



A Roadmap for
North American Broadcasters

Transforming TV Ad Sales for Converged Selling and Cross-Platform Optimization

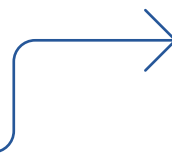


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Executive Summary

Audience experiences are being transformed by the rapid consumer adoption of Connected TV (CTV) and the vast array of premium TV content choices in linear and OTT environments.

How do media companies meet audience demand for premium-quality channels and content across every screen — while also maximizing profitability?

The solution is an evolution toward **unified cross-platform monetization**.

Unifying monetization enables broadcasters and advertisers to:

- Trade in a common currency such as audience impression
- Reach audiences in a unique and unduplicated way
- Sell across all inventory, regardless of platform or whether its live or on-demand
- Optimize ad placement to maximize revenue
- Increase automation and reduce cost across advertising operations

High-value premium inventory can still be sold by spot. Trading the remaining inventory across platforms with adaptive audience-based fulfillment enables broadcasters to sell across their inventory with automated and optimized placement to maximize revenue and improve operational efficiency.



Imagine Communications, in partnership with Operative, enables broadcasters to leverage this business model **regardless of platform or delivery type**. We believe high-quality, dynamically optimized ad placements across linear, linear addressable and on-demand content are the key to the long-term success of our mutual customers.



Speed to Market

Accelerate go-to-market with advanced optimization & automation



Automate & Optimize

Integrate disparate processes between sales and operations, reducing friction



Drive Monetization

Integrated ad processing & delivery to maximize revenue across broadcast and OTT

- Open transfer of data between AOS and OSI via API Layer
- Order Management moving up stream into the sales system
- Addressable Ad Insertion with SureFire
- Impression-based Linear Optimization with GamePlan
- Modular, interoperable approach to modernize & future-proof ad tech stack

Imagine has a long history of industry-leading linear traffic, ad decisioning and optimization technologies enabling media companies to continually adapt their advertising models to an evolving business landscape. Recent innovations include GamePlan™ for dynamic linear schedule optimization and the SureFire™ video ad server with linear-like control of dynamic ad insertion (DAI) for live and on-demand streaming content.

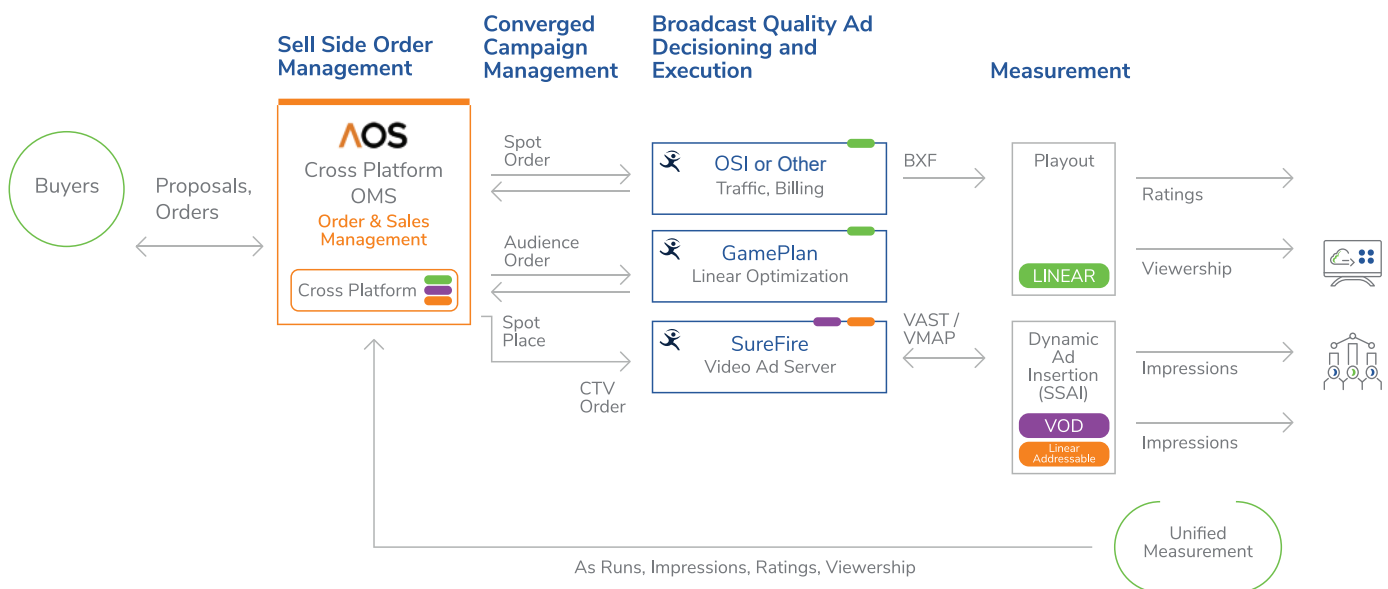
Operative built AOS to unify advertising systems and data, automate cross-platform sales processes, and deliver real-time insights across the ad management workflow. By integrating Imagine's innovative solutions with Operative's cloud-based AOS platform, broadcasters are provided with a complete solution to support cross-platform converged trading **with optimized operational efficiencies**.



