Account Executives at Global Media Company Spend up to 60 Percent More Time with Sponsors

Overview

Country or Region: United States
Industry: Media and entertainment

Customer Profile
Scripps Networks, based in Knoxville, Tennessee, delivers lifestyle content through television, the Internet, books, magazines, and emerging media platforms.

Business Situation
Scripps Networks used video samples and slide presentations to sell to advertisers, but the process of finding and managing that content was time-consuming and often unproductive.

Solution
Scripps Networks adopted a video and presentation library and management solution by PPTshare, powered by Microsoft technologies.

Benefits
- Boosts time for direct selling by up to 60 percent
- Strengthens relationships with media buyers, advertisers
- Provides 99.995 percent uptime
- Spurs rapid adoption
- Delivers business insight to boost sales effectiveness

"Microsoft SQL Server and PPTshare help us to give our account executives more time to do what they do best."

Garry Heath, Director of Ad Sales Marketing, Scripps Networks

Account executives at Scripps Networks, LLC use video samples and slide presentations to help sell ad time. But finding the right content, copying it, and shipping it to advertisers was time-consuming and expensive. Scripps Networks turned to its video and presentation management vendor, PPTshare, which helped it to adopt a sales enablement solution based on PPTshare technology and Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 data management software. The customized content library and presentation management system reduced the time to locate content and get it to potential clients by 98 percent. Account executives now spend up to 60 percent more of their time with media buyers and advertisers—and still spend more time with their families. The solution has high availability, won rapid user adoption, and delivers business intelligence that Scripps Networks uses to burnish its sales effectiveness.

Situation

PPTshare was accustomed to helping its customers to organize and use their video and slide presentation decks. The challenge posed by Scripps Networks LLC, however, was a bit more complicated than that.

Scripps Networks—home to HGTV, Food Network, DIY Network, Travel Channel, Cooking Channel, and Great American Country, among other brands—was concerned that its video and presentation content management practices could become a drag on the company's advertising revenue. It brought those concerns to PPTshare, its longtime video and presentation management vendor, and sought a solution.

The account executives at Scripps Networks relied on their company's enormous library of video content—housed in New York City and Knoxville, Tennessee—to help make sales pitches. In particular, they used the thousands of video "vignettes" that the Scripps Networks television brands had produced for advertisers over the years. The vignettes were important sales aids because they gave prospective advertisers specific examples of how Scripps Networks could produce similar content for them. Account executives would generally bring the videos with them to client meetings or mail them to clients.

That is, they would when they could find them. Locating a video that had been produced for another advertiser a couple of years before might require tracking down the executive responsible for that account at the time and asking about the video's whereabouts. It wasn't always clear if the content was stored in Knoxville or New York. It could take a week to find, copy, and send a video to the regional office that had requested it. The account executive then mailed the video to a media buyer or

advertiser—and wondered when, or if, the video had been viewed.

"Scripps Networks came to feel that it wasn't the most productive way for it to operate," says AlexAnndra Ontra, President of PPTshare. "Any time that the account executives spent looking for content was time that they weren't out meeting with clients and generating sales."

The time to track down and process video content was equally distracting to Scripps Networks. "Time spent responding to requests for existing video was time that the ad sales marketing department at Scripps Networks couldn't spend building new sales tools, producing new vignettes, or creating new partnership opportunities for advertisers," says Ontra.

Video wasn't the only medium creating a problem for Scripps Networks account executives. Slides—a simpler medium in many ways—were causing a greater headache. "Anyone can build a slide deck," points out Ontra. "And Scripps Networks had everyone from planners to vice presidents building them—but without any practical way to exchange them or to share best practices."

When account executives in New York City and Los Angeles, California, for example, were each pitching Scripps Networks vignettes to independent automotive companies, much of their presentations might be the same—but each presentation would be created separately, and redundantly.

"To cut down on the time spent recreating similar decks over and over, Scripps Networks wanted to produce 'master' sales presentations that were the result of repeated refinement by their account execs around the country," says Ontra. "And the

presentations needed to be instantly accessible to everyone. Scripps Networks asked for our help and we agreed to provide it."

