

**Audio Transcript**  
Episode 263 of "[E&P Reports](#)" Vodcast Series  
with *Mike Blinder*  
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The banner features the E&P Reports Vodcast logo on the left, which includes a Wi-Fi symbol and the text 'E&P REPORTS VODCAST'. In the center, the URL 'EditorandPublisher.com/Vodcasts' is displayed. On the right, there are images of a camera lens and a professional microphone. Below the URL, two video thumbnails are shown. The left thumbnail shows Gordon Borrell, CEO of Borrell Associates, in a home office setting with a Christmas wreath and a lamp. The right thumbnail shows Mike Blinder, Publisher of E&P Magazine, in a studio setting with a microphone. At the bottom of the banner, the text 'Episode Sponsor' is followed by the BLOX DIGITAL logo.

**[Gordon Borrell discusses key insights from the fall 2024 advertiser study](#)**

In his seventh appearance on *E&P Reports*, Gordon Borrell, CEO of [Borrell Associates](#), joined Mike Blinder to preview insights from his firm's latest advertiser survey and its implications for the media industry. Borrell Associates, widely regarded as a leading authority on local advertising trends, has released its fall 2024 survey, gathering data from over 1,100 advertisers and 122 agencies. The findings shed light on evolving advertiser preferences, challenges in media sales, and strategies for 2025.



Announcer:

This is E&P Reports, a vodcast from Editor and Publisher Magazine, the authoritative voice of news media since 18/84, serving newspapers, broadcast, digital, and all forms of news publishing.

Mike Blinder:

Warm greetings once again, Mike Blinder, Publisher, EMP Magazine. As always, we start off by urging those that listen to this program on pod podcast platforms to please participate. I'm doing alliteration this morning and follow us. Those that are watching on our YouTube channel. Please subscribe that way.

Mike Blinder:

If you follow or subscribe, you get an update each and every time we upload this weekly podcast series, we dedicate to news publishing, we call E&P Reports. Gordon's 7th appearance. I promised you a jacket at 5 and I reneged and have to make up a jacket for you. You've been on the show 7 times. Welcome.

Gordon Borrell:

That's amazing. How time flies.

Mike Blinder:

How time I've been on your show three times. So you're gonna have to bring me back, and we'll see if we can do some equity. Anyway, you likely know this. We no longer, you know, look at your bio on LinkedIn. We go to chat GPT, the critical accurate authority of all information far and wide, he said sarcastically, and asked Chat GPT who the hell you are.

Mike Blinder:

You rate it because it's changed since the last time. Here's what Chat GPT says about you. You're the founder and CEO of Burrell Associates, a leading firm specializing in local advertising research and analysis, recognized as a top industry analyst. He is frankly quoted in major publications like The Wall Street Journal, New York Times, ad agent Forbes before establishing Burrell in 2,001. You were VP of new media at landmark.

Mike Blinder:

That's when I knew you in the dark ages and we both had darker hair and more of it. Um, you are sought after speaker on media trends. You've appeared on CNN. You reside in Hampton Roads, Virginia with a wife. You have 5 children.

Mike Blinder:

How did it do a to f? Did it get you?

Gordon Borrell:

Uh, it did did very well, but I have to tell you, um, that you can program Alexa, which I have done to answer certain questions certain ways, and you can't do this. It has to be on my account, of course. But if I said, I'm I'm talking low because Alexa is down there in my office. Um, Alexa, who is Alexa, who is Gordon Burrell? It would come back with, Gordon Burrell is the husband of well known author, Lokia Burrell, a former Saint Pete Times, New York Times newspapers reporter, blah blah blah.

Gordon Borrell:

So, yeah, um, all of those, you know, nice things that chat gpt said about me is, uh, are overshadowed by, I think, the biggest accomplishment is, uh, is staying married to a wonderful wife and having beautiful children.

Mike Blinder:

Yeah. Mine should say that, uh, he is the publisher of E&P where his wife does all the real work, and he just does stupid shows like this and interviews you. Anyway, beyond that, um, I got an email from you. I'm and it looked personal because it said, hi, Mike, but then I realized it was when you sent out, um, teasing the fall study. We had a massive amount of reporting on your spring study, and now you're teasing.

