

Utilizing Advertising Technology for Agencies and Brands

**Business Services
Marketing Technology**

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Edward Montes
CEO

BIO: As CEO and co-founder of Digilant, Ed is responsible for planning and implementing the company's strategic direction, overseeing international operations, and delivering on the company's vision. In 2010, Ed was awarded *LatinTRENDS* Magazine's Latino Trendsetter Award in the technology category. In 2011, he was named one of *Boston Business Journal's* Top 40 under 40.

Prior to becoming the CEO at Digilant, Ed was Manager Director for Havas Digital, North America where he was recognized with the Media All Star

award by *MediaWeek* in 2009. Ed has also worked for Yahoo! Inc. and was a prosecutor in the Middlesex District Attorney's office of Massachusetts. He is a graduate of Boston University School of Law and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

About Digilant:

DIGILANT is an independent digital marketing company that helps agencies and brands utilize advertising technology to discover media opportunities. The company offers breakthrough solutions to support the entire media buy – from planning through execution, measurement and optimization. With a distinct team of experts and approach, Digilant adds relevance and uncovers unique insights so marketers boost their brands in a crowded media landscape.

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Mr. Montes, you site indicates Digilant goes above and beyond the data. What do you do?

Mr. Montes: Digilant is a consolidated digital media-buying platform. What that means is we provide technology and services to our clients, who are primarily brands themselves or agencies, to help them buy cross-channel media or put together advertising campaigns more efficiently. All of our campaigns are data based or based on some relevant data points. Going above and beyond the data means that it is more than just helping you acquire data or more than just putting your data to work. It is putting your data to work in a way that actually results in better business performance.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of how that works in reality not in theory?

Mr. Montes: There are plenty of clients who use data today in what is commonly known as remarketing or retargeting campaigns or advertising programs. Those programs tend to provide the opportunity to message a customer who has been to your website or that has been to a shopping page or some important part of your website again with another message. It is an effective technique but it is one that is limited by the number of people who actually come to your website. We can offer this form of digital marketing but we also offer products that actually allow you to analyze the users who are coming to your most important pages, including the digital attributes or audience characteristics. We also help you take a look at the overall landscape of potential consumers and find those users that are similar in online behavior as well as other data points to the audience that visits your most important pages. This means we can help you expand your business by finding users who are most important or most likely to be receptive to your advertising and your products.

CEOCFO: When you speak to prospective customers do they understand the difference easily and is there an 'aha' moment when they understand Digilant is different?

Mr. Montes: There are some who are well versed in digital and there is a broad spectrum of people who have not been exposed to much digital marketing, let alone sophisticated data based campaigns. The clients that get the opportunities to work with us and clients that understand the marketplace can understand some of the

nuances or differences that we provide. I think the 'aha' moment generally happens when they see results. We have a very high retention rate of customers; somewhere around the high 80% rate, so I think a lot of customers are actually having that 'aha' moment when the results and insights are produced.

CEOCFO: You mentioned earlier the types of customers but are there particular types or brands that might be more likely to work for you or is it more across the board?

Mr. Montes: We generally work with players from many industry verticals or categories and with clients of multiple sizes. As customers they have to be involved in digital marketing and have to have a substantial enough budget that they are operating at scale digitally. Clients that are most likely to be successful with us are those that know what they are trying to accomplish with their digital marketing programs. By that I mean there are still many clients that are chasing non meaningful performance or business metrics in their digital campaigns. Our best customers understand how marketing and digital marketing specifically helps their business. They also should have data or proprietary data that they can use for marketing purposes. Many of our products and services are geared toward the data the client has and how we can enrich or bring that data into the online world.

CEOCFO: How do you reach your potential clients?

Mr. Montes: Our primary method for finding our clients is our sales force. Marketing is second and often supports the sales team's efforts. We have a number of sellers across the US and they are deployed geographically from Boston down to Miami and from Dallas to Chicago and San Francisco down to Los Angeles. We have a geographic net if you will of sales people who are going out speaking to clients and agencies and evangelizing our products and services. The other way we try to connect with new clients is by attending or speaking at trade-shows. Our marketing team also puts

out thought leadership materials and best practices. These materials may appear on our own website or in columns that we write for different marketing magazines.

