

2023 Erwin Ephron Demystification Award Winning Nomination

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I host a podcast series called "Legends of Media Research" where almost each guest is a great candidate for this award. But, without question, of all the Legends I've showcased, Artie is the very best in our industry. He's the best researcher - and, perhaps even more importantly, he's the best research leader in our industry. He addresses each of the award criteria in both capacities.

As a researcher, Artie spearheaded many of our industry's best research initiatives to date. This includes Project Blueprint - which was over a decade ahead in introducing a viable system for cross-platform measurement (before most researchers even understood the need); the Disney Media & Advertising Lab - which propelled the industry's engagement with neuro measures; new ad format research - where ESPN was always at least TWO steps ahead; advertising on mobile - which again reflects an area where ESPN was way ahead of the curve; and so much more. For just about any research, Artie did the best-in-class research pioneering insights. Often this challenged conventional thinking - but it almost always motivated forward conceptualization.

Artie had a knack for seeing a research gap - and finding a path, however improbably, for translating this into the realm of action. For example, he quickly understood the advantages of engaging in neuro research - but translating that need into reality could clearly not come about with his existing budget or staffing. And so he was able to excite the ad sales teams not only at ESPN but at sister Disney companies to join and collaborate together to bring a mere possibility into fruition. This also reflects how fearless Artie is in embracing new analytics and technologies and quickly schooling himself and his team in the new arenas.

But Artie's great contributions, unquestionably, have come from his role as a research leader - both for his team and for our industry as a whole. No leader is more emotionally secure than Artie. What this means is that where many (perhaps most) rely on their teams to build their own profiles in industry; for Artie, he always pushed his team forward into the limelight. As a consequence, today, there are more research leaders in our industry that cultivated their own leadership skills while being mentored by Artie than ANY other leader in our industry. Indeed, in the Legends podcast series, Artie is frequently cited as the defining leader who shaped the researcher's world views. In this way, Artie is the mentor to our industry's best.

But Artie's single most commendable quality, without a doubt, is his capacity to collaborate - for which he is clearly without peer. A few years ago, we hosted an industry lifetime achievement award for Artie at the Media Engagement Conference. One of those toasting Artie asked the room of delegates how many of them had DIRECTLY collaborated with Artie. And to clarify - by this he was referring to people actually sitting at a table with Artie, collaborating on an initiative. Over 80% of the room raised their hands. CLEARLY, there is no other research leader in our industry with a track record reflecting this level of collaboration.

Artie is not only the best possible candidate for this year's Erwin Ephron Demystification Award... he's the best candidate EVER for this award. He's the very best in our industry!

I think the best example here is Artie's work in Project Blueprint. Now keep in mind that Artie spearheaded this project back in 2012 - over a decade ago - and, in truth, it solved for the challenge of providing for cross-platform measurement. Had our industry adopted this framework, we would have prevented the migration of hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue from TV to the new digital platforms (to be clear, it wouldn't have stopped it, but it would have curbed it considerably). Before anyone else, Artie understood how TV audiences moving across platforms favored TV networks, at a time where almost all others framed it as threat.

But pulling Blueprint off was no easy feat. Above all, it required corralling both Nielsen and Comscore in a common venture. No one other than Artie could achieve such collaboration - and no one has ever since.

This project is a reflection of everything the Award is all about - collaboration, challenging conventional thinking, pioneering new analytics, translating IMPOSSIBLE ideas into action, inspiring industry, explaining the need, etc. It's the poster child of what Erwin Ephron himself would have aspired to build.

In looking across his career, Artie has helped shape our industry more than anyone else - both directly, through his own initiatives - and indirectly through the class of research leaders he has cultivated. He is clearly THE leader who has most moved our industry forward and left a legacy.

I think there is a criteria that is assumed - but should actually be spelled out in the nomination process - and that is INTEGRITY. Here, too, Artie has always been a champion for integrity. There are leaders who do research to show - and those who do it to know. Artie not only does it to know - he does it to know WHY. He never shies away from bad news - in fact he embraces it with the same passion as he does the good... but once he discovers bad news, he gets to the 'why' so he can put



forward potential remedies. For Artie, all research needs to be 'best-in-class'. He never cuts corners. Integrity is always job one!

This nomination was submitted by Dr. Duane Varan, CEO of MediaScience.