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A BHR Interview with Nelson Boyce, Managing Director, Google

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About the Author



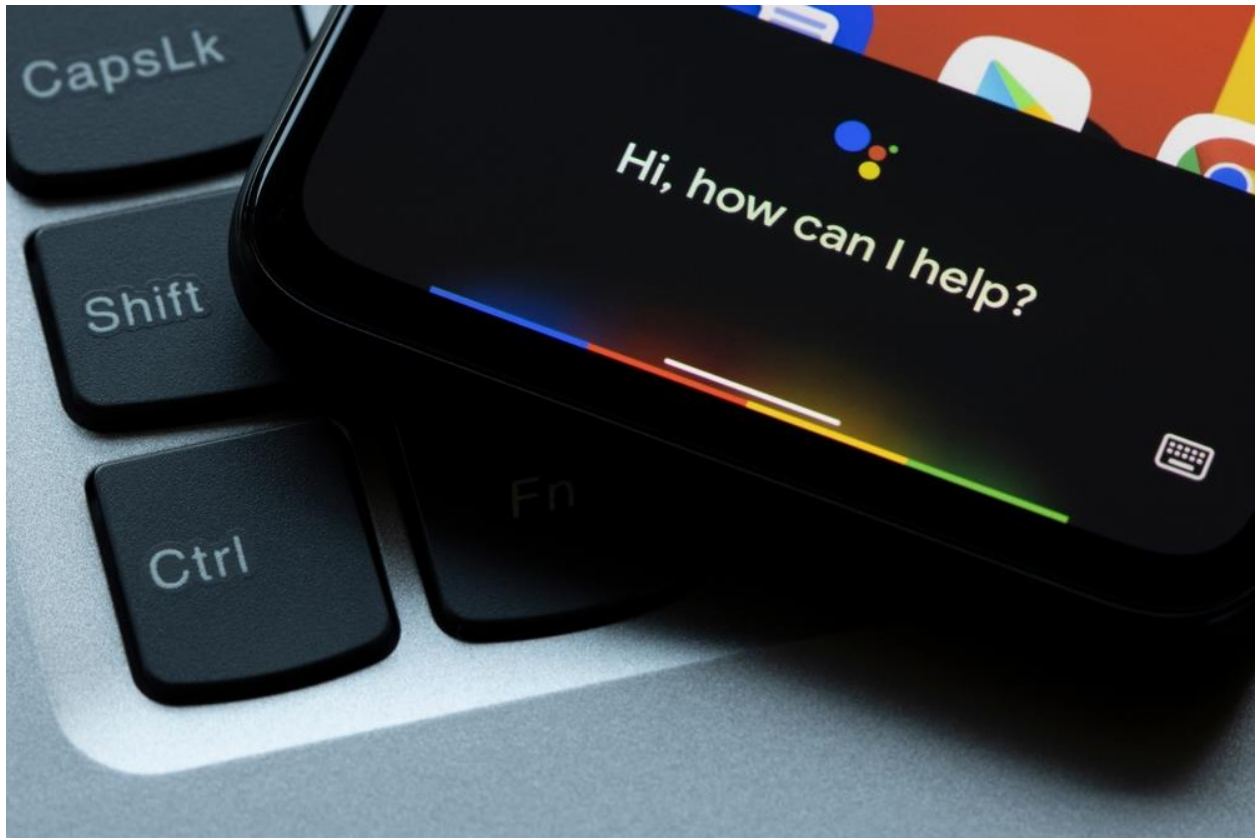
Nelson Boyce is a Managing Director at Google, leading travel industry advertising and marketing relationships in the central and eastern US. Prior to that, he was the Director of Agency Business Development at Google, overseeing the relationship with Publicis Groupe, a global advertising and communications company. Prior to Google, Nelson was the Senior Vice President of East Coast Media Sales for BET Networks a division of Viacom Media Networks. In this role, Nelson was responsible for driving linear and digital ad sales revenue. Aside from creating and

maintaining a high level of agency and client relationships, Nelson played an important role in the execution of sales strategy and process for the division.