CEOCFO: What surprised you most as the business has developed?

Mr. Montes: The most surprising thing so far is the amount of time required to build a multi-pronged, multi-national company. We have a sophisticated technology layer and recruiting and retaining the technology team is sort of one skill set for me. Having this diversified function in the company has been a challenge. It is not just growing sales and marketing or focusing on product; I would say it is equal across the board. And since we operate in Europe, Latin America and North America, it's not just doing it here but also abroad where infrastruc-

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– Edward Montes

ture and other key elements necessary to operate the business differ vastly. It is also been challenging to build a distinct company culture, so I, in partnership with some other team members, have spent a lot of time working on this. I think from a client perspective what surprised me the most is probably the range of clients we serve which includes the type, size, sophistication and knowledge. There is so much need for digital marketing talent and assets as well as products and services that you can find yourself chasing requests that may have little to no profit on the other end.

CEOCFO: Are there geographical areas where you would like a greater presence or do you care?

Mr. Montes: We care because from our standpoint there are some infrastructure requirements. Our strength is the Americas from Canada all the way South to Brazil. That is where the bulk of our business is coming from and I would like to continue to strengthen that. Our successes here have afforded us several new offices in the past few years. I would like to continue growing in the Americas, as we have done, and I would like to get stronger in Europe and potentially enter APAC at some point. But to do so it takes time to make sure the product localization is correct and the culture can be exported. Every time we open a new country we get better at it and we know that contrary to popular belief it is not as simple as deploying the software and letting someone use it.

CEOCFO: About a year ago you went from Adnetik to Digilant. Why did you make that change and how has it helped you?

Mr. Montes: Adnetik was meant to represent advertising and kinetic energy; the energy of the digital space with our advertising knowledge. Unfortunately it also was very similar to the term adnetwork which is a particular class of intermediaries or service providers in the digital marketing space. As we started to expand globally, the term was being confused with adnetwork as opposed to Adnetik. So the change to Digilant helped us alleviate the confusion. Digilant is meant to evoke the vigilant way we protect our clients' business in the digital realm. There are some people who do not have their clients' best interest at heart in this space and we think the new name sets us apart and helps communicate that we always act with the client's best interest in mind.

CEOCFO: As far as tweaks, what would you like to add to your offering?

Mr. Montes: We constantly want to improve upon the product and we will always work towards that. We also want to evolve the product and add more channels of media as well as provide more analysis and insight into the data by providing unique information about our client's audience. I also

want to continue to make Digilant a place where innovation is the norm and people enjoy contributing to an evolving product. Change and innovation will ensure Digilant remains an exciting place to work and for clients' to do business with.

CEO CFO: Where does the human element come in for Digilant?

Mr. Montes: Technology alone is not sufficient to sustain the business. Although we rely on our technology to do the heavy lifting, it is necessary to have a layer of services and human interaction. This is why the bulk of our business relies upon our clients working with our service teams in order to make the campaigns or marketing

and advertising as successful as possible. We have a strong preference for pairing our technology with people as opposed to simply deploying technology and walking away from our clients because we believe human interaction and interpretation adds value.

CEO CFO: What should the business and investment community pay attention to Digilant?

Mr. Montes: If you are in the business or investment community, you are seeing the impact of big data across a number of industries. Our company exists as a result of the impact or the current onslaught of big data and marketing and advertising. If you be-

lieve that data can give you an advantage and if you are a client or a potential business owner, or manager and you are looking for an edge through the data that you have, we are a company that from a marketing and media perspective can put that to work for you. Our entire thesis of being is to try and create data advantages for our clients because we believe media is moving to a bilateral marketplace model. In a bilateral marketplace, the party with the superior information tends to have the upper hand or the advantage. We want to give our clients those advantages by creating data and enriching existing data. That is why they should pay attention to us.



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