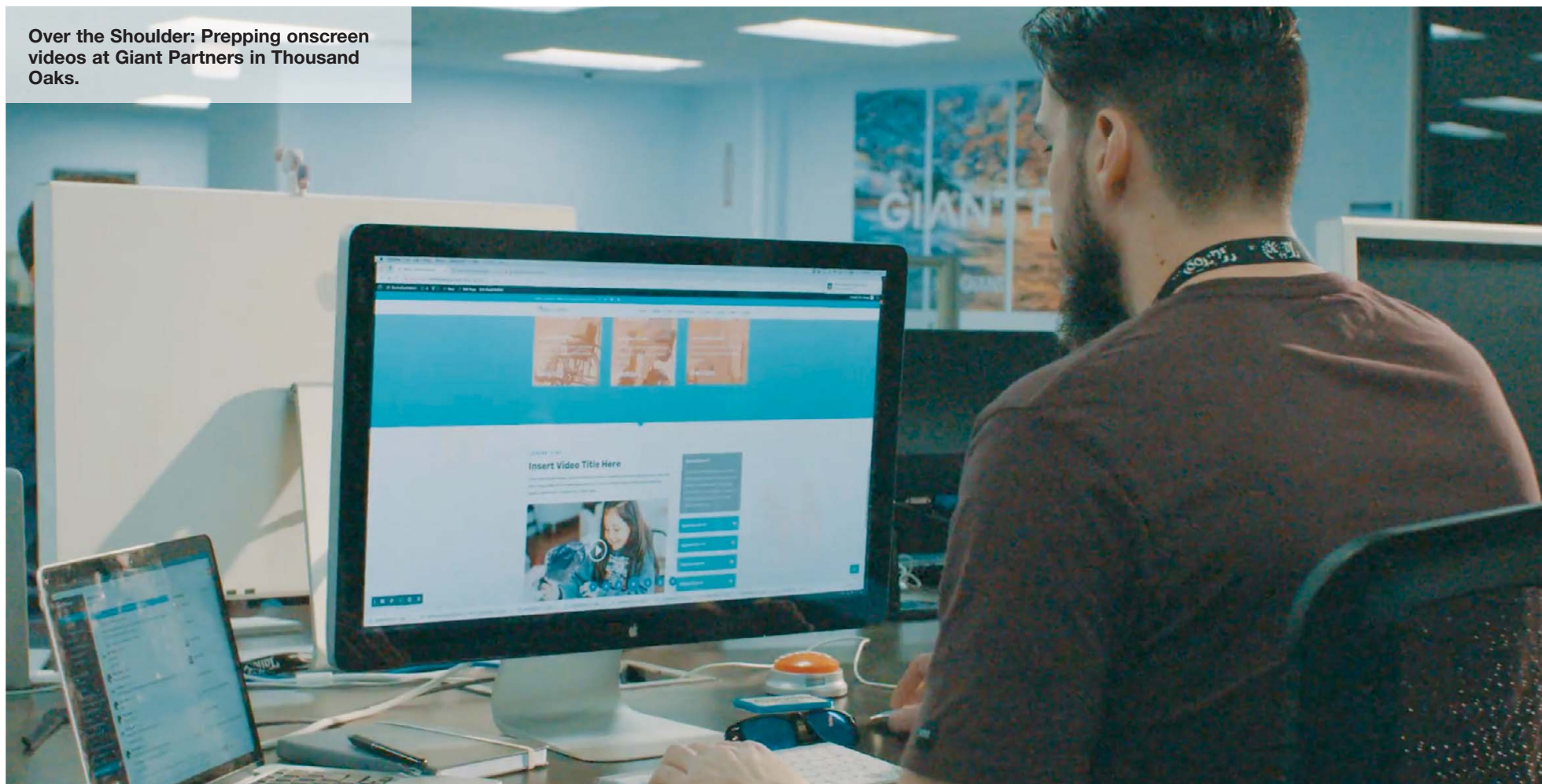


Over the Shoulder: Prepping onscreen videos at Giant Partners in Thousand Oaks.



Data + Marketing

TECHNOLOGY: Giant Partners in Thousand Oaks buys nearby Worxstudio for a selling advantage.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Data provider **Giant Partners** has overhauled the marketing portion of its business since acquiring digital marketing firm **Worxstudio**. Both companies are in Thousand Oaks.

The stock acquisition closed in July for an undisclosed amount.

With data as the day's hottest marketing currency, it has become common for marketing firms and advertisers to snatch up data companies to help them better communicate with narrow market segments. Successful data firms can command hefty price tags — earlier this year, French advertiser **Publicis Group** acquired Houston-based **Epsilon**, which bills itself as the industry's most advanced data-driven marketing firm, for a whopping \$4.4 billion.



Barile

Data companies acquiring marketers is rarer but made sense for Giant Partners as a response to client requests for data-driven marketing services. "We found (Worxstudio has) been more influential on our company at large than we expected," Giant

Partners Chief Executive **Giovanni Barile** told the Business Journal.

Giant Partners main line of business has been mining public sources of data such as subscriber lists, motor vehicle service records and online registries for consumer and business data, compiling it into lists and segmenting it by demographic and behavioral categories. It then offers those lists to companies that want to identify and market to their ideal target audiences.

In addition to big-name clients including **BMW North America**, **Ferrari North America** and **Ohio State University**, it sells its data lists to digital marketing agencies that use them to fuel campaigns for their clients.

