. The impact on our industry has been profound, with many publications shuttering in recent years.

Our business is diversified, which has helped insulate us.

We've also significantly improved how we monetize traffic — each visit to our site now generates twice as much revenue as it did just two years ago.

Still, 70% of our business has some degree of traffic sensitivity. We must be structured to endure extreme traffic drops outside of our control, so we're reducing our overall company to a size where we can absorb that volatility.

We're also exiting the majority of our Commerce business, given its reliance on search, and maintaining a few high performing verticals.

We're launching and investing in BI Live, our new live journalism events business. It's a space where we can showcase our journalism, connect directly with our audience, and build a strong portfolio of experiences. We've already seen demand, brought on key leaders, and will continue to build the team.

3. Finally, we are fully embracing AI.

As we shared during our April All-Hands, we are going all-in on AI — and we're off to a strong start.

Over 70% of Business Insider employees are already using Enterprise ChatGPT regularly (our goal is 100%), and we're building prompt libraries and sharing everyday use cases that help us work faster, smarter, and better.

In the past year, we've launched multiple AI-driven products to better serve our audience — from gen-AI onsite search to our AI-powered paywall — with new products set to launch in the coming months. We're also exploring how AI can boost operations across shared services, helping us scale and operate more efficiently.

Change like this isn't easy. But Business Insider was born in a time of disruption — when the smartphone was reshaping how people consumed news. We thrived by taking risks and building

something new.

We’re at that moment again. It calls for bold experimentation, openness to change, and a willingness to lead.

Among all publications, we are uniquely positioned to do just that.

What’s next

I know this is a lot to absorb and it will take time to process. We’ll come together during the All-Hands today at 11:30AM ET and leaders will be hosting team meetings to answer your questions.

To those affected today, we are grateful to you for helping build Business Insider and for being wonderful colleagues. Your work has made an impact and we appreciate you.

Please support each other today and as we move through the coming days and weeks. While this change is extraordinarily difficult and will test us in many ways, it is a moment I know we’ll be able to meet. Thank you all for your resilience, as ever.

Barbara

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/media/business-insider-layoffs-traffic-sensitivity/

Connor Keeshan Returns to BBH

USA as Managing Director

BBH USA has appointed Connor Keeshan as managing director—a new role meant to guide the Publicis Groupe agency through its next chapter of growth.

Keeshan returns to BBH after a five-year stint earlier in his career as an account director. He will now lead account management, reporting to CEO Steven Panariello.

In his career, Keeshan has held senior account management roles at agencies including Johannes Leonardo and TBWA, working on global brands like PlayStation, British Airways, Volkswagen, Samsung, and Mercedes-Benz.

“I love a boomerang story,” Panariello told ADWEEK. “To spend time at BBH—and some of the best people in this industry have—is a fascinating common denominator.”

Keeshan will be tasked with keeping up the momentum for BBH USA, which has recently added 11 wins to its roster—including Goodyear, PayPal, Grey Goose, and PATRÓN.

Panariello, who joined as CEO in August, called the past several months a “thrilling ride.”

“The momentum has been really galvanizing,” he said, adding that the managing director role was needed to “operationalize growth” and “deepen client relationships as we continue to add new partners.”

As BBH enters what Panariello calls its “next pivotal chapter,” the agency is focused on strengthening leadership and sustaining its culture. Keeshan joins a leadership team that, in addition to Panariello, includes CCO Erica Roberts, CSO Samantha Deevi, and CMO Lindsey McNabb.

“There’s a lot of trust between the leaders,” Panariello said.

“We know how to rely on each other and how to get the most out of each other, to show up best as an agency.”

He added that BBH has proven its capabilities around rebuilding “iconic brands” that have lost their status and want to reclaim their place in consumers’ minds.

With Keeshan on board, Panariello predicts more growth and “a really exciting new chapter for BBH USA.”

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/agencies/connor-keeshan-returns-to-bbh-usa-as-managing-director/

Nostalgic Disney+ and Hulu Campaign Wants to Give the Best of Both Worlds

Disney’s new throwback campaign wants to make viewers flip (phone).

Starting this month, Disney+ and Hulu are showcasing ’90s and 2000s nostalgia in new ads highlighting some of the streamers‘ best throwback series. According to Disney, the campaign aims to provide themed content drops across the Disney+ social channels, as well as Easter egg pins viewers can look for.

