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# In Atlanta, BBDO Shifts Focus Digital Content and Analytics

## Replaces Staff, Seeks Clients With Lots of Contact With Customer

By [Malika Toure](#). Published on July 24, 2014.

 BBDO's Atlanta office is shifting its focus toward

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Drew Panayiotou

content production and analytics and emphasizing TV less as marketers seek a different mix of services. As part of that shift, the office last week laid off 10% to 15% of its staff of roughly 250 people, with plans to replace them with hires better suited to the new focus.

When the transition is complete, more than half the staff will be devoted to analytics, small-screen content production and digital creative.

The changes in Atlanta echo a broader industry transformation, as agencies that built their businesses around high-profile, high-cost TV campaigns adjust to marketers' changing needs.

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CMOs still buy major TV campaigns, but they are increasingly clamoring for smaller, faster campaigns that come more often, said Drew Panayiotou, president-CEO at the Atlanta office of BBDO, part of Omnicom Group. He joined in April after more than three years as CMO for Best Buy's U.S. operations, where he never had enough material to communicate with consumers on the increasingly direct basis social media now allows. "I always needed it," he said, "and I never had enough."

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Once he became an agency executive, he said, CMOs told him the same thing. "I need 10 mini-campaigns a year versus one a

quarter," one CMO said, he recalled.

"We're looking more closely at what messages are actually working in terms of ROI, as opposed to focusing on what media clients should be buying," Mr. Panayiotou said. Placing greater emphasis on messaging is imperative, he said -- devising it, placing it and then more importantly reviewing and revising it.

Mr. Panayiotou is executing the pivot with the help of Wil Boudreau, who was named exec VP-executive creative director in November. Mr. Boudreau arrived from BBDO New York, where he and his team were accorded a budget of approximately \$5,000 to start what became Lowe's "Fix in Six" series of stop-motion Vine videos. "We were literally in a closet-sized space shooting videos with an iPhone," Mr. Boudreau recalled.

With clients paying closer attention to production costs, budgeting becomes an additional consideration. That sets a new challenge for art directors and copywriters. "They need to be the new directors, filming and editing," Mr. Boudreau said.

As the agency hires, it is focusing on multi-disciplinary creatives, particularly "burgeoning talent who grew up in this time," Mr. Boudreau said. It recently hired Tim Wilson, a creative director at [AKQA](#) in London, to join the agency as a creative director in September.

"His ideas don't have digital applications, they are digital from the day they are born," Mr. Boudreau said.

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BBDO Atlanta has also set out to chase clients in categories such as apparel, electronics, automotive, luxury, travel and leisure -- marketers that look to reach consumers on multiple platforms, Mr. Panayiotou said, and "continue a conversation and not just a barrage of messages and advertising."

The office recently picked up projects, for example, from Carnival Corp., whose brands include Carnival Cruises, Princess and Holland America. BBDO Atlanta will produce work for it this year in social media, online, customer relationship marketing and TV.

Other BBDO offices may make similar changes or revise their specialties in other ways. Each agency office needs a "market-competitive offer to win business and grow on its own account," said BBDO Worldwide President-CEO Andrew Robertson. "Not exclusive expertise, but particular."

"It's less to do with creating in-house production facilities and more with making lots of work," he added.

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