A Modern Broadcast Ecosystem

In recognition of the broadcast industry's desire for best-in-class solutions and interoperability, Imagine Communications and Operative have partnered together to enable a unified and modular ad management and delivery architecture as illustrated in the following diagram.

Future State Broadcast Architecture



The significant benefits of this architecture include:

- **Multichannel order support** resulting in elimination of “swivel chair” sales and order management
- **Near real-time spot placement** for orders and posting
- **Enhanced monetization** of ATSC 3.0 ad insertion from linear live stream, while reducing user interactions
- **Impression-based order support** that is dynamically optimized to **increase revenue** — utilizing fewer spots, while greatly **reducing makegoods**



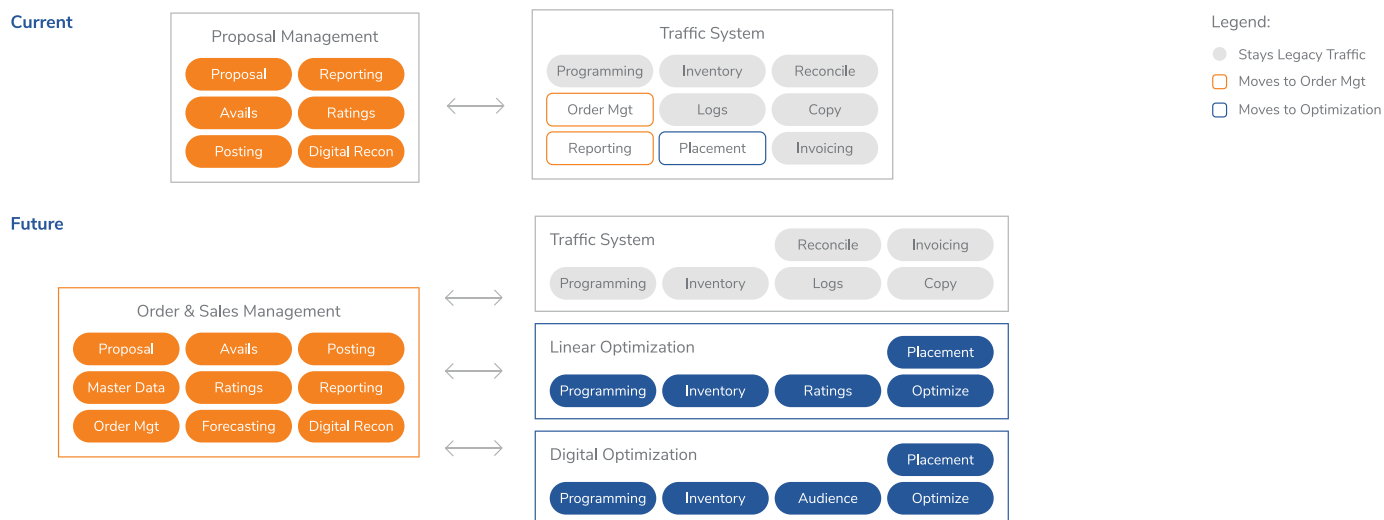
Your Transformation Journey

The Evolving Role of the Broadcast Traffic System

Traditionally, automated traffic systems have played a critical and central role in the effective management of a broadcaster’s advertising inventory. From order management to spot placement and log creation, including copy ingest, reconciliation, billing and reporting, the traffic system has been the indispensable foundation ensuring the curation, protection, and optimization of the broadcaster’s ad revenue stream.