Disney is also creating real-life instances around the

throwback theme, with immersive activations and photo ops in Los Angeles and at various fan events, including VidCon and Destination D23. Additionally, the company is partnering with brands like Swimply and ThredUp over the summer, noting that it’s bringing “fan favorite ‘90s and 2000s locations and looks to life.”

See one of the streamers’ throwback spots here:

Beyond the activations, Disney+ premium subscribers can access a “Throwback Stream,” which is a 24/7 channel showcasing retro Disney content and marathons. For instance, the company noted that the channel provides content from the Saturday morning cartoon era, with shows such as Doug, Recess, Lilo & Stitch: The Series, Phineas and Ferb, Kim Possible, and Pepper Ann.

The company is also introducing a curated Throwback Collection of library titles, including Lizzie McGuire, Hannah Montana, Boy Meets World, and The Golden Girls.

Disney+’s throwback campaign comes amid an ongoing increase in the importance of library depth among streamers, with older series, including shows such as The Office and Suits, regularly making a dent in the Nielsen streaming charts.

According to Nielsen’s 2024 State of Play report, “Content that pre-dates 2010 represents an opportunity as streaming services seek to solidify their standings with viewers.”

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/convergent-tv/nostalgic-disney-hulu-campaign-streamers/

NBA Playoffs Take It to the House for Global Fan Fests

After years of putting its NBA House in coveted international markets during the playoffs, the league is turning each of those houses into a home.

The NBA held its first NBA House sports marketing initiative in London for the 2012 Olympics and has taken the party around the globe in years since. For this year's NBA Finals, the league will be hosting sprawling activations in Calgary, Mexico City, Mumbai, and São Paulo, featuring game viewing parties, mascots, dance teams, live music, meet-and-greets with former NBA players, photos with the Larry O'Brien Trophy for the league's champion, skills challenges, and stores stocked with league merchandise.

With subscriptions and total watch hours on NBA League Pass globally increasing 4% and 6% respectively, compared to last season, and global partnerships revenue increasing for the fifth-straight season, the NBA is focused on markets where its growth has been particularly promising.

"For us, 99% of our fans will not have an opportunity to see an NBA game in an NBA arena in North America, so one of the things that we're very focused on is: 'How do we bring authentic NBA experiences to life to our fans around the world?'" said Kelly Flatow, the NBA's evp of global events. "There's certainly an opportunity to bounce a ball and shoot some hoops, but also to be able to broaden that, tap into, and bring to our fans what they love about the brand, and that's about fashion, music, technology, and lifestyle."

Back in December 2023, YouGov released a survey attempting to determine the global footprint of sports leagues from the United States. In the U.S., the National Basketball Association had 25% of those surveyed say that the league was among their top interests or that they were somewhat interested in it. That share rose to 27% in Canada, 30% in Mexico, 30% in India, and 31% in Brazil.

Last year’s NBA House was one of more than a half dozen it’s held in Brazil.*NBA*

Canada already has a Hall of Fame NBA player in Steve Nash and an NBA title from the 2018 Toronto Raptors, but it’s also produced the most non-U.S. players in the league for 11 straight years. This year, 21 Canadians opened the season on NBA rosters—including the Oklahoma City Thunder star and the NBA’s Most Valuable Player, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander.

Brazil has had players in the NBA since the New York Knicks took a young Nenê Hilario, later known as Nenê, in the 2002 NBA Draft, with Gui Santos coming off the bench to help the Golden State Warriors during their latest playoff push. Rio de Janeiro even hosted a preseason game between the Chicago Bulls and Washington Wizards in 2013.

“Since we have done games and different kinds of life experiences around the globe, we learn from each other, and we find those commonalities with the fans,” said Raul Zarraga, svp and head of operations for NBA LATAM. “The common factor is the passion for the NBA, [but] they experience it in different ways.”

Mexico City, however, is an old friend of the league, hosting its first NBA preseason game in 1992 and its first regular-season game in 1997. Overall, the city has hosted 13 regular-season NBA matchups since 2014 and is such a regular fixture that it’s already a TBA on next season’s calendar. Mumbai hosted a pair of NBA games in 2019, and the NBA has used personalities, including Kevin Durant and Ranveer Singh, and initiatives, including a Project Runway-style fashion program, to stoke the love of both the league’s game and its culture in different corners of India.