Previously, Nelson was the Senior Vice President of Ad Sales Strategy and Marketing at Nickelodeon. He was responsible for supporting senior management in the development of short-term and long-range sales strategy and plans, analyzing and developing opportunities for successful new lines of business, and representing ad sales in business analyses, deal-making and planning to ensure the division's continued growth. Nelson had several other roles at Nickelodeon, including Senior Vice President of Digital Ad Sales, and Head of sales for TeenNick, Nickelodeon's teen-targeted network. Before coming to Nickelodeon, Nelson spent many years at VIBE, Blaze, Honey, and Heart & Soul magazines. Before switching to media, Nelson was a financial analyst with PaineWebber (now UBS) in their Mergers and Acquisitions group. Nelson sits on the board HSMAI (Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International), WTTC (World Travel and Tourism Council), Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta, and is a member of BLAG (Black Leadership Advisory Group) and the Exec Sponsor of the Atlanta Black Googler Network Chapter at Google. A graduate of Harvard University, Nelson lives in Atlanta, GA with his wife and son.

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Nelson, can you tell us a bit about your role at Google and your connection to the business of hospitality

I co-lead the US Advertising Sales for the travel category. My partners include OTAs like Priceline, Metas like Tripadvisor, Suppliers like Marriott Bonvoy and cruise lines like NCL who look to reach consumers through various Google surfaces like Google.com and YouTube.

How does Google, one of the most innovative businesses on the planet, define "innovation?"

Teamwork, diversity, and responsibility are critical in driving innovation at Google. As our CEO Sundar says, "Innovation comes from a collaborative and diverse team. We succeed when our partners do, and we are grateful for the work we do together."

This past year was a [year of profound innovation](#) and product momentum for us as a company- and it took a lot of strong and responsible collaboration with our teams and partners to get there.

Do you believe Google's clients deliver "innovative marketing" through your platforms? If so, why? If not, why not?

Google is heavily investing in AI and rapidly delivering advancements in marketing. On January 23, we announced [a conversational chat experience](#) to help advertisers build Search campaigns. This can help smaller advertisers that may want more assistance. For example, as Search becomes more visual, we've heard advertisers tell us that it can be challenging to create compelling images that drive performance. That's why we designed the conversational experience to suggest images tailored to a particular campaign using generative AI and images from a landing page. Marketers still have full control, approving images before they're used in a campaign. This capability will be added in the coming months.

Are there any hospitality or travel products or services which appear to use Google's platform in a more "innovative" manner?

Lufthansa is one of the world's largest airlines — and despite challenging economic conditions, they still set themselves ambitious growth targets. In order to reach those growth targets, they needed to find new customers with high lifetime value. They decided to use Performance Max, which uses Google AI to help marketers find more converting customers across all of Google's channels including YouTube, Display, Search, Discover, Gmail, and Maps. The results were overwhelming. Customer acquisition grew by 45% and bookings skyrocketed by 59%. Cost per action also dropped by 27%.

Are there non-hospitality products or services which have demonstrated a more creative, unique or innovative marketing approach? How so?

One example is this year's [Super Bowl spot](#) which highlights a Pixel camera accessibility feature called [Guided Frame](#) which helps blind and low-vision people take selfies. It was first launched on Pixel 7 and was developed with advice from a group of blind and low-vision Googlers. To bring the story to life, Google partnered with Adam Morse, an award-winning filmmaker who's also blind.

Where does AI or virtual reality, augmented reality or other technology advancements fit into Google's marketing platforms?

For more than [two decades](#), Google has worked with machine learning and AI to make our products more helpful. AI has helped our users in everyday ways from Smart Compose in Gmail to finding faster routes home in Maps. AI is also allowing us to contribute to major issues facing everyone, whether that means [advancing medicine](#) or finding more effective ways to [combat climate change](#). As we continue to incorporate AI, and more recently, generative AI, into more Google experiences, we know it's imperative to be [bold and responsible together](#). AI will help brands, publishers, and agencies in this moment by reimagining how marketing delivers measurement, media, and creative.

What do you see as the future of innovative digital marketing?

We are in an era of AI-powered growth, and marketers today will shape what the future becomes. Consumers want a new relationship with brands that respects their data and gives them relevant and personalized experiences. Business leaders want more from Marketing – demonstrable value as a powerful and reliable growth driver just as third-party cookies are going away. (IAB, ALM 2024 keynote)

- We need Marketers to develop new ways to know your customers and connect them with the magic of your products.
- We need Publishers to keep developing deep user relationships based on trust and a clear value exchange.
- We need Agencies with vision, context, and expertise to put the best tools and data to work. And we need all sides to continue to collaborate and work together to move our space forward. But let's not sugarcoat this: Change is hard. It takes a willingness to take smart risks, to experiment, to study best practices and scale what works.