With that, all this wasn't just Scripps Networks' problem anymore. Now, it was PPTshare's problem, too.

Solution

Could PPTshare devise a technology solution to address the concerns at Scripps Networks? Most of the requirements that Scripps Networks detailed to PPTshare were business oriented—such as needing a solution that was reliable and easy to use, to encourage rapid adoption and broad use. But at least one requirement focused on technology.

"We gave PPTshare the mandate that the solution had to be built on a Microsoft architecture," says Garry Heath, Director of Ad Sales Marketing for Scripps Networks. "That it had to be a Microsoft-based tool was a no-brainer for us; Microsoft drives everything we do. We use Microsoft technology because it's cost-effective, user friendly, and it works."

Six weeks after being presented with these issues and requirements, PPTshare returned to Scripps Networks with its solution, which the media company dubbed the Scripps Network Interactive Video Library ("SNIVL," affectionately pronounced "snivel"). The solution is based on two PPTshare products: PPTshare Online Library and PPTshuffle™ Slide Library for PowerPoint. The products form an integrated system that Scripps Networks uses to filter, search, tag, manage, and distribute video and slides, as well as to create new presentations from existing slides and video.

PPTshare met the Scripps Networks requirement to base the solution on Microsoft technology. SNIVL and its underlying PPTshare products run on the Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 data management system, Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010, and Microsoft ASP.NET code developed with Visual C#. Microsoft technologies furnish capabilities such as search (through Microsoft FAST Search Server 2010 for SharePoint) and business intelligence (through Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services).

The manner in which PPTshare provides the solution is something of a departure for Scripps Networks. PPTshare hosts SNIVL for Scripps Networks at a PPTshare data center, making this a software-as-a-service or cloud-computing solution. PPTshare saves Scripps Networks the expense of infrastructure expansion and maintenance, and makes it easier for advertisers, account executives in the field, and other authorized users to access and use Scripps Networks presentations and videos, since there's no need for these external users to navigate through a Scripps Networks firewall.

To use SNIVL, Scripps Networks account executives log on to the solution through a standard web browser and go to the video library (see Figure 1). There, they can search using any combination of filters, including industry, advertiser, network, flight dates, sponsorship type, and size of video. Or, they can go to the site in response to an email notification advising them of the availability of new content.