The NBA started its year with 125 international players on its roster, had players from three non-U.S. countries (Canada, Serbia, and Greece) vying for league MVP, and finished its season with players from five nations leading it per-game in points, rebounds, assists, blocks, and steals. It realizes that if it wants to connect with the fans those players are attracting, it has to find ways to celebrate the NBA’s biggest moments on their home court.

“In Mumbai, where basketball is still in early stages of fandom and growth, it’s really about expanding our fan base and bringing people that have maybe a peripheral interest in basketball, but they’re interested in music, lifestyle,

culture, these other elements that the NBA brand overlaps with," said Rajah Chaudhry, NBA head of strategy, Asia Pac, and NBA India country head. "It's our first year in Mumbai, so we're doing it as a smaller, two-day event, but hopefully over the years we can make it as big as, say, Brazil, which runs for a few weeks now."

Spreading the floor

The São Paulo NBA House from June 5-22 at Villa-Lobos State Park marks the league's seventh playoff visit to Brazil—2024, 2023, 2022, and 2019 in São Paulo; 2020 virtually; and 2016 in Rio de Janeiro. After last year's installment drew more than 45,000 fans, brands including Budweiser, Emirates, Hellmann's, Sadia, Sportingbet, and XP have jumped on to support the 2025 iteration.

"It's a continuous experience through all the different days that are not only about watching the Finals, but also about experiencing a unique moment for friends and family and meeting influencers, content creators, and celebrities during this two and a half week event with activities every single day," Zarraga said. "It doesn't matter what kind of experience you would like to have: We found in NBA House a great opportunity for fans to enjoy it any way they want."

Brazil keeps rewarding the NBA for its efforts, with more than 59 million Brazilian NBA fans shopping at 32 NBA Stores in the country, making it the league's No. 1 brick-and-mortar destination in the world. That doesn't include Brazil's NBA Store Truck—the league's only mobile store on the planet—or ecommerce platform LojaNBA.com. Brazilian fans have also given the league a massive media presence through ESPN Brasil, Disney+, Prime Video, the NBA Brazil YouTube Channel, and NBA League Pass.

After 13 years promoting its product in India, the NBA is looking for the same kind of wins from a similarly diverse

approach. The first-ever BUDX NBA House takes place June 7 and 8 in Mumbai with guest appearances by five-time NBA champion Derek Fisher, Hall of Famer Gary Payton, and the Sacramento Kings mascot, dunk teams, and dance teams. Budweiser, Brand USA, Emirates, and Visit California are among the brands attempting to connect with the NBA's more than 6.5 million fans on social media in India, where the league is still making inroads through a broadcast deal with YouTube and a youth basketball development program.

"I will say it's challenging: The time zone in India is always a bit of a challenge for us, [and] unfortunately, the games are on pretty early in the morning," Chaudhry said. "Something like an NBA House here helps us to connect those dots. You've got your core fans who are going to get up early and watch a game. Maybe not everyone's going to do that, so this gives them that opportunity to touch and feel what the NBA brand stands for and come at a more friendly time."

Brazil gets an NBA House and dancing mascots partly because it supports more NBA stores than anywhere else in the world.*NBA*

Closer to home

After making its Canadian debut in Vancouver last year, NBA House comes to Calgary from June 5-8 at The Rooftop YYC. Three-time NBA champion Danny Green and 2010 NBA champion Metta World Peace will be in the building, as will activations from brand partners Gatorade, Hennessy, Hisense, Michelob Ultra, and Mitchell & Ness.

The NBA placed the Raptors in Toronto (and the now-Memphis Grizzlies in Vancouver, to lesser effect) 30 years ago. Today, the NBA’s Canadian presence is up to a record 183 million views on the league’s Canadian social channels this season.

The league has also developed 676,000 fans in Calgary's Alberta province alone, the third most in Canada behind Ontario and Quebec.

"In Canada, with the team there, and now with a WNBA team [the Toronto Tempo, which arrive in 2026], it's a combination of maximizing the interest of the fan base to know more and to enjoy more NBA than ever and the fact that the people are looking for this," Zarraga said.