Indeed, legacy traffic systems have excelled at providing linear broadcasters with the tools to gain timely access and management of their inventory. Today, the legacy traffic system can be one component of a modular, converged, multiplatform environment that supports dynamic trading and cross-platform optimization.

The graphic below illustrates the ability for broadcasters to migrate to a best-in-class modular workflow that **does not require replacement** of the existing traffic system. Instead, the linear traffic system can continue to play its well-established role as an order execution engine that will integrate into a modern, cross-platform ecosystem. This will require the traffic system to support a set of open APIs to achieve the automation described in this paper.



By combining the unified order and sales management tools in AOS with the GamePlan and SureFire abilities to dynamically optimize delivery across linear and OTT platforms, broadcasters are ready to manage and optimize their inventory seamlessly across platforms.



Imagine and Operative – Better Together

Imagine and Operative, as global providers of market-leading advertising technology solutions to broadcast organizations, have worked together to seamlessly integrate the key business applications described below. The integrated solution provides a smooth migration to converged cross-platform selling with dynamic schedule optimization.

Converged Order and Sales Management by AOS

As the convergence of linear and digital ad sales continues to gain scale, broadcasters need to address the endemic challenges present in legacy-based operations. AOS, Operative's next-generation, cloud-based ad operating system, unifies and automates workflows and execution, integrating a variety of first- and third-party applications and data sets.



In the path toward full automation and convergence, broadcasters seek to tackle a gamut of issues including:

- **Unified proposal process.** Buyers want the best offering and value across products and platforms, and that is what sellers should be able to deliver.
- **Centralized & automated order management.** Providing a unified way to manage and steward campaigns across assets will allow business to scale efficiently.
- **Leveraging data-driven insights.** In today's prevalent decentralized operating structures, the ability to make informed, data-driven decisions is extremely limited.



With those challenges in mind, AOS has been purpose-built to enable broadcasters' ad businesses to become:

Unified, via the Universal Product Catalog and Cloud Extensions

The universal product catalog provides broadcasters with the capability to centralize all sellable assets and inventory types into a centralized view. It is designed to be a repository for all product dimensions, including reference data, audience targets, products, and packages. This central hub is foundational in enabling scalable, cross-screen targeted advertising models. A universal product catalog allows media companies to accelerate their negotiation, proposal, and delivery processes. Regardless of a media company's focus, a universal product catalog acts like glue to hold the ad business together in the face of increasing complexity.



The cloud fabric of AOS provides modern integration technology for open interoperability. The need to easily bridge together data and workflows from a broad array of technology and measurement partners has become vital in creating scalable and efficient multiplatform workflows. AOS cloud extensions allow for ongoing ecosystem innovation taken at any pace most suitable for each customer.

Easy & Automated, via a Unified Proposal & Order Management System

Every seller wants to make sure they remain in control of their pricing and proposal management, but these processes must be unified and streamlined to remain relevant to buyers who are accustomed to easy, automated audience buying on digital media. An efficient, user-friendly front-end proposal system empowers a media company to offer advertisers a single insertion order across a host of products and channels, while maintaining pricing and product control.



For the media company, the front-end proposal system is literally the face of the company, either as a companion to the seller as they put a deal together, or as an automated self-service dashboard for buyers. A successful front-end proposal system must be open and easy to integrate with. It should seamlessly connect to and ingest product and audience data for as many systems as the media company requires. This is further supported by threading the unified proposal capabilities through order management, ultimately continuing to automate workflow throughout the lifecycle of an ad buy.

