You’re involved in several initiatives at Rogers Media. Can you explain them?

Corby Fine: I wear a couple of hats. I’m senior director of business development for the digital group at Rogers Media, which is the media division of Rogers Communications, Canada’s largest telecommunications company. We’re a fully integrated media company across all channels—television, radio, print, internet, publishing, sports, entertainment and shopping. I also run our Digital Business Development Center of Excellence. Essentially, my team is responsible for evaluating all new initiatives that have a digital component and then helping build business cases for them. We are also the subject matter experts for our corporate mergers and acquisitions team.

“As a publisher, we need to understand that different buyers have different needs and ways in which they want to conduct business.”

Given your broad portfolio of responsibilities, what are your three biggest business priorities?

Fine: One is differentiating through data. Two is being able to fulfill the media buy in whatever way a buyer wants to—whether it’s by phone, via an automated always-on system or through an auction where a buyer takes its chances. As a publisher, we need to understand that different buyers have different needs and ways in which they want to conduct business. We need to have the infrastructure and tools to enable that. Third, we need to figure out how to maintain the value of the audiences and the inventory while also finding new ways to drive incremental revenues, whether it’s through new types of ad units, consumer offerings or ecommerce.
Why is the shift to programmatic ad buying significant to your business, and how are you leveraging this opportunity?

Fine: As an industry, we were fairly uneducated about the shift to data-driven programmatic digital buying. Rather than trying to develop a market ourselves, the eight companies in CPAX agreed that collectively we have a much stronger opportunity to both educate and build a market. We have a better chance to learn from each other and drive a stronger relationship between the buy side and the sales side in the Canadian market.

We launched in the spring of 2012 and have a fairly strong working relationships with all of the premium buyers in the market as well as the trading desk. We can leverage and help facilitate programmatic buying for larger multichannel, upfront deals, whether they’re tied to TV or publishing.

We work with premium content brands, meaning brands that we either own or operate on a multichannel basis, so they’re either tied to TV stations, mass consumer trade magazines or radio stations. These are professional editorial, multichannel owned and operated assets. Rogers has ad representation deals with companies like Hearst Corporation, Time Inc., Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, the NBA, the NFL and Major League Baseball. Some of the brands have also given us permission to extend their inventory into the CPAX ecosystem.

How has eMarketer helped you make the business case for audience segmentation and programmatic buying?

Fine: Audience data and programmatic buying are moving so fast that it’s been very difficult to find and track relevant, valid sources of information to determine the size of the market and its direction. The beautiful thing about eMarketer is that it tracks all of these trends. There are two eMarketer charts that I regularly use on a slide to set up the conversation as to why we entered this business.

The charts showed that the No. 1 targeting interest of advertisers was audience-based, more so than contextual, behavioral and psychographic factors. The data showed that the No. 1 measurement to prove the effectiveness of an online marketing campaign was whether the advertiser found the right audience, more so than price and even performance-based conversion.

How has eMarketer helped you solve a problem?

Fine: There’s a big question around the need to provide direct programmatic buying, which essentially means letting an advertiser connect its buying engine, buying systems or demand-side platform to your inventory at fixed rates with guarantees. There’s been very little activity in the Canadian market around this. eMarketer data included the prediction that next year, something like 13% of programmatic buying is going to be done this way. It’s actually a number that is much higher than I would have been able to determine on my own based on my own conversations with buyers.

eMarketer has given me baseline information to allow me to make the decision that this is something important. The data was so important that it made a top features and requirements list on a request for information proposal that I put out to some technology providers. The request for information is for a supply-side platform to allow Rogers to open up a private exchange.

The second thing is that eMarketer has something that most other research sources don’t: regionalization. You provide information from the US and around the world that I use to predict where Canada will go because we usually follow suit on what we see in the US market. And then you track the Canadian market as it comes to fruition. This gives me an opportunity to see where we are and where we’re going. It’s important to distinguish between where the Canadian market is going based off global trends vs. based off Canada-specific data.

“eMarketer has something that most other research sources don’t: regionalization.”

I get the benefit of seeing what the rest of the world is doing, because we’re generally a little bit behind in some areas. Having that option to look at my domestic market, as well as the global market, is incredibly powerful.
What do you like best about eMarketer?

Fine: The ability to grab large, high-resolution charts and essentially plug them right into presentations saves me a lot of time. The charts are clean and crisp, and I don’t need to spend time reformatting them.

I like the ability to categorize and save documents based on different categorizations that make sense to me and create a favorites list to come back to. The ability to store the list locally is really critical. The alerts are great because I have triggers to notify me when new, relevant topics hit.

We’re a big media and communications company trying to innovate and run at a speed that’s probably not normal for the business. eMarketer information and insights help us justify our strategy and make decisions more quickly.

“I need top-line market trend information to make business decisions, and that’s what eMarketer allows me to do.”

What sets eMarketer apart from other business intelligence sources that you’re using?

Fine: For me, it’s the variety and volume of information—the breadth of it. In addition, I don’t need to wait weeks to get the next thing. It’s absolutely fast enough. The simplicity also sets it apart. I need top-line market trend information to make business decisions, and that’s what eMarketer allows me to do.