An NBA House in Mexico City drew so many young fans last year that brands followed it back for 2025.*NBA*

NBA House is also returning for the second-straight year to Mexico City, where it's taking over the Fórum Hipódromo de las Américas for Game 4 of the Finals on June 13 and 14. Coming

off of last year’s Mexico City game between the Miami Heat and Washington Wizards in November, the NBA has taken notice that more than 40% of its fans in Mexico (roughly 13 million people) are Gen Z and driving the more than 5.6 million follows on the NBA’s social media accounts there.

“Doing fan events around the world is not new for us, but that is something that, throughout time, we’ve continued to go back to listen to what our fans want,” Flatow said. “We have organized ourselves to be a fan-first business so that we can deliver what is our global standard, but be able to then customize locally what is most relevant to a fan in Mumbai and what’s most attractive to a fan in Mexico City.”

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/nba-playoffs-house-global-fans/

Not All AI Is for Profit. Meet Google’s Civic Tech Experiment.

Big brands are trying to figure out how to use AI across multiple departments, and tech giants such as Microsoft, Apple, OpenAI, and Google are all racing to position their solutions within corporate America.

But beneath this fanfare, Google has a little-known tech incubator called Jigsaw that’s trying to develop AI for more civic-minded purposes.

Created in 2011, Jigsaw studies how emerging tech impacts the world, and builds tools to mitigate some of the more harmful effects, like online harassment. It also tries to protect free speech, enhance civic deliberation, and more.

The public emergence of AI products has made this initiative more urgent.

Jigsaw has built new tools off of Google's AI models like Perspective API and Sensemaker, have been adopted by platforms and publishers like The New York Times, OpenWeb, and Reddit, as well as local governments and universities.

"We're helping make these divided communities that we live in discuss contested topics together in a way that's civil, with the hopes that a lot more of us will stop lurking and start participating," Beth Goldberg, Jigsaw's head of research and development, said on stage at C2 Montréal on Thursday.

Spencer Baim (left), Jigsaw’s head of brand, creative, and marketing and Beth Goldberg, Jigsaw’s head of research and development, speaking at C2 Montréal.*ADWEEK*

What Could BG Be?

In February, Jigsaw brought Sensemaker to Bowling Green, Kentucky to pilot the tech and help local leaders gain insights from residents, because the town projected growth to double over the next 25 years.

“What would happen if our technology could really help leaders listen to what their community wanted?” said Spencer Baim, Jigsaw’s head of brand, creative, and marketing, on stage alongside Goldberg. “What if our tech allowed thousands of people to participate in an ongoing conversation about their

future?”

The tech incubator partnered with The Computational Democracy Project, Innovation Engine, a local strategy consultancy, and Bowling Green’s local leaders to launch “What Could BG Be?,” a month-long online conversation allowing residents to share ideas about their hometown’s future.

The case study was an expansion of the BG 2050 Project, a 25-year vision document led by Innovation Engine on behalf of the Warren County government, where Bowling Green is located. It also doubled as a marketing campaign to attract more participants.

What Could BG Be? received input from over 7,800 local residents who shared over one million ideas on the county’s future. Jigsaw then used Sensemaker to simplify and categorize the results for the city’s leaders, who saw a push for improvements on infrastructure and transportation, arts and culture, and economic development, for example.

“The local leaders embraced the AI,” said Goldberg. “They trusted this process because they had co-designed it with us. 96% of [them said] that this AI-generated report made it easier for them to understand and accurately represent their community’s needs.”

Jigsaw’s next step is to build its brand and promote its tools to further demystify AI for civic use.

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/media/not-all-ai-is-for-profit-meet-googles-civic-tech-experiment/

Fox Television Stations One Hour Special Examines the Five Years After George Floyd

Fox Television Stations will premiere a one-hour special called After George Floyd.

The show is produced by Fox 9 Minneapolis and will look into what has or hasn't changed since George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis sparked protests, civil unrest, and nationwide calls for police reform.

Hosted by Fox 9's **Symone Woolridge**, the show shares the stories of residents and businesses in and around George Floyd Square five years later.