Designed for Scale & Growth, leveraging data & insights

Audience targeting options on their own island don't offer enough scale to satisfy advertiser demand. Sold separately, they also don't offer big profits for media companies. Media companies need a way to unify audiences across channels to achieve scale and optimize these campaigns as a seamless whole.

Without careful planning to knit data and operations together, optimization can become nearly impossible. To maximize placement and delivery with so many variables requires automation, as well as centralization and exposure of key business and viewership data sets. With a central, coordinated focus on yield, media companies remain in control.

AOS Highlights



Unify Tech & Inventory

Connect your tech stack and unify all inventory, advertiser, and workflow data



Automate Operations

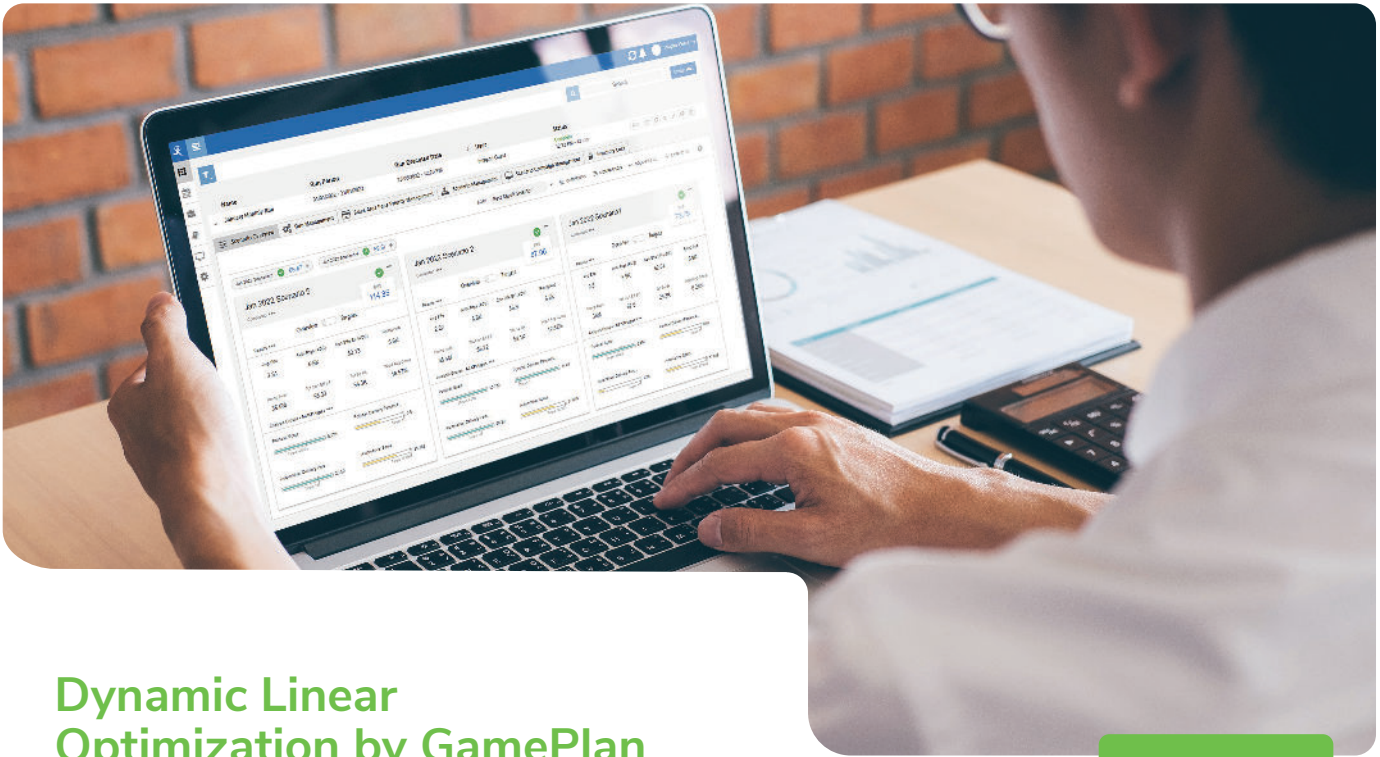
Maximize efficiency by automating repetitive tasks throughout your media workflows