Mike Blinder:

Um, you actually have a webinar coming up, right, where you're gonna release information to the industry about the fall advertiser study?

Gordon Borrell:

We do. It's coming up this, uh, week. It's on 12th, which is Thursday at 11 AM. Um, and if you



wanna, uh, register for it, it's gonna be great. This is our biggest webinar of the year.

Gordon Borrell:

We always the year end webinar where we're looking at next year, which is just basically a review with the advertisers, 1,000 advertisers just told us, is always our biggest. We'll probably have 700 or more people on it. Um, right now, at this recording, we have a little over 500. Just go to the Burrell Facebook page or the Burrell LinkedIn page, um, or you can just go to the Burrell Associates website. And on the left side, you'll see a sign up for research alerts.

Gordon Borrell:

Just sign up for research alerts, and we'll notify you of the sign up for the webinar. 11 AM Eastern, uh, Thursday 12th.

Mike Blinder:

Yeah. So we're done. Right? Because that's it. They want you to plan the That's

Gordon Borrell:

all there

Mike Blinder:

is to it. We are not done because E and P must be the first at releasing this information. So what we're gonna do after this commercial break is we're gonna try to get this guy to tell us what he's gonna say in that webinar so you hear it first. Stick around.

Announcer:

This episode of E and P reports is exclusively sponsored by Blox Digital, formerly TownNews. Even though the name has changed, their commitment to the media industry is as strong as ever. Bloxx Digital is now even better positioned to deliver integrated solutions like content management, audience development, advertising revenue, video management and more. Join the over 2,000 news publishers worldwide that power their ongoing digital transformation with Blox Digital. Serving over 141,000,000 monthly users who view over 6,500,000,000 pages of content each year.

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Mike Blinder:

Alright, Gordon. I mean, for those who live under a rock, Burrell Associates is a leading research agency in our industry. And I always joke whenever what does Burrell do? Well, they don't look at audience. They look at advertising.

Mike Blinder:

They ask they ask 2 questions. What are you buying? What do you plan to buy? Of course, it breaks it down a lot more than that. But it basically, what you're saying is here's what happened and here's what people say they're gonna do when it comes to spending in media advertising.

Mike Blinder:

This is critical information. I don't know if you have any competitors that are that are as granular as you are. And many companies in our industry have shifted focus, and and you have moved this industry in different directions over the last few decades, um, because of this accurate information. This study we're about to try to get you to unpack a little of, 1100 advertisers, a 122 ad agencies. Right?

Mike Blinder:

And you're uncovering the just basically what they're spending. Do I have that correct, sir?

Gordon Borrell:

It is. We do it twice a year, and this is our fall or Q4, uh, survey.

Mike Blinder:

Alright. So here, when we interviewed you in the spring, right after the spring survey, um, you spoke about, um, local advertising was tracked to grow by 3.2% this year. How did we do? Are we on track? Did we grow by ...

Mike Blinder:

Are we not at ... Lovely. Can you can you release that information to us?

Gordon Borrell:

Um, well, I believe there was some growth planned for this year. Um, I'm you know? So so the webinar is out not out yet, and the webinar is not when we're going to release our new forecast. Uh, we might. Well well, we might because we will we are uploading it right now.

Gordon Borrell:

We do have the numbers. Everything has to be tested out, and then we punch a button. I'll so so I can only give you a little bit of generalities. And we're doing this kind of live. Uh, we're doing it live right now, but people are gonna listen to it, you know, a few days later recorded.

Gordon Borrell:

I'm looking at the bottom of my screen because I'm asking Corey Elliott, my colleague who sits atop all of the numbers and the team that puts them together to, uh, to tell me. So he's gonna he might. He just said, stand by. So if that comes through, I'll let you know. But I could tell you this.

Gordon Borrell:

From our survey, what we found, Mike, is something just heartening. I don't wanna say it's remarkable. It's like, yeah. Okay. If you really thought about it, that probably would happen.