Here's what the show producers promise:

- *We will walk the beat with two Minneapolis police officers assigned to the area, where emotions remain raw.*
- *We sit down with the former police chief who led the department five years ago – and the current chief – to explore what has changed and what work remains.*
- *We speak with the State Commissioner of Human Rights about the consent decrees now in place for the police department: Have they made a difference?*
- *And we follow the journey of the muralist who painted the iconic image of George Floyd in 2020.*

The special will air on Sunday, May 25 across all Fox Television Station primary streams at 9 p.m. ET / 8 p.m. CT. This includes each Fox Local channel, LiveNOW, and Fox Soul.

Local Broadcast Schedule:

- **New York:** WNYW Friday 5/23 – 2pm, WWOR Sunday 5/25 – 5pm
- **Los Angeles:** KTTV Friday 5/23 – 8pm, KCOP Monday 5/26 – 7pm
- **Chicago:** WFLD Saturday 5/24 – 11pm, WPWR Sunday 5/25 – 8pm
- **Dallas:** KDFW Saturday 5/24 – 11pm, KDFI Sunday 5/25 – 8pm, KDFI Monday 5/26 – 10pm
- **Philadelphia:** WTXF Friday 5/23 – 6:30pm
- **Houston:** KRIV Friday 5/23 – 1pm, KTXH Friday 5/23 – 9 pm, KTXH Saturday 5/24 – 9pm
- **Atlanta:** WAGA Thursday 5/22 – 7pm, WAGA Sunday 5/25 – 11:30pm
- **Washington:** WDCA Thursday 5/22 – 11pm, WDCA Sunday 5/25 – 6pm
- **San Francisco:** KICU Thursday 5/22 – 8pm
- **Tampa:** WTVT Saturday 5/24 – 12pm
- **Phoenix:** KUTP Friday 5/23 – 8pm, KUTP Saturday 5/24 – 4pm
- **Seattle:** KCPQ Saturday 5/24 – 8pm, KZJO Sunday 5/25 – 4pm
- **Detroit:** WJBK Sunday 5/25 – 11:30pm, WJBK Monday 5/26 – 7pm
- **Orlando:** WRBW Saturday 5/24 – 5pm
- **Minneapolis:** KMSP Thursday 5/22 – 10pm
- **Austin:** Saturday 5/24 – 11:30am
- **Milwaukee:** WITI Thursday 5/22 – 11pm
- **Gainesville:** WOGX Saturday 5/24 – 12pm

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/tvspy/fox-television-stations-one-hour-special-examines-the-five-years-after-george-floyd/

EXCLUSIVE: IPG Mediabrands Lays Off Dozens as Analytics Roles Move Offshore

IPG Mediabrands, the media arm of Interpublic Group (IPG), has laid off between 35 and 40 employees across its analytics division this week, according to sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

The cuts—delivered without written communication—targeted analysts as the media network moves analytics roles offshore to its Global Capability Center in India.

In a statement to ADWEEK, an IPG Mediabrands spokesperson confirmed the cuts: “Regrettably, we informed a portion of our team about necessary separations. These actions are part of IPG Mediabrands’ ongoing transformation to streamline operations and align with evolving organizational needs. We are committed to supporting the transition of those impacted by providing resources, severance payments and continuation of benefits, per IPG policy.”

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/agencies/exclusive-ipg-mediabrands-lays-off-dozens-as-analytics-roles-move-offshore/

TelevisaUnivision and Disney Score New Distribution Partnership

Ahead of marquee soccer coverage, TelevisaUnivision and Disney are scoring distribution goals.

This week, TelevisaUnivision and Disney Entertainment announced a new multi-region distribution partnership. With the deal, TelevisaUnivision's U.S. networks—including Univision, UniMás, TUDN, and Galavisión—will launch on the Hulu + Live TV line-up on June 3, coming in ahead of the FIFA Club World Cup and Concacaf Gold Cup.

"We're thrilled to enter into this new partnership with Disney that puts our community at the center," Rafael Urbina, president of streaming and digital at TelevisaUnivision, said in a statement.

According to the companies, more channels, including N+FORO, TLNovelas, Bandamax, De Película, De Película Clásico, Telehit, and Telehit Música, will be added to the Español add-on for Hulu + Live TV subscribers at a later time.