Drive Insights with Data

With deep analytics and real-time benchmarking, AOS provides the insights you need to fully optimize revenue





Dynamic Linear Optimization by GamePlan

GamePlan is Imagine's award-winning cloud-native scheduling optimizer and spot placement engine for linear TV. Fronted by a powerful and intuitive user interface, GamePlan's informative dashboard significantly simplifies the critical task of monetizing all ad placement opportunities without over delivery, ensuring that even last-minute campaigns can be planned simply and accurately to deliver effective results. The GamePlan cloud-based engine introduces advanced scalability to the optimization process, enabling broadcast managers to automatically spin up any number of instances, in parallel, to find the optimal result in the minimum time.

A standalone optimization module that is compatible with third-party business systems through open APIs, GamePlan provides media companies with simple-but-sophisticated methods for applying quality metrics to one or more campaigns, allowing inventory holders to strike the optimal balance between maximizing the value of commercial airtime and meeting the expectations of the buying community.



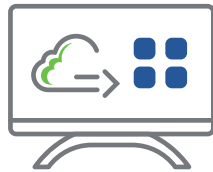
GamePlan's ability to dynamically adjust to changing conditions, such as alterations to program schedules and updated viewership predictions, helps make it possible for broadcasters to not only book their airtime in the most optimal way, but also to maintain a continuous state of inventory optimization.

GamePlan Highlights



Maximize Revenue

Sell placements by spot or audience.
Reach optimal yield in a seamless hybrid model



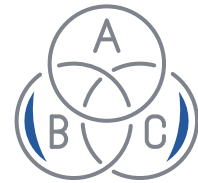
Optimize Inventory Utilization

Deliver your audience commitments with quality campaigns and minimized audience wastage



Minimize Cost

Easily scale your operations and eliminate the "Makegood Tax" with full automation of campaign delivery



Best Result Tools

Test multiple scenarios with AutoPilot then use Best Result Selector to identify the top result

GamePlan derives much of its power and sophistication from its cloud-native architecture. Compatible with all virtualized environments, including private and public cloud services, GamePlan leverages the scale and distributed nature of cloud environments to essentially throw more processing power at inventory optimization than is currently feasible using manual processes and procedures on fixed hardware.

Broadcast-Quality Ad Decisioning by SureFire

While ad sales are shifting toward CTV advertising, it should be noted that the digital video market is lacking solutions that can coherently apply all the well-developed benefits of **broadcast-quality decision making** that has been the hallmark of linear TV advertising and helped maintain its position as a key part of a marketer's ad spend:



- Revenue and campaign optimization leading to **efficiency maximization** for the seller
- High-quality, **brand-safe locations** for the buyer, neatly separated from competitor ads
- Addressable ad replacement to support **ATSC 3.0** advertising applications
- Highly controlled placements to ensure **strict compliance with broadcast regulations**
- Careful and **comprehensive rotation of copy** to maximize campaign effectiveness
- Perfect playout timing and controlled ad frequency to maintain a **quality end consumer experience**

SureFire video ad server from Imagine is an ad decisioning solution for CTV, leveraging common broadcast rules and audience data across on-demand and addressable linear platforms to increase revenue and protect the value of video inventory — all while lowering operating costs.

Designed for TV, SureFire delivers broadcast-quality and linear-like control to streaming. It can automatically ingest channel schedules, campaign information, business rules (frequency, content restrictions, brand-separation, etc.) and first- and third-party audience data for addressable advertising on streaming content with the same quality and control as linear TV.

In summary, SureFire brings linear-like quality and control to addressable advertising of streaming services, enabling media companies to sell inventory to traditional TV advertisers that are often held back today.

SureFire Highlights



Automate

Integrate with leading ad traffic systems



Broadcast Quality

Control brand rules, restrictions, separation and frequency



Targeting

Leverage your rich 1st and 3rd party audience data



Cloud-Native

Scalability and flexibility of cloud-based architecture



Meeting the Challenge for Broadcasters

As broadcasters continue to evolve beyond the bounds imposed by a linear program schedule and expand their offerings to include multiple nonlinear platforms and ATSC 3.0, the industry must evolve in several areas to meet the challenges that arise to manage this new ecosystem. Cross-platform content distribution has rapidly become the goal for most U.S. broadcasters, who know that they must meet viewers wherever they are. However, without an efficient cross-platform monetization model, mass campaigns will not be able to achieve reach and frequency targets.