Either way, the account executives can select video files, build presentations based on existing slides and slide decks (see Figure 2), integrate presentations with video, and send their prospects email messages with links to the presentations or video files—all from within SNIVL.
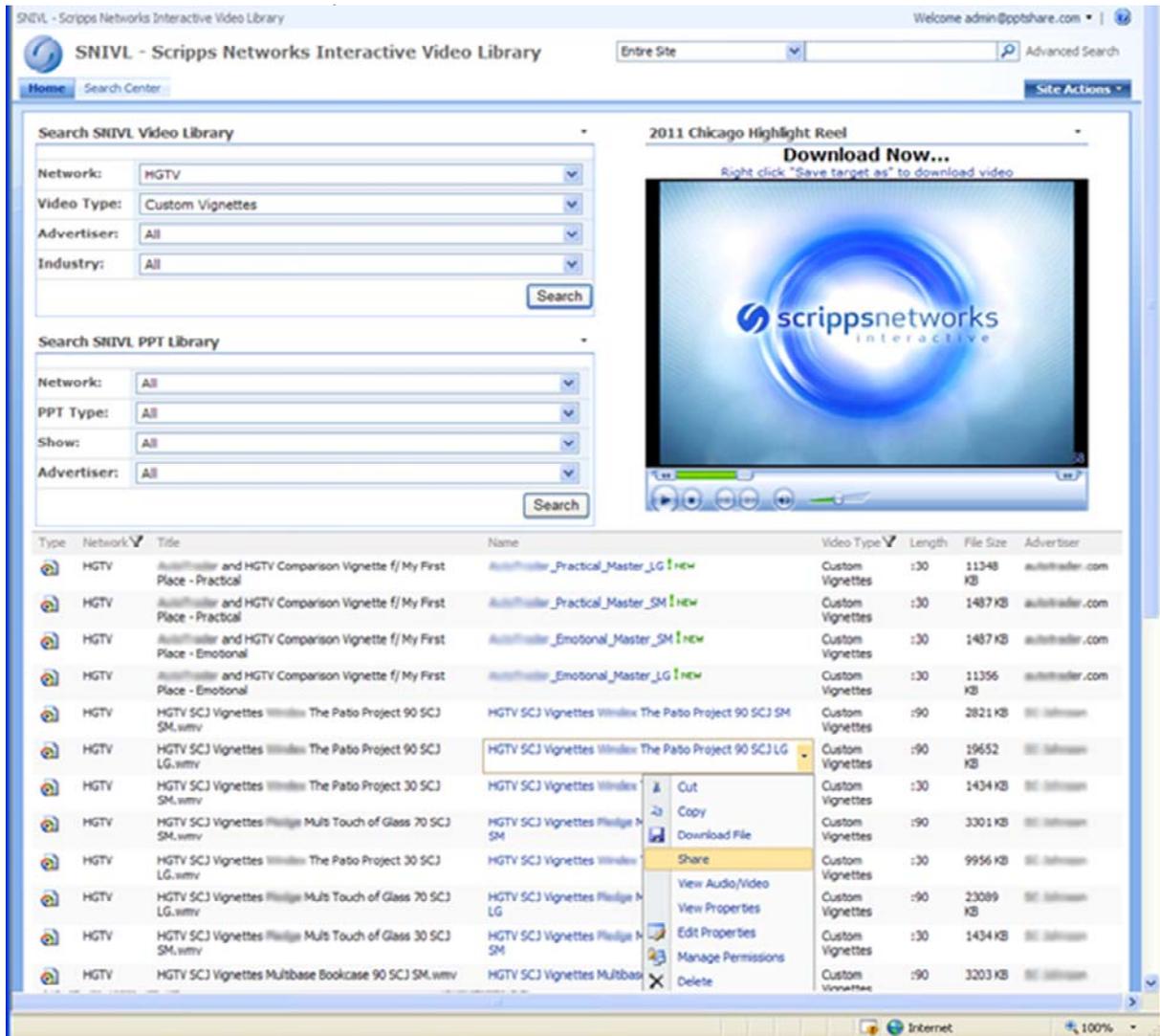
Putting together video files or presentations and distributing them to media buyers and advertisers is only part of the way that Scripps Networks uses SNIVL. Scripps Networks also takes advantage of business intelligence capabilities provided by SQL Server to gather data on the use of those files and presentations—including whether, when, and how often the content is viewed or shared by recipients. The data management software logs use of the

solution-generated links to access content, and aggregates that information in a series of reports available to Scripps Networks users on the SNIVL site. Users can view the reports or download data to Microsoft Excel 2010 spreadsheets for further analysis.

Benefits
PPTshare met its customer's challenge to reduce the time that Scripps Networks

Figure 2: Executives build presentations quickly by dragging and dropping existing slides (top rows) into a new presentation (bottom row).

account executives need to find and manage video and presentation content. As a result, those account executives have more time to meet with their clients and to build more effective relationships with them. The SNIVL solution also provides high availability and business intelligence for better decision making.

Boosts Time for Direct Selling by up to 60 Percent

Scripps Networks' key goal for its solution was to boost the productivity of its sales executives in finding, using, and distributing video and slide content. In that goal, the solution has been completely successful, according to Heath, the Director of Ad Sales Marketing at Scripps Networks.

He points to the three-to-five day span that it used to take for an account executive to identify, locate, and receive a copy of the tape or DVD to be shared with a media buyer or advertiser. Today, Scripps Networks account executives use SNIVL to complete that same process in as little as 20 minutes—effectively cutting the time needed by more than 98 percent. The new process also preserves the visual clarity of the video, which wasn't always possible with the earlier technology.

