Unruly CEO Steps Down Amid Tremor Takeover

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News Corp. sold Unruly to ad-tech company Tremor International earlier this year, and now the video advertising outfit's outgoing CEO, Norm Johnston, is set to lead the publisher's global advertising strategy.

In a note published earlier today, Johnston notified readers that he would "pass the baton" of leadership to Tremor CEO Ofer Druker, and that he is soon to take up the role of head of global advertising strategy at News Corp.

"Pending AGM approval," Johnston wrote, "I will shortly become a non-executive director on Tremor's board of directors, which will enable me to remain involved in the overall strategic direction of the company."

Johnston joins at a time when the publisher is looking to shore up its first-party data strategy, including its News IQ ad platform, a tool it hopes will rise to prominence as audience targeting tools such as third-party cookies wind down over privacy concerns.

The switch takes place six months after Tremor International purchased Unruly for an undisclosed sum in a deal that saw News Corp. take a 6.91% stake in the ad-tech company. Terms of the transaction also mean that Tremor International also holds exclusive rights to sell outstream video advertising inventory on more than 50 News Corp. titles in the U.S., UK, and Australia.

Tremor International is listed on the London Stock Exchange and was formed by way of a $176 million merger between RhythmOne and Taptica in February 2019.

Consolidation in the ad-tech sector has been widely anticipated for some time, a trend that is expected to accelerate given the financial pressures brought by the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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