Gordon Borrell:

But it's just it's heartening. It's good news. There was and this is not the big survey we did. This is this just in. This is a monthly panel that we do.

Gordon Borrell:

So this is the results for the November monthly panel of a couple of 100, um, advertisers that we do every single month. Um, and this is sort of a benchmarking month to month to month. They just registered a large spike in optimism for next year. I don't wanna say it's the largest that we've ever seen because we haven't gone back and looked at all the others yet. But it's like, oh, wow.

Gordon Borrell:



They're looking you know, compared to the previous survey, we do a business barometer, you know, twice a year, I believe. Compared to the previous one. Uh, wow. They're feeling really good about next year.

Mike Blinder:

Alright. So there's if you don't get us the exact number by the time we're done with this interview, you're basically saying no doom and gloom yet. Relax. Take a breath. There was growth.

Mike Blinder:

We didn't go down, thank god, because we've had some years where you've, you know, showed the down towards trends, um, and it looks good. It's promising. Now you in the tease you sent out, you said 4 media types set for significant increases. Would you like to release that ahead of the webinar or tease us a little? Can you break down?

Mike Blinder:

What what 4 media types? I can take a guess.

Gordon Borrell:

All the news edge out of the webinar. Come on. Give it to us. I'll talk generally about what we're seeing, um, in in in that are some some increases. I think OTT, CTV, um, you know, any type of video advertising that is distributed digitally is, uh, certainly in the mix.

Gordon Borrell:

That's growing, I think. And here's the Zinger. Direct mail. Direct mail is fantastically surprising to all of us because, you know, it's print media. And you know what we've heard about print media, which is true.

Gordon Borrell:

It's just really, really, really struggling. So it carries the cost of having being printed and physically delivered, which is certainly, you know, a disadvantage over digital.

Mike Blinder:

You always show in every report, if I go back in time, it's still search and social or near the top.



Are they still up there? Can I ask you? Is that still

Gordon Borrell:

Yeah. The this? Yeah. They they are. We are anticipating in the entire, you know, advertising world is anticipating a pretty steady, maybe not sharp, but steady decline in search.

Gordon Borrell:

It's way at the top. It's nosebleed levels.

Mike Blinder:

Right.

Gordon Borrell:

Uh, people spend lots of money on it, and ChatGPT and generative AI, you know, programs like that, are gonna take the edge off it and and other things. That's not showing up in our data, and it's typical because local advertisers lag a little bit. You know, they're not up there with the national advertisers understanding all this new stuff. The once big, big surprise in it, um, is at the top of the list. Beating out social media, there's one one category.

Gordon Borrell:

And it's just it hasn't happened since social media hit the top of the list in terms of usage, um, and effectiveness. Social media has highest level of advertisers buying it, so more than newspapers, more than radio, more than TV, more than banner ads, etcetera. Highest always been up there since the, like, mid 2010s, uh, 2010, 2011, 2012 when it started, you know, zooming up. Not anymore.

Mike Blinder:

Drumroll?

Gordon Borrell:

I have to sign up for the webinar. Events. Events. It's like You're back up on Holy crap. I'm looking at you know, on simultaneously, on December 12th, we will be starting or kicking off our charts of the week.



Gordon Borrell:

We do really, really popular drives the most traffic on our website, charts of the week series. We do it twice a year. This is the winter series, 10 charts, oh, you know, over 10 weeks. And this one is the first chart I'm looking at right here. You're the 1st to see it.

Gordon Borrell:

Can't even see it. Right? But at the top of this chart, it has events and sponsorships as the number one in terms of maybe 20 different types of media that advertisers buy. 56% of them are buying events. Alright. Sponsored events.

Mike Blinder:

Um, you tease the fact that there's a a a shift in advertisers' perceptions about media reps' digital competence.

Gordon Borrell:

Oh my god. Mike, uh, this is bad.

Mike Blinder:

Okay. This is bad news. Because you're still showing let me finish the question. You're still showing a whole mess of trust in local agencies. Is that because we still suck at selling digital?