Scripps Networks account executives put that time savings to good use. Many now spend up to 60 percent more time in face-to-face meetings with prospects than they did before adopting SNIVL. "We want our account executives out meeting with clients; that's how they make sales," says Heath. "Microsoft SQL Server and PPTshare help us to give our account executives more time to do what they do best."

Strengthens Relationships with Media Buyers, Advertisers
The process isn't just faster, according to Heath. It's also more effective. "Now, when our account executives finish calls with their prospects, they can follow up with links to appropriate sample vignettes well within an hour," he says. "Imagine the greater impact that has on media buyers and advertisers than receiving that same material a week later. The conversations are still fresh in their minds. It's the best time to get their attention to view the videos. And it's a great way to demonstrate our effectiveness."

That, in turn, contributes to what Heath calls "a trickle up" effect. "If the account executive is able to respond quickly to a request from a media buyer, then the buyer can do the same with his client, the advertiser," explains Heath. "This fast turnaround makes for a more mutually

beneficial partnership and can dramatically enhance and strengthen the relationships among them all."

Another consequence of this productivity boost has nothing to do with sponsorships and ad sales—at least, not directly. "Our account executives are now more effective at what they do," says Heath. "And that's not just good for business—it also means a more well-balanced work/home life— something Scripps Networks encourages as one of its core values."

Provides 99.995 Percent Uptime, Spurs Rapid Adoption
For SNIVL to boost the productivity and effectiveness of the Scripps Networks account executives, it must be reliable. The solution must be up and running when account executives need it, and when media buyers and advertisers click emailed links to view videos and presentations. SNIVL meets this test with high availability, according to Heath.

That availability averages 99.995 percent, reports Ontra. One of the factors she cites for that high availability is the use of SQL Server. "We just don't see problems with SQL Server—it's there and it works," she says. "It gives us the reliability and availability that we need to satisfy clients like Scripps Networks. It supports all of our presentation management and video solutions, which require multi-terabytes of data, failover clustering, mirroring to a backup site. Scripps Networks needed a solution to help enable sales. SQL Server is a key technology in that sales enablement."

The high reliability and user friendly interface of SNIVL has made it easy for Scripps Networks account executives to adopt it. Scripps Networks introduced SNIVL with a 25-person pilot. Within a year, and without any significant advertising of

the solution, SNIVL use grew to cover all
300 account executives at Scripps
Networks.

**Delivers Business Insight to Boost Sales
Effectiveness**
One of the most significant ways that
Scripps Networks uses SQL Server in SNIVL
is for business intelligence.

"For the first time, we have real-time
business intelligence for both managers
and account executives around the use of
video and presentations," says Heath. "The
account executive receives an alert through
email when his or her SNIVL link is viewed
by a client or shared with others.
Management can then quantify the
potential for sales based directly on the
level of client interest."

Scripps Networks can expand its use of
successful approaches and quickly replace
less successful approaches. When
aggregated data shows consistent
advertiser interest in a specific type of
marketing vehicle—talent-based vignettes,
for example—Scripps Networks account
management can consider proposing a
similar vignette to other clients.

"We're using the Microsoft and PPTshare
sales enablement technology to gain a
better sense of what our clients need from
us," says Heath. "What could be more
valuable than that?"

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers in the United States and Canada who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:
www.microsoft.com

For more information about PPTshare products and services, call (212) 213-1315 or visit the website at:
www.pptshare.com

For more information about Scripps Networks, LLC, visit the website at:
www.scrippsnetworks.com

Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2

Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 delivers higher scalability for mission-critical environments, more efficient IT, and expanded reporting and analytics through self-service business intelligence.

For more information about Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2, go to:
www.microsoft.com/sqlserver/2008/en/us/R2-editions.aspx

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 Enterprise
  - Microsoft FAST Search Server 2010 for SharePoint
  - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft PowerPoint 2010
- Microsoft Visual Studio
  - Microsoft Visual C#
- Technologies
  - Microsoft ASP.NET
  - Microsoft SQL Server Reporting Services

Partners
- PPTshare