

# What Marketers Should be Most Thankful For

By Joanna O'Connell, CMO, [MediaMath](#)



This time of year, it's typical to take stock of what we're thankful for – our friends, family, health, job and other positives in our lives. But what should marketers be thankful for?

## 1) The rise of programmatic marketing

Programmatic advertising has shifted from “tip of the spear” to “mainstream.” As we move into the next phase of programmatic, marketers should be excited about the real potential programmatic has to impact all aspects of marketing, from paid to owned and earned, in driving the business outcomes they care about. Programmatic will continue to permeate marketing, taking its roots in machine learning and automation of decisioning driven by data, and push those concepts through the full marketing spectrum of consumer/brand touch points.

## 2) The value of humans in an era of big data

Marketers love data. It's wonderful that there are advances in gathering and analyzing data, but it's important to remember that you are marketing to consumers, not machines. Don't forget that you are trying to reach actual people. You also work every day with people (even as machines become more and more important in our marketing efforts). Recruiting and

keeping great talent, from analysts to creative, will – and should! – remain paramount.

### **3) Breakthroughs on the false dichotomy between privacy and relevancy**

There has been growing public debate that consumers need to choose either privacy or relevancy. This is not the case, and marketers should be grateful this myth is breaking down. Many of the world's top brands are already engaged in marketing that is both privacy-aware and relevant, recognizing that loyal, happy consumers are treated with respect AND given advertising that is meaningful to them. Thankfully, the conversation is shifting toward valuing relevant advertising, while simultaneously prioritizing privacy and effective targeting. Understanding your consumer *and* delivering great content in a way that is respectful and open will mean competitive advantage down the line.

### **4) 2016 will be the year of the agency**

The question, “Are agencies dead?” has been making the rounds in the marketing industry over the last few years. Fortunately, the conversation is shifting toward, “How can agencies be the most valuable partners to their clients?” Marketers should be thankful that agencies can't and shouldn't be a thing of the past. Expert services won't ever go away because they will always be needed – but as those needs evolve, the agencies must change with them. Even the most well-staffed in-house media teams rely on external partners, whether for executional or strategic help, and that's not a bad thing. By putting the focus on partnership in the truest sense of the word, with a shared vision and responsibility plus open communication, agencies and their clients can smartly work towards shared goals together.

*About the Author: Joanna joins MediaMath from AdExchanger where she was the founding member of the AdExchanger Research*

*practice, developing syndicated primary research in the areas of programmatic advertising and audience targeting, and serving as an expert partner to marketers, agencies, publishers and advertising and marketing technology companies. Prior to AdExchanger, Joanna spent three years at Forrester Research, serving as Principal Analyst. Joanna has more than 15 years of experience in the marketing leadership industry. She started at digital advertising agency Avenue A in New York and was a founding member of Razorfish's ATOM Systems agency trading desk. More recently, she ran brand relations for the Audience on Demand practice at VivaKi, helping advertising clients target and optimize broad-reaching interactive campaigns. Joanna graduated from Vassar College with a B.A. in psychology. She was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and graduated with departmental and general honors.*