

# AppNexus + Axel Springer

Transparency, Independence, and Higher Yields: How AppNexus Helped Axel Springer Take Its Business to New Heights

## THE CHALLENGE

**Axel Springer needed an open, transparent partner to help it build the advertising ecosystem of the future**

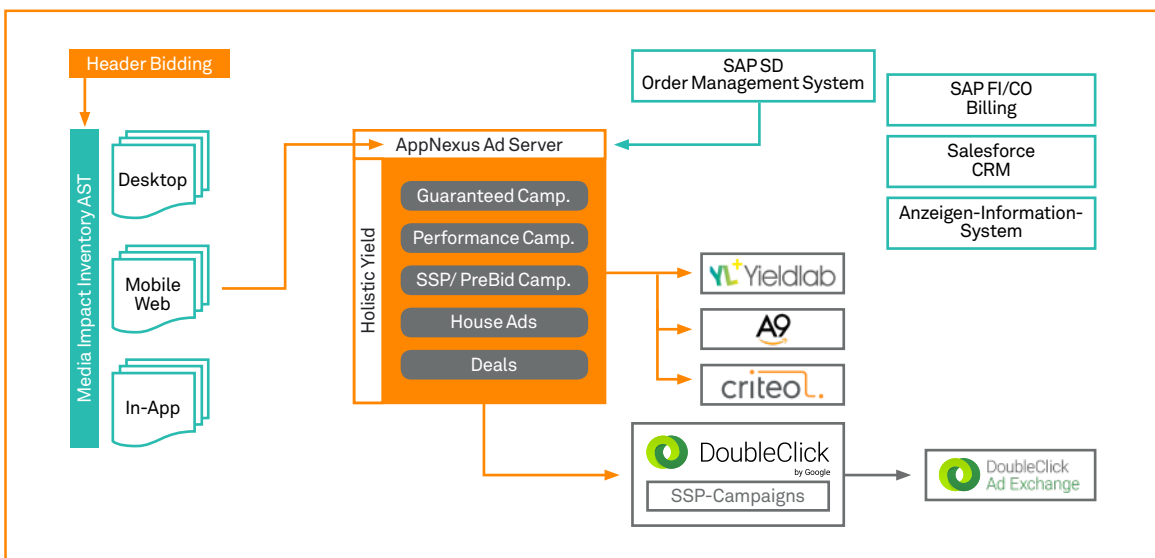
Axel Springer SE is a German media company and one of the largest digital publishing houses in Europe. As the owner of major news brands like Bild, Die Welt and Business Insider, the firm employs more than 15,000 people and reaches hundreds of millions of readers and viewers each month.

With so many different businesses under its umbrella, Axel Springer’s various brands have a wide range of advertising technology needs. In order for each of these businesses to maximize its potential, the company needs a strategic partner that offers a variety of intelligent advertising products, including ad servers, SSPs, SDKs, and DSPs. In 2017, Axel Springer set out in search of an advertising technology solution that could help its brands flourish on both the buy-side and the sell-side, across desktop, mobile, and in-app environments.

Like many large publishers, the company had become worried about Google’s dominance in the digital advertising marketplace, as well as the lack of transparency found in its ad server and SSP products. Axel Springer’s sales house, Media Impact, sought to challenge Google’s walled garden with an open, full-stack solution that could integrate multiple demand sources holistically and provide a transparent view of its monetization.

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## Media Impact – Holistic Yield enables up to 13%+ pr. Revenue



In addition, the firm sought to upgrade its ad server to one that would allow its various programmatic and direct demand sources to compete with one another on even footing. In Axel Springer’s existing waterfall setup, direct deals were guaranteed access to every impression, even if a programmatic buyer was offering a higher price. Until the publisher could implement a system for accepting these high-end programmatic bids, it would have no choice but to continue leaving money on the table.

Last, but not least, Axel Springer needed its new technology partner to come with a top-tier customer service team, one that could help it migrate its complex ad server operations to a new platform. With over 30,000 ad placements sitting inside its existing ad server, the publisher and its new partner would certainly have their work cut out for them.

## THE SOLUTION

### Axel Springer implements header bidding with the AppNexus publisher suite

After an intensive RFP process, Axel Springer chose AppNexus’ publisher suite to power Media Impact’s ad stack holistically.

Whereas its earlier setup prioritized Google’s AdX demand over other programmatic demand sources, Axel Springer used the AppNexus Publisher Suite with prebid.js to create a stack that allowed holistic optimization. All demand partners, including Google AdX, were able to submit their bids simultaneously. With AppNexus’ log-level data, the publisher was able to validate that its inventory was being sold fairly, inside a truly open marketplace.

Meanwhile, the AppNexus ad server and its advanced forecasting capabilities allowed Axel Springer to optimize its yields with open dynamic allocation. In its prior setup, each impression was offered to different demand sources along a strict hierarchy, with direct deals getting the first crack, followed by the firm’s exchange partners. But under open dynamic allocation, these rival demand sources were finally able to compete inside the ad server, allowing Media Impact to accept higher programmatic bids and generate superior CPMs whilst ensuring guaranteed campaigns would still achieve their delivery goals.