Mike Blinder:

I mean, is their perception of our ability to understand all forms of media still down in the dumps and we're we gotta train ourselves a lot more? Is that what you're seeing here? Yep. Okay. Here it is.

Gordon Borrell:

It's it's it's disappointing. So, you know, if you're a master at spin, you'll look at the chart, and I've got it in front of me. We separated just give me a minute on this, and I'll give you all the numbers. Um, we separated the question into marketing savvy. So it says you bought newspaper advertising.

Gordon Borrell:

How How would you rate the marketing savvy of your newspaper rep? And then digital



advertising. You said you bought, you know, mark newspapers or radio or whatever it was, TV advertising. How would you rate the digital savvy of your TV rep? So when you look overall at marketing, radio is at the top.

Gordon Borrell:

So 36% of those who bought radio listed the radio sales reps as having exceptional marketing savvy. So they're at the top. Beat out TV, which is at 30%, newspapers at 25%, you know, down down the left. Oh, hey. That's great.

Gordon Borrell:

But over the past 4 years, those numbers have declined. I told you radio was 36%. Used to be in 2021, 41%. Told you newspapers, 25% said they had exceptional marketing expertise, used to be 30%. So it's declined.

Gordon Borrell:

The percentage of advertising rating advertisers, rating their reps as having very strong marketing savvy, has declined. You wanna hear digital? Oh, this is this is so sad. Um, the numbers are down roughly 10 to 15 points from, you know, overall marketing savvy. So they you know, fewer of them think they have, you know, broadcast TV, radio, cable, newspapers, etcetera.

Gordon Borrell:

So television, broadcast television, 19% say they have great digital savvy, and they're at the top. They haven't been at the top before, newspapers typically have. Radio is below them at 19, cable at 19, newspapers at 16. Here's the reverse of that, and this is what's so disappointing. Not excited to give you this, but, you know, fell, I'm a researcher.

Gordon Borrell:

I need to give you the bad. And that is we asked, you know, if if their sales reps had no marketing savvy and no digital savvy. For newspapers, 1 in 4 advertisers said their newspaper sales reps had no marketing savvy. 1 in 3, 36%, said their newspaper reps had no digital savvy. That's scary.

Gordon Borrell:

For radio, it was 17%, no marketing savvy, and 28%, no digital savvy. There is clearly work to be done, Mike.

Mike Blinder:

Alright. I we've we're we're getting near the end of this, and we're teasing up that that webinar. He's given us some information, folks. We're gonna ask him about this. I and I've been out at a lot of conferences this year.

Mike Blinder:

They're just promoting the E&P brand. I go out there and see other speakers and listen to other pundits. There's a lot of people talking about the death finally of broadcast. I mean, at least in from this side of the industry. Thank god they're gonna go through what we went through for the last 10 years.

Mike Blinder:

They're about to go under. There's public radio's in trouble. Broadcast TV stations are gonna lose that critical automotive and political advertising finally, which is blowing them up. What what are you showing? I mean, you had you had, uh, in the spring, I'm I'm looking at the data that we reported on, you had local broadcast TV forecast to grow by 6%.

Mike Blinder:

Um, is linear finally meeting their doom and gloom world, or are you still seeing strong, you know, good old American, uh, band I mean, whatever I was saying, the people that that that own some spectrum are still gonna have a good strong year. What's going on with that?

Gordon Borrell:

Um, so, no, I don't see the doom and gloom. I I do see struggles. There is, you know, uh, radio and and TV advertising, in particular, are struggling against declining audiences and, you know, further fragmentation. That's a old, old, old story. Um, however, um, you know, there's been doom and gloom, you know, prophesized for just about everything since the Internet came along, every type of traditional form of media.

Gordon Borrell:

And the fact is there are really good, smart people out there who are whose livelihoods



depend on it, and they're figuring out a way. So broadcast TV is transitioning from ATSC 3 point o. They would hate to hear me say they're transitioning from it, uh, because they're now whole hog in CTV and OTT and other things. They're getting into podcasting. Radio's getting into podcasting.

