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CobbleCord Looks to Help Consumers Filter OTT Options

By Amy Maclean | February 19, 2019 |

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It seems like there's a new OTT service launching almost every day. How's a consumer supposed to keep track of it all? While some see chaos, former **Showtime** marketer *Virginia Juliano* sees opportunity. Enter **CobbleCord**—a **business** she started more than three years ago that asks consumers a series of questions to make recommendations for free and subscription OTT services, as well as vMVPD services.




It's an idea that came to her as she helped Showtime bring its OTT service to market. She realized many consumers will need some hand holding. "The average Joe or Mary doesn't know where to begin. We filter it down to some very simple questions and rankings of your entertainment, internet, device and price preferences," Juliano told *Cablefax*. From there, top recommendations are made as well as some other possibilities that might be outside of a consumer's price range but worth considering. Juliano knows given

her operation's small size that every OTT service available isn't immediately listed on CobbleCord, but it's constantly being updated.

As an OTT curator, she has a birds-eye view of the evolving space. "When I first launched CobbleCord, there were two skinny bundles available—**Sling TV** and **Sony Playstation Vue**," she said. "I think there's going to be a degree of a shakeout... However, there are a lot of these smaller niche players, and some medium ones too, that have a very sound model. They're not trying to create the amount of originals as a **Netflix** or they're keeping their backend very lean. It's really going to be interesting to see which are the winning models. I don't think there's going to be one-size-fits all, just like there isn't one-size-fits-all for a streaming combination."

CobbleCord users have had a high interest in some of the expected categories—movies, sports, news and general TV programming. What Juliano found more surprising is the number of users who told CobbleCord that they're uncommitted and pretty open to hearing about anything. "It's getting quite a lot of traction, which shows me people are hungry for information and new choices. And looking for ways to discover things," she said.

As for CobbleCord's business model, right now it makes money through referrals and some programmatic advertising, but Juliano has bigger plans. Currently, users have to take recommendations and sign up for services themselves. She wants those transactions to eventually happen within CobbleCord, with a revenue share model. "The consumer would have one place to go to manage all their subscriptions. Not watch—we don't want to serve video. We want to be a subscription management layer," she said, adding that she's also having conversations with others, including some cable operators. "The smaller cable guys—a lot of them are getting out of the video space because the margins are not making sense for them. They're doubling down on broadband... [They're] very interested in what we're doing because it helps them sell broadband, it helps them with upgrades, and when they're not selling video, it's a great complement."



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