Even better, the AppNexus implementation team managed to port Axel Springer’s complex ad server decisioning logic to its platform in record time. In just three months, the publisher’s entire display advertising stack was up and running on AppNexus for desktop, mobile, and in-app inventory. Due to AppNexus’ speedy migration, Axel Springer was able to make the final switch in time for the crucial Q4 season.

Last, but not least, Axel Springer benefited greatly from AppNexus’ video SSP and ad server. The SSP attracted key programmatic video buyers to the publisher’s video supply, and the ad server delivered direct sold campaigns for a variety of major video advertisers. As a result, AppNexus has empowered Media Impact to successfully monetize its video content across desktop, mobile, and in-app inventory.

*“While digital publishers are frequently intimidated by the idea of changing their entire technology stack, **our speedy implementation is proof that migrating ad servers isn’t something to be afraid of - so long as you have the right technology partners at your side.**”*

**Carsten Schwecke**  
Managing Director of Media Impact, Axel Springer’s Sales House



“AppNexus gave us all the tools we needed to craft a holistic, transparent, and independent approach to how we sell digital advertising,” said Carsten Schwecke, managing director of Media Impact, Axel Springer’s sales house. “While digital publishers are frequently intimidated by the idea of changing their entire technology stack, our speedy implementation is proof that migrating ad servers isn’t something to be afraid of -- so long as you have the right technology partners at your side.”

## RESULTS

### AppNexus drives a more than 13% in open market eCPMs

Axel Springer’s migration to the AppNexus platform was an overwhelming success.

In addition to emancipating itself from its reliance on Google, the publisher was able to use header bidding and open dynamic allocation to generate the highest possible yields from every impression. Since moving to AppNexus, Axel Springer’s open-market eCPMs have grown by over 13%.

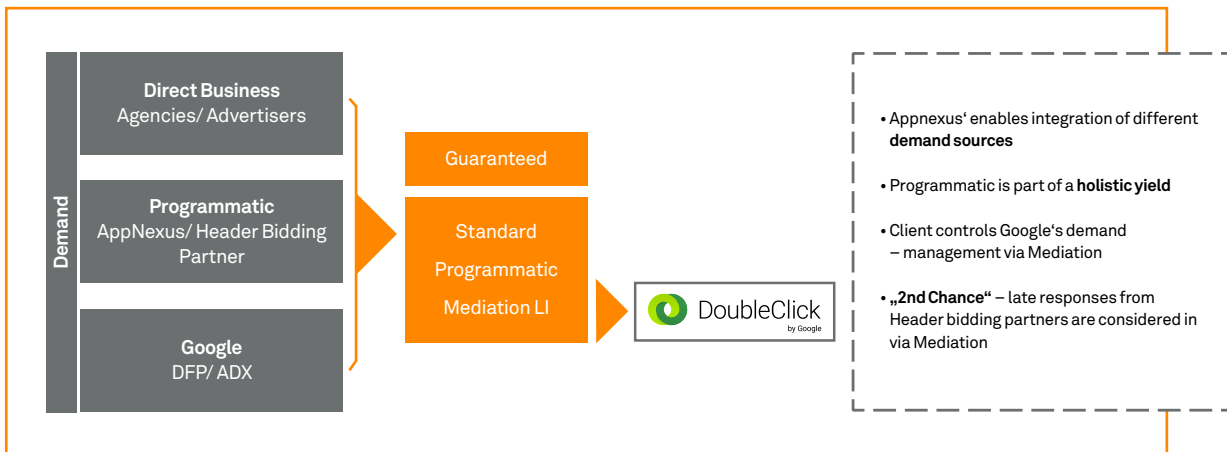
Of equal importance, the publisher’s newly open and transparent ad stack has allowed it to rest easily with the knowledge that its inventory is being sold exactly as it intends. With full insight into its internal decisioning logic and bid landscape data, Media Impact is firmly in control of its ad sales operation.

“Our partnership with AppNexus should serve as an example to all publishers that there are options for action in holistic marketing, even without Google as your leading ad-tech stack,” Schwecke said. “We encourage all publishers in our situation to begin exploring the open market.”

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### Transparency and Holistic Yield – eCPMs increased by 13%





### About Axel Springer

Axel Springer SE is the largest digital publishing house in Europe, with numerous multimedia news brands, such as Bild, Die Welt, and Fakt and more than 15,000 employees. Axel Springer's business is divided into three segments: paid models, marketing models, and classified ad models.

Headquartered in Berlin, Germany, the company is active in more than 40 countries with subsidiaries, joint ventures, and licensing.

For more information, visit Axel Springer SE at [www.axelspringer.de](http://www.axelspringer.de)

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### About Media Impact

Media Impact is one of Germany's leading providers for online, mobile and print advertising. The company combines high-quality brands and a unique portfolio of media products and services to successfully create individual tailor-made communication solutions. Its a joint venture of Axel Springer SE and Funke Mediengruppe.

For more information, visit Media Impact at [www.mediaimpact.de](http://www.mediaimpact.de)

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### About AppNexus

AppNexus is an internet technology company that enables and optimizes the real-time sale and purchase of digital advertising. Our powerful, real-time decisioning platform supports core products that enable publishers to maximize yield; and marketers and agencies to harness data and machine learning to deliver intelligent and customized campaigns. Headquartered in New York City, AppNexus employs over 1000 professionals in offices spanning five continents.

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