

The Web's Largest Content-Style Ad Network, Adblade Enables Advertisers To Reach Over 200 Million Monthly Unique Users in the U.S. through NewsBullets with the Absolute Assurance of Brand Safety

**Business Services
Content-Style Ad Network**

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**Ashraf Nashed
CEO**

BIO:

Dr. Ash Nashed, MD is the Founder of Adblade and serves as its Chief Executive Officer. He is a recognized pioneer in the online health information industry, having launched one of the Web's first medical websites in 1994. Dr. Nashed Co-Founded The-HealthCentralNetwork in 1999, which grew into the second largest online health information network in the US and sold the company in 2005 to a group of blue chip investment firms. He also founded DealOn/Offerex, a

daily deal exchange, which he sold to ReachLocal in 2011. Dr. Nashed is Board Certified in Emergency Medicine and he is on the Board of Directors of Emergency Medical Associates, one of the nation's largest medical groups.

About Adblade:

Adblade is the world's first and only ultra-premium ad network, enabling advertisers to reach over 200 million monthly unique users in the US on over 1,000 top branded sites with the absolute assurance of brand-safety.

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Mr. Nashed, would you tell us about Adblade?

Dr. Nashed: Adblade is the web's largest content-style ad network. What that means is that we have ads that look like content, although they are properly marked as advertising. By looking like content and being positioned typically under article on major leading news and information sites, users will read the content of the ad as opposed to a banner ad on the web. We found that most users ignore the banners, which is something in the industry called banner blindness. Our content-style ad units are called NewsBullets, and they are a powerful vehicle for companies that want to get their message out there and reach the over 250 million users that we reach every month. At scale, advertisers both get a message out as well as drive significant traffic to their site and products, and they can actually measure people who purchase as a

result of those ads using our system. Our system can then optimize which ads are performing the best and driving the performance with our advertising on the hundreds and hundreds of websites that we work with.

CEOCFO: How do you work with the end advertiser?

Dr. Nashed: Advertisers can work with us in a variety of ways, and the simplest way is for them to go to Adblade.com, where they can create an account and create their own ad using our easy to use interface. Once their ad is approved, they can pay by credit card or PayPal, and their ads will go live the same day. The other way for higher volume advertisers is that they can work with us through an account manager and they can handle their needs on our system without having to log in to their account at all. It can be anywhere from self-service to a complete full service solution.

CEOCFO: When you speak with potential customers directly, do they understand it immediately, is there an "aha!" moment, or is it intuitive once it is pointed out?

Dr. Nashed: It is fairly straightforward. Particularly now, there is a lot of talk about content marketing, and many major advertisers are starting to understand that people do not want advertising, but they want to be informed and educated. Our units are the ideal vehicle for that type of transaction with consumers. They do understand it because there has been a lot of discussion in the marketplace about the value of content-style advertising. We are finding that people understand it pretty quickly.

CEOCFO: Do you find that people are taken aback when they realize it is an ad rather than real content?

Dr. Nashed: It depends on how it is presented. There are companies that have been copying our unit, but we have been the pioneer and the leader in this space. There have been some companies out there who have copied our style, however they headline it as "From around the web". That is misleading to customers. We clearly mark the ads as being advertisements, and we think that is an important characteristic so that consumers are not misled from the beginning. It also depends on the type of page you are taking a user to. If it is purely a sales-heavy landing page, I could see that some people would be a little turned off by it, but the way we optimize the ad allows us to put those ads where the consumers respond. We call this "converting"- meaning the consumers are responding to the type of landing page they are going to. Our system typically will optimize so that the user experience is a fairly decent user experience as far as advertising goes. People typically do not like advertising in general, whether it may be on the television, radio, or internet. We know that, but at the end of the day the units work very well both for the publishers in terms of generating great revenue and for the advertisers.

CEOCFO: After a company creates an ad and pays you, what happens?

Dr. Nashed: We have partnerships with hundreds of media publishers, such as Yahoo, Fox News, McClatchy Newspapers, Hearst Broadcast, and hundreds of local major TV station websites. They are already running our ads, so that when an advertiser comes to our site and creates an ad, they are automatically placed on hundreds of leading websites. We work directly with these publishers, and typically, we give them a share of their revenue, so it is important that we generate great revenues for them and they are counting on us to help monetize their websites for them.

CEOCFO: Would you tell us the most difficult part of the process to put together?

Dr. Nashed: It was the technology. The key here is to make it simple for advertisers but the way we are able to do that and make it perform well for both parties requires a lot of technology in the middle. It has taken us five years to develop this technology; it is technology that makes it easy to create an ad, and it makes everything easy for the account management team that we have as well as the monitoring and performance. We have algorithms that do many automated optimizations as well, but we add a human layer on to that which we think is very important both from a customer service level and from a performance level. All of that technology took a lot of time to build so that it could work so well and make things so simple for both the publishers and the advertisers that we serve. The technology was definitely the biggest challenge.

"There are many ways to look at advertising today that did not exist before, and the opportunity to provide advertising in the form of content is a very powerful tool on the internet and mobile internet as well. It is a tremendous opportunity that people should be looking at."- Ashraf Nashed

CEOCFO: What is your current geographic reach?

Dr. Nashed: We are primarily in the US and Canada, and somewhat in the UK.

CEOCFO: In May, you released a new and improved advertiser and publisher interface. What has changed with that new interface?

Dr. Nashed: We changed the entire design. There were many things, which took an advertiser about three clicks to do, and now it takes them one click. It comes down to those little things that make it an interface that is easier to use for the advertiser.

CEOCFO: You mentioned earlier that you were the pioneers in this area. Would you tell us about your

competitive landscape, and how you stay ahead of the followers?

Dr. Nashed: Quite a few companies have come along to copy our unit. It is nothing new, and it is something we have been dealing with in the last four years in terms of copycats. We have been able to stay ahead of the pack simply because we have built what we think is the best technology, and we have built the best publisher network. The result of having the best publisher network allows us to generally be able to provide the best performance to advertisers, and therefore the advertisers are willing to pay us more than they are willing to pay our competitors. It also goes full circle so that we are able to pay our publishers more than our competitors are. New competitors constantly challenge us. People look at the ads, which seem very simple, and they come along and find that it is actually not that easy to provide great performance for both sides of the equation- meaning the publisher side and the advertising.

CEOCFO: What have you learned in past experiences that have been most helpful at Adblade?

Dr. Nashed: One thing is that sometimes you can be too early with an idea. We have done things very early, and sometimes too early before the marketplace is ready to adopt it. The key message there has been to understand where the marketplace is at the current time, and make sure you provide solutions that address the current marketplace's needs as opposed to getting too many steps ahead in the game.

CEOCFO: What surprised you the most as Adblade has developed?

Dr. Nashed: What shocked me was how quickly we grew. Our first full year of business, we had eight figures in revenue. I did not expect that we would be so successful so quickly, and it spoke for the need in the marketplace for what we had.

CEOCFO: Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to Adblade?

Dr. Nashed: If they are in a situation where they would like to advertise their product to a very credible and

high-value audience, they should be looking at Adblade and our useful units, which are extremely effective. On the business side, if they are in the digital media space or are interested in being in the digital media space, we

are a unique player to partner with in order to help with their goals.

CEOCFO: Final thoughts?

Dr. Nashed: There are many ways to look at advertising today that did not

exist before, and the opportunity to provide advertising in the form of content is a very powerful tool on the internet and mobile internet as well. It is a tremendous opportunity that people should be looking at.