Beyond the channels, beginning in early June, Disney+ and ViX will be available as a combined offering in Mexico. This will give ViX users access to Disney+ as part of their subscription.

"This new partnership allows us to strategically build upon our current channel offering and Spanish-language content available on Hulu + Live TV, while providing subscribers in Mexico with a meaningful opportunity to access the very best of Disney's blockbuster films, award-winning originals, and iconic franchises alongside TelevisaUnivision's industry-

leading Spanish-language content, including news, novelas, sports, and more in one subscription," said Lauren Tempest, general manager, Hulu, and evp, DTC content partnerships.

TelevisaUnivision's upfront presentation was all about connecting brands with Spanish-speaking consumers, and the new distribution deal gives the company even more reach to do that.

Speaking with ADWEEK following the company's upfront presentation, TelevisaUnivision ad sales chief Donna Speciale noted that her company would be back in the annual advertising event next year, especially considering the Hispanic population's growth in the U.S.

"We are now 20% of the population, but the next few years is going to be even more," Speciale said, adding, "We're not going to stop until we have every single advertiser that is advertising to an English language that is now going to be leaning into Hispanic as well."

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/convergent-tv/televisaunivision-disney-distribution-partnership/

Dozens of Premium Publishers Join Adelaide's New 'AU

Ecosystem’

The media measurement vendor Adelaide, which created the proprietary attention metric AU (attention unit), launched its most ambitious venture yet on Thursday, a marketplace called the AU Ecosystem.

The offering combines a suite of largely preexisting tools and services into a single, standardized marketplace through which media buyers and sellers can transact based on media quality, not just quantity.

More than 40 premium publishers—including The New York Times, Hearst Magazines, The Wall Street Journal, Spotify, the Financial Times, and NPR—have joined the ecosystem at launch, according to Adelaide founder and chief executive Marc Guldimann.

“The vision is to create a new currency,” Guldimann said. “Gross rating points measure who you’re reaching. AU measures how well you’re reaching them.”

The rollout is the latest milestone in a years-long project of coalition-building, during which Adelaide has worked to educate and promote adoption of AUs among buy-side parties like brands and agencies, as well as their sell-side counterparts at publishers ranging from streamers to news organizations to audio platforms. The launch of the AU Ecosystem represents the culmination of those efforts, although the metric is still dramatically limited in its overall scale.

How the AU Ecosystem works

The AU Ecosystem functions as a marketplace, but not in the traditional real-time bidding sense.

Instead, it is a quality layer that sits across the buy and sell sides, facilitating attention-based transactions through four core offerings: sponsorship of AU measurement, inventory audits, high-AU curation, and AU guarantees.

Some publishers, like Hearst and Condé Nast, are covering the cost of AU measurement to reduce friction for advertisers. Others, like The Wall Street Journal and Spotify, are packaging their highest-performing inventory into premium attention deals.

The Journal, for instance, ran six attention-guaranteed campaigns during the 2024 presidential race, according to Guldimann.

“The AU Ecosystem should be the gold standard for quality publishers,” said Brendan Spain, the vice president of advertising at the Financial Times. “It’s the first time the ad experience is aligned with the user experience.”

At the FT, AU scores have become central to how campaigns are packaged and priced, with clients now requesting them in RFPs.

Some of the publisher’s ad formats have outperformed standard display ads by 40% to 52% on AU, according to Spain, which validates its historical emphasis on creating ad environments that prioritize reader engagement.

The FT recently debuted a new high-attention product, called FT Focus, that reflects this philosophy.

From metric to market-maker

Since its founding in 2019, Adelaide has focused on positioning AU as the logical successor to viewability.

Unlike viewability, which measures whether an ad is seen, AU attempts to quantify how well it is likely to be seen, taking into account placement, format, and surrounding context.

The concept has slowly gained traction among marketers and media owners. Adelaide now works with over 125 partners, including DSPs, SSPs, and major publishers, and has been integrated into Google's Display & Video 360.

On Tuesday, the measurement firm even published a case study using AU to compare YouTube inventory to that of other premium CTV streamers, which found YouTube ads to be 19% more effective.

"Every other market pays for quality," said Guldimann. "In advertising, we've been stuck with proxies like CPM. We're trying to change that by making media quality predictable."