Gordon Borrell:

They are competing heavily with, um, you know, digital agencies. They're competing with newspapers by starting hyperlocal sites, not only in markets where they have radio stations, but in markets where they don't. So there's a lot of smart people and a lot of activity pushing against this tide. It may be an inevitable tide, but I think the decline will be slower than most people think. I'll just say one other quick thing about broadcast TV.

Gordon Borrell:

One of the findings we'll discuss in this webinar on 12th is the surprise, uh, in the effectiveness, uh, of broadcast TV. Ratings are very, very high for broadcast TV. And in the number of advertisers saying that they're going to increase their budgets or come back where they haven't brought broadcast TV because, you know, political advertising crowded out the airwaves in 2025. So it's exhibiting a little bit of strength against that ebbing tide.

Mike Blinder:

Alright. So we're we're gonna shut this thing down now. 1st of all, to our audience, we didn't get as much out of him as we wanted, but but we're gonna report on the findings of that webinar. Once he gets his chance to shine on his own, and we just doubled your audience, Gordon, so you owe me a commission on it.

Gordon Borrell:

Thank you very much.

Mike Blinder:

There you go. Because this audience is just gonna, you know, just sign up in droves here. We're gonna report on it because you're gonna let us report on that once you release it. Right? I mean, we can get the story out.

Mike Blinder:

But in the meantime, you've got now I'm gonna give you exactly 1 minute, do the elevator pitch, give us the teases of what if I go to this webinar, what amazing data will I learn that will help me grow my news industry, media industry business? What what do you got? Go ahead and

Gordon Borrell:

take a look. We we just discussed some of it, so let me put it into action. You know? If I'm telling you 1 in 4 advertisers believe that your sales reps have no marketing savvy, that's a big warning sign. And that means even if you have a training program, maybe it sucks.

Gordon Borrell:

You know? Test it out. Advertisers have a lot of questions about marketing. They don't wake up and say, I think I'll buy some radio advertising. I think I'll buy some newspaper advertising.

Gordon Borrell:

They'll say wake up and go, you know, I wonder whether I should advertise on threads. You know, it seems to be a bigger audience. Not everybody's leaving x and Twitter is kinda collapsed.

Mike Blinder:

How come how come I saw that local bakery on Hulu? What's going on here? Yeah. I mean, that That guy's just right down the street from me. He can't have a bigger advertising budget than me.

Mike Blinder:

I just saw him while I was watching this rerun of Mad Men. You know what I mean? This is where the world's at now. Right? They're just saying, what the hell's going on?

Mike Blinder:

Correct?

Gordon Borrell:

Yep. Your your sales reps can't fool the advertiser by saying, oh, yeah. Tell me about all the problems. I think I can come up with a solution. You know, say, a newspaper rep.

Gordon Borrell:

And guess what the solution is? Newspaper advertising. No. You know, they have to have more arrows in the in the quiver. So that's one thing.

Gordon Borrell:

I think the the the other is, you know, think of think of events. Why is that? Events and social media are at the top of the list. You're involved in those 2 and trying to, you know, get advertisers to get a gain of voice out there. They're both actually the same.

Gordon Borrell:

Events are the live version of social media. Social media is the virtual version of events. It's a gathering of of large amounts of people, and advertisers have gotten kinda sick of social media even though they're still supporting it and say it's effective. They wanna get out and shake some hands. So I think, you know, those are things that you need to think about.

Gordon Borrell:

And, in particular, I'm just gonna go back on. If your rep is perceived as being somebody who sells your product and that's it, you're in trouble. That's not what the advertisers want. Somebody's gonna steal your business.

Mike Blinder:

There you go. Gordon Burrell, once again, if anyone wants to attend this webinar on Thursday, do yourself a favor and go to burrell associates, um, dot com and and click on the link to to register or just search for Burrell Associates on Google. You'll find the Facebook page or the LinkedIn page where you can register as well. Gordon, we're looking forward to getting something more out of you this study and releasing it to our audience. But as always, we appreciate your valuable time.

Mike Blinder:

Thanks so much.

Gordon Borrell:

Thank you, Mike.