With Worxstudio under its wing, howev-

er, Giant Partners has created a new, fully integrated digital marketing division called **DigiGiant**. Rather than just sell lists of consumer names and contact information, the company is now able to take a comprehensive, consultative approach for its clients.

"We do an internal strategy that takes between a day and a week, depending on the complexity of a customer's go-to-market strategy and value proposition," Barile said. "Every single customer is unique. Sometimes we have to learn an industry in the process which is no trivial task. Once we do that ... we present to the customer the strategy we recommend. They decide whether ... to award us with that business."

Information-based marketing

In addition to selling data, Giant Partners has offered in-house marketing services for years, but mostly in the form of old-school email campaigns and pay-per-click spend management.

Barile said the firm's clients began asking for more modern digital marketing services — Worxstudio's specialty — in 2017.

"That's what caught our attention," he said.

Giant Partners hired the neighboring firm for an initial project to help fill a client's digital marketing request. To their surprise, Worxstudio had already bought data from Giant Partners, learned how to ingest it and translate it into actionable insight for a marketing campaign, and formed a way of customizing campaign suggestions based on a client's audience.

According to **Chris Bergh**, chief executive of **DataKitchen Inc.**, a data analytics consultancy and software provider in Cambridge, Mass., Giant Partners must have seen Worxstudio's ability to analyze and act on its data as a sustainable competitive advantage it could pass on to its clients.

"Data is notoriously error-prone and analytics are challenging to modify quickly," he told the Business Journal via email. "A company (like Worxstudio) that can streamline the cycle time for new analytics while maintaining near-perfect quality can react more nimbly

to markets and can more easily adapt marketing campaigns to client requirements."

In fact, Barile said the fast reaction time and adaptability of Worxstudio's methodology are driving a "new core competency" for the firm.

"We're able to do data on demand," he said.

For example, consider a social media marketing campaign that targets a list of pet owners in 10 specific ZIP codes with household income of \$80,000 or more. If the campaign isn't yielding results with that dataset, Giant Partners can adjust the parameters in real time, perhaps to target pet owners with household income of \$150,000 instead of \$80,000.

"Without revealing our true secrets, we're able to provide other digital agencies better custom audiences for their campaigns. We never anticipated that," Barile said.

And because Giant Partners already houses all the data, "we don't always pass that cost on to the customer," he added.

Since July, the company has primarily offered this to its existing clients. It is just now beginning to accept new accounts.

All this represents a big evolution for Giant Partners, but the company isn't forgetting where it came from.

"Clients needing just data to fuel their own

marketing will still exist. Our list and data business is still viable," Barile said.

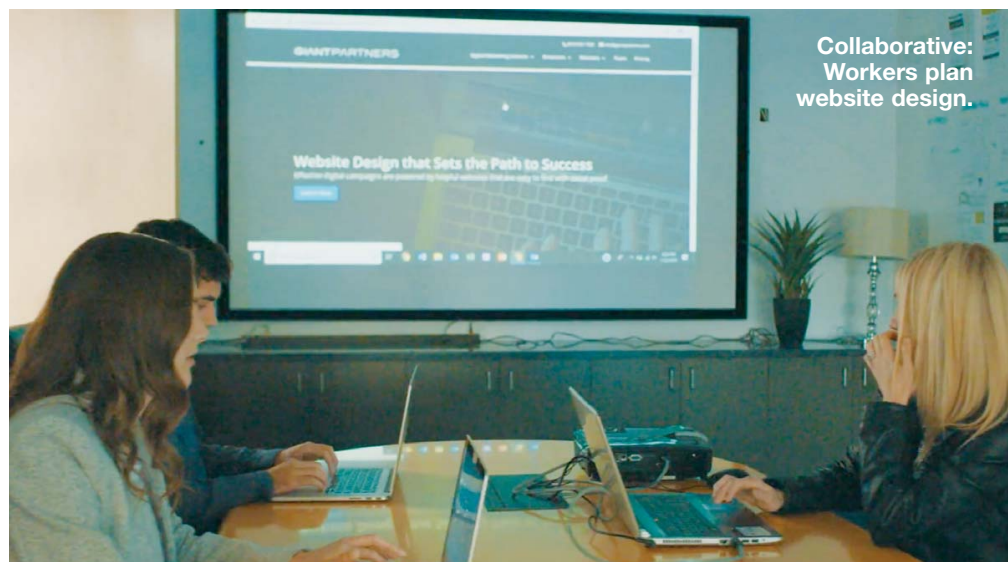
"Data append," or the process of cleaning clients' databases of inaccurate or outdated information, has remained a segment of the company's new DigiGiant division, too.

Data in demand

Giant Partners' acquisition of Worxstudio illustrates just how valuable data-driven marketing has become.

Barile called it the future of the industry, a sentiment echoed by **Christopher Rafter**, chief operations officer at **Inzata**, a big data firm and manufacturer of analytics software in Tampa, Fla.

"Practically every step in the buying process can be tracked digitally," Rafter said. "We're finally reaching the point where people are mobilizing things like artificial intelligence and algorithms to ingest and process all of that fragmented information and turn it into a logical sequence. From analyzing all those different sequences and identifying patterns and trends, that would inform other marketing decisions such as price promotions, product placements, advertising activity and targeting certain demographic segments. That may be what (Giant Partners) is looking to capitalize on with this acquisition."



Collaborative: Workers plan website design.