The goal is to position AU alongside legacy buying currencies like GRPs, but with a focus on the depth rather than the breadth of exposure.

"It's like Carfax or FICO for media," Guldimann said. "We want to build a market-driven currency where price approaches value."

Challenges remain for attention-based buying

Despite its momentum, the ecosystem still faces hurdles.

While AU offers a conceptual improvement over viewability, it brings its own challenges—particularly around education and standardization, according to U of Digital head of innovation Myles Younger.

"There's an educational lift that has to happen," said

Younger.

Publishers may also have to rethink how they bundle inventory.

For instance, publishers often bundle high and low-quality inventory together to offer ad buyers scale, which helps publishers' margins. A framework like AU, while beneficial in many respects to publishers, could put some of those margins at risk.

Despite these growing pains, the kind of industrywide reorientation that Adelaide is working to realize is a positive, according to Younger.

"Anything that moves the market toward judging quality is a good thing," Younger said.

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/media/adelaide-au-ecosystem-attention-metric-publishers/

Topsort Drops 3 New AI-Powered Ad Products to Simplify Retail Media Buying

Topsort, a four-year-old advertising tech startup, announced three new ad products today aimed at simplifying retail media ad buying.

The products include a sponsored listing-focused ad exchange called Toppie, a suite of measurement tools called Top Optimizer, and a tool for digitizing in-store consumer data called In-Store Journey. The tools build on Topsort's retail media infrastructure, which companies use to sell ads on their ecommerce websites and around the web.

For Regina Ye, Topsort co-founder and chief executive officer, these three tools also aim to answer a broader question that the company's engineers have been ruminating on—and building a technological solution to—since founding Topsort in 2021 as a competitor to companies like Criteo, Koddi, and Publicis-owned Epsilon.

"With all the tech that's available these days, does it really unlock a different future?" Ye asked. "What does it really mean, [and] what's the implication for retail media?"

The company is revealing the products this week at its first Topsort Developer Day, a three-day conference in Palo Alto, Calif., which Ye said it plans to host annually. The event includes a keynote from Nobel Prize-winning economist Alvin Roth and panels focused on retail media tech, product and measurement standardization, and AI. Companies including Kevel, Google, Skai, Nvidia, Albertsons, and DoorDash will be represented onstage.

Solving retail media's tech problem

The Topsort Developer Day tagline, "it's not a media problem, it's a tech problem," tees up Topsort's AI-powered product launches, promising to "break down Big Tech's barriers and put product-driven innovation into the hands of the builders."

Toppie, the new ad exchange and demand-side platform, lets advertisers buy sponsored listing ads for the same SKUs across multiple retail media networks, Ye explained. The logistical challenge of buying across many different retail media networks is one of the major hurdles that Toppie aims to

solve.

Brands and agencies have been testing the exchange with positive results, Ye said. In a pilot, electronics brand LG sold out of all its regional inventory after buying ads through Toppie and had to pause the campaign until it could restock.

With Top Optimizer, which Ye said its been testing with Doordash, Topsort is touting its machine learning tech as a solution for commerce media networks looking to improve the performance and reliability of their onsite ads. By layering the AI piece on top of the retailer or ecommerce company's ad platform, Top Optimizer can handle things like pacing, prediction, and live forecasting, Ye said. It can also set up automated messaging that will alert the relevant parties as metrics change.

"A lot of these different endpoints bring some science to building an ad business," Ye said. "Because sometimes it's hard to know if it's working."

Mapping in-store movements

Topsort's In-Store Journey tool digitizes fully anonymized data collected through Bluetooth-connected beacons that many retailers already have installed inside their physical stores. It then runs the data through an AI model and overlays it with other signals, like digital ads or sales data, to get a better understanding of how shoppers are interacting with products in-store.

Capitalizing on that in-store first-party data could give retailers a much-needed leg up against Amazon, too, Ye noted.

"We're committed to enabling retailers to leverage industry-best technology to challenge big tech's dominance," Francisco Larrain, the cofounder and chief technology officer of

Topsort, said in a statement. “In-Store Journey is a clear example of this.”

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/commerce/topsort-drops-3-new-ai-powered-ad-products-to-simplify-retail-media-buying/