To get streaming services to market quickly, most broadcasters built separate systems and processes for monetizing their streaming inventory. While selling traditional linear and connected TV inventory together may intuitively feel like mixing oil and water, doing so delivers several important benefits, such as efficiencies of operational scale and lower cost by virtue of having a unified platform to transact the buy, rather than separate ones.

To grow advertising revenue — to thrive in this increasingly fragmented consumer environment — broadcasters must find efficient, new ways to reach and monetize their audience across all delivery methods, including traditional linear, on-demand and streaming. Getting to true cross-platform monetization won't happen overnight — it will be a journey. What follows is a brief discussion of the tools and techniques needed to meet these challenges.



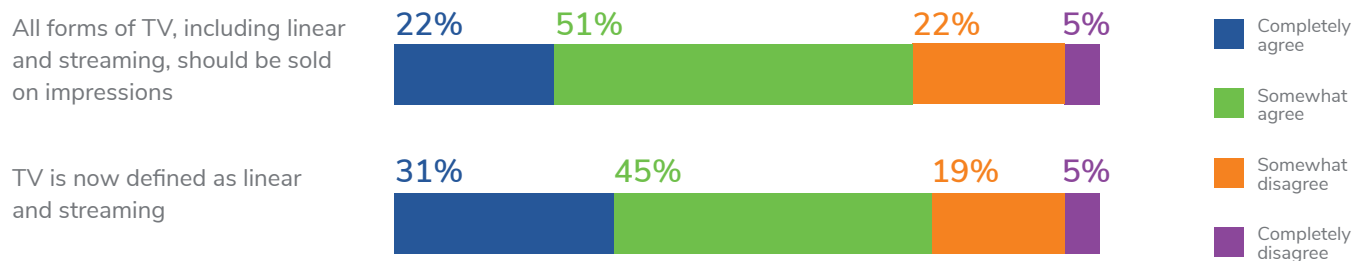
Cross-Platform Measurement

As broadcast sales organizations adapt to the reality of a multiplatform world, the need exists to plan, measure and value an advertisement delivered across disparate platforms based on common metrics. To date, digital and traditional linear broadcast offerings have been measured and valued using separate metrics. Unifying linear and digital processes requires moving toward a unified audience-based trading model; for broadcasters who have been selling spots for decades, this is as much a cultural change as a technical transformation.

Broadcast stations in the U.S. have traditionally sold their advertising inventory by program and daypart, along with guaranteed ratings. Premium inventory, in many cases, is sold on a fixed spot placement basis. This way of selling — by guaranteed audience with fixed spot placement — is complex, expensive and limits the opportunity for broadcasters to continually maximize delivery and value for agencies and marketers.

Consequently, broadcasters are increasingly incentivized to support a unified audience-based trading model across multiple inventory types in an efficient way — ideally using a single currency and measured together in a single campaign. According to a recent TVSquared survey of buyers, more than 70% believe that all forms of TV should be sold on impressions, and more than 75% of respondents agreed that “TV” is now defined as linear and streaming.

Buyers as it Relates to TV



Audience-First Targeting

While traditional linear TV continues to be sold globally by guaranteed audience (using ratings) for premium events and inventory, much of the world has shifted their remaining inventory to adaptive audience types of fulfilment including audience impressions. Audience impressions is a common currency that can be calculated from a combination of linear TV ratings data and impression information from on-demand and streaming services.

Switching non-premium linear inventory to trading a common currency based on audience impressions will greatly increase the efficiency of broadcaster ad sales teams, as they won't have to spend time making up for unexpected, inventory-wasting under-delivery. Importantly, this trading approach is also compatible with the digital norms of selling streaming and on-demand inventory as a single campaign. That, in turn, frees sales teams to spend more time cultivating their relationships with existing clients and prospecting for new ones.

