

## **Gorilla Nation Integrates Teens with Kids For Focused Ad Rep**

By [Fred Aun](#) , July 17, 2009

Communicating with 12- to 17-year-olds is tough even when they're sitting across the kitchen table. Doing so through online ads is similarly difficult. Online ad rep company [Gorilla Nation](#) believes its decision to expand its existing "kids" sales division to include teens, with the new name of GN Kids & Teens, will help advertisers meet the challenge.

Gorilla Nation is calling the new division a "one-stop solution for reaching the coveted kid, tween and now teen demographic" and it lists Procter & Gamble, Nintendo and Fox Broadcasting among its teen-focused customers. "Many marketers, once the recession occurred, had been ignoring that teen audience," said CEO Aaron Broder. "Well, not ignoring it actually, but placing less emphasis there. One reason for that is there's been a lack of choices and ways to reach teens."

Given their widely varying interests -- and fickleness when it comes to Web site loyalty - - teens are notoriously elusive targets for advertisers. Broder said some marketers figure social networks are good places to reach teens, but they enter the space fearing their efforts will end up alongside inappropriate content.

A safer route is to advertise on sites featuring content tailored for teens. While there are many teen-focused, "mid-tail" Web sites frequented by 12- to 17-year-olds, these sites usually fail to draw enough traffic to interest big brands or to warrant in-house sales teams.

As does its competitor, [Alloy](#), Gorilla Nation aggregates these teen sites under one umbrella for advertising purposes. "Those sites, standing alone, aren't attractive," Broder said. "That's why we put so much energy into aggregating a lot of the best independent sites." He said the aggregated sites provide advertisers with alternatives to the "big three" teen-magnets: sites operated by Disney, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network.

One Gorilla Nation site, [Teen Hollywood](#), is popular with 12- to 17-year-old girls. Its publisher, Mark Hodgins, said the site benefits from advertiser uneasiness with social network advertising because image-conscious brands "have some assurance what type of content they're buying into" when they buy space on Teen Hollywood.

Up until now, Teen Hollywood advertising was handled by Gorilla Nation's entertainment group. "This change makes sense because there tends to be a lot of crossover [between kids and teens]," Hodgins said.

He also likes the way Gorilla Nation provides very site-specific representation as opposed to the "shotgun approach" used in some other networks. "It allows us, as a niche, mid-tail site, to be able to sell to large advertisers and maintain high CPMs," Hodgins said. "We're able to fill a very substantial portion of inventory because the advertisers hand-pick off GN's teen category list."

As a whole, Gorilla Nation represents the ad inventory of more than 500 mid-tail Web publishers. Although the company was forced, late last year, to lay off about eight percent of its employees, Broder said it has been re-hiring and "optimizing the balance" of its workforce. It now has about 150 staffers, virtually the same number it had before the layoffs, he said.

The firm is "holding steady" in terms of ad share when compared to 2008, said the CEO. However, he noted the kids and teen division is growing about 50 percent yearly and he expects it will pull in about \$10 million in revenue this year.