

# Cynopsis: Kids!

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Good morning. It's **Monday, January 9, 2012**, and this your first early morning briefing.

Answering a few of our questions this week is **Brian Fitzgerald, Co-founder of Evolve Media Corp**, a provider of online advertising solutions, creative agencies and video platforms. Evolve is the parent company of four business units, Gorilla Nation Media, AtomicOnline, Double Helix and SpringBoard Video. Fitzgerald was a Co-founder and developer of all of these franchises. Today our questions will focus specifically on **Youthology Media** ([www.youthologymedia.com](http://www.youthologymedia.com)), a subsidiary of Gorilla Nation Media that provides kid, tween and teen targeted digital marketing programs. Until last year, Youthology Media was formerly known as Gorilla Nation Kids and Teens (GNKids and Teens). Youthology's services include digital content development, branded entertainment, targeting, and brand studies, as well as video production and distribution for clients in the entertainment, consumer goods, food and beverage, retail, and telecommunications industries. It also provides targeted brand campaigns, show cases for brands, and online advertisement sales, as well as sells advertisements to advertisers and agencies internationally. Prior to co-founding Gorilla Nation in 2001, Fitzgerald was an Intellectual Property attorney. He lives in LA with his wife and kids.

**Gorilla Nation had been involved in the kid and teen world for some time, what happened or changed to make you decide that you needed a specific company, Youthology, specifically for the youth market? Was it one area that drove the decision specifically kids, tweens or teens?**

GNKids and Teens was the starting point for us in the youth world and we were hugely successful. The deeper we got into this vertical we discovered brands really wanting to reach tweens specifically. Therefore we added more tween specific sites to our offering in order cater to this growing demand. The Youthology vertical encompasses kids, teens and tweens allowing us to present brands with a more specific audience, with ad products and media programs custom tailored to engage said audience.

**What is the main difference between the way adults and kids, tweens and teens use digital media?**

There are some parallels between digital use of adults and youth in the fact they are on the web for 3 things- research information, entertainment and to socialize. The difference is in the content. Tweens and Teens are researching information they might need for school projects as well as info about music, movies, sports, and video games. Adults tend to search for information about how-to's, travel, local events, etc. When it comes to entertainment, games are HUGE for kids, teens, tweens and this really spans all ages of youths. We have found one of the best ways for a brand to engage with youth is through a branded game. Adults enjoy entertainment through games as well but also watch videos and visit humorous sites.

### **And specifically social media?**

I think it goes without saying that the main source of social media for adults is Facebook and Twitter. Given the age minimum for Facebook is 13, younger youth are not even able to participate. Youth tend to socialize on sites surrounding content where they share common interests and are able strike up conversations about those topics. We have been very impressed and somewhat surprised about how mature and well spoken some of the youth are on our social sites. We often see them talking about politics and world affairs. They are very in tune with current events and quite vocal about them on our message boards. Recognizing that market opportunity, our publishing division AtomicOnline purchased TeenSpot.com, one of the Web's largest teen community sites, allowing Youthology to offer to marketers media programs that are far more integrated than what we customarily can execute reliably on sites that are merely affiliates.

### **Have the current economic challenges changed how you are partnering and developing new relationships in marketing, branded entertainment and custom video production and distribution?**

Over the last 2 years we have been diligent in delivering branded entertainment and other highly custom executions at constantly improving price points. At the same time we have ensured that our represented sites are able to seamlessly and effortlessly integrate these custom elements. These dual focuses provide advertisers with price effective high impact scalable executions and our publishers access to advertising dollars previously out of their reach.

### **Do you think that kids, tweens and teens are as fickle, unpredictable, unreliable, etc., as industry folks like to think they are or is that just an excuse?**

I wouldn't say they're fickle; they just know what they like and what they don't like. Through our community of youth websites we've noticed that if something doesn't grab kids' attention immediately, they'll move on without hesitation, it's easy to do since so much is being thrown at them. So for us, it's important to capture their interest as soon as they click onto our sites it's how we keep our readers coming back.

### **How hard is it to keep up with kids, tweens and teens or a step ahead of them to make sure you can reach them the way you need to reach them?**

This question kind of goes hand and hand with the previous question. Youth are very busy on the web surfing around different sites and if they are not entertained or engaged they will leave. We find it very important to listen to the kids, teens and tweens on what they are discussing on the sites, what games they are playing, and what articles they are most interested in reading. This gives us knowledge to relay to brands and helps us create campaigns that are impactful and will resonate with the youth. It's not about staying ahead as much as it keeping a pulse on youth.

### **Is everybody at Youthology really young?**

Our employees reflect the Youthology brand and range from 2-17 years old. Just kidding! Youthology employs a staff that ranges in age from early 20s to 40s. However, we do actually work with sites that were started by youth. Either way, working in the youth market keeps everyone very young at heart.

**What have you learned from your own kids and their friends that has influenced how you or your clients are reaching their target audiences?**

I've learned that if kids find something engaging, then they will really immerse themselves with it and spend a ton of time interacting with it (a toy, a game, an activity, etc.). The flipside of that is that, it is often very difficult to predict what they will find engaging. When I look at some of the toys, games or other things that capture my kids attention, I am baffled. If someone told me that Puffles, a part of Club Penguin, would be so huge, I would have laughed. How wrong I was.

**What are the educational applications of what Youthology does and is there anything new on that front?**

We do have a number of educational sites and education/college based social networks that offer free notes, outlines, vocabulary terms, study guides, practice exams, as well as college only social nets. We are not currently seeking out any additional educational sites but I do think we will work in more educational integrations and campaigns in 2012.

**What new youth project are you most excited about?**

One of the things that I am really excited about is SPIL's Social Gaming. In a social game a user will be able to earn virtual currency in exchange for interacting with an advertisement. This allows players to connect with, and share a brand's message within their gaming environment, where they are already the most engaged. SPIL is one of the largest gaming sites in the world with a localized global network of sites in 19 languages. Currently they reach over 140 million unique users worldwide per month.

**I understand you are an electric mountain biker. How did you get involved with the sport and is it a competitive sport?**

It's not exactly competitive. I've always loved the feeling of speeding down the side of a mountain or navigating a rocky creek bed, but as time cranked on, climbing up that mountain got harder and more and more treacherous! So I found a way to manipulate that a bit to my advantage. Now I can peddle downhill for as fast as my heart desires! I've found away to please the 22-year-old guy inside of me without putting to much wear and tear on my 42 year old body.