Additionally, the ability to move beyond age and gender-based demographics to a more precise audience profile will enable sales organizations to optimize the value of their linear inventory to meet buyer preferences and demands.

Dynamic Trading

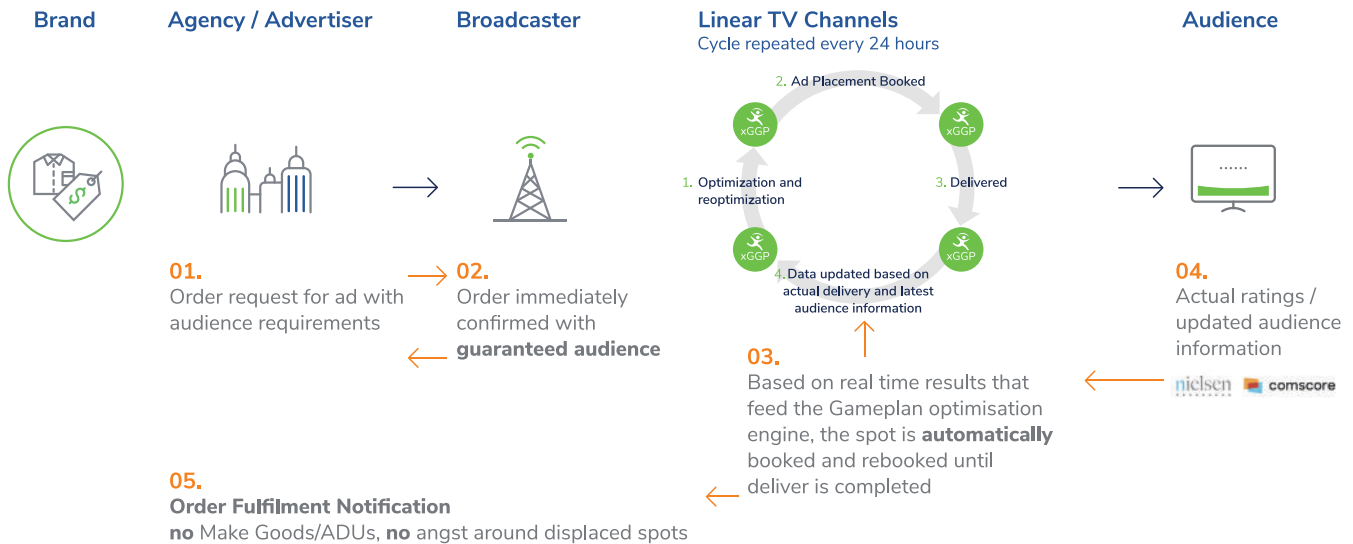
Selling based on audience impression means the spots are not immutably locked into place; instead, they are dynamically booked and rebooked across linear, streaming, and on-demand based on changes to supply and demand, as well as the most recent viewership data.

This also solves the problem of ads that are bought months in advance against metrics and market conditions that may no longer be valid, which can be optimized with adaptive audience-based fulfilment. As illustrated in the graphic Adaptive Audience Fulfilment Process Flow, an advertiser places an order with a broadcaster, and the broadcaster is immediately able to confirm the order and guarantee the advertiser's target audience.



Adaptive Audience Fulfilment Process Flow

Orders demand only Audience guarantee in confirmation...



By dynamically booking and rebooking across platform inventory, broadcasters enable brands to get their ads in front of the audience they are targeting, without issues such as displaced spots or the need to be made whole for any under-delivery.

GamePlan for linear and SureFire for on-demand and CTV have been purpose-built by Imagine to fully enable such dynamic optimization. The coupling of these solutions with Operative’s AOS sales and order management solution brings ongoing awareness, visibility, and control across the broadcast enterprise.



Integration Approach

AOS, GamePlan and SureFire have been purpose-built to support existing industry standards, while also being capable of adapting to emerging standards as the ecosystem embraces them. The flow of data between applications relies upon the extensive use of existing standards and open TIP APIs, inclusive of:

Feature	Benefit
Inventory Avails Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Near real-time avails for salesperson proposals ● Quicker speed to market
Product Catalog, Sales Element Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sync avails and order continuity between systems ● Seamless order management
TIP Formatted Order Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multichannel orders streamline order management ● Eliminate swivel chair for sales
Pre/Post Log Times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Near real-time spot placement for order management and posting ● Enhanced monetization
Addressable Placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduces interaction for ATSC 3.0 ad insertion from linear live stream ● Better monetization for ATSC 3.0
Recommended Spots and Airtimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Optimize Inventory for increased revenue potential ● POC estimates an increase in yield up to 20% ● Reduce Makegoods

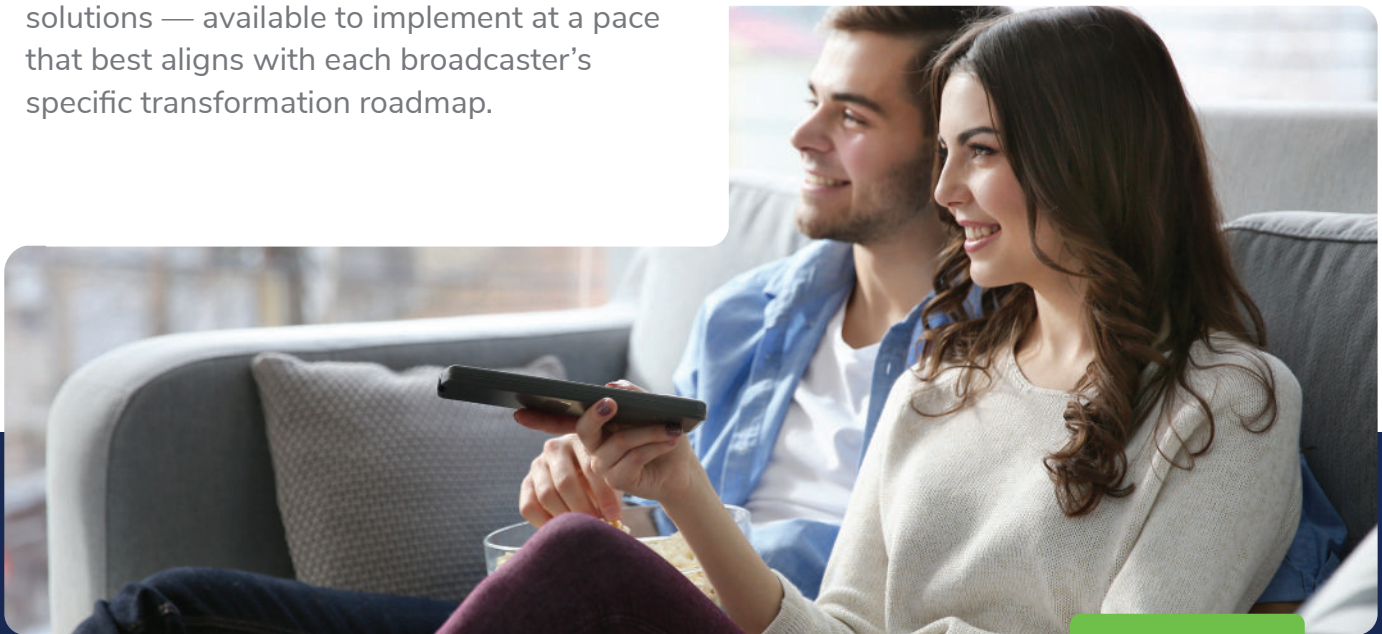
The use of open APIs, including TIP API support, provides further solution extensibility to enable areas of automation within each customer's environment.



Conclusion

Imagine Communications and Operative are transforming TV ad sales for converged selling and cross-platform optimization of linear, on-demand, and CTV for North American broadcasters.

Working together, Imagine and Operative have tightly coupled their cloud-based solutions to accelerate speed to market, automate, and optimize at scale, and deliver innovative cross-platform monetization solutions — available to implement at a pace that best aligns with each broadcaster's specific transformation roadmap.



Ready to get started? Connect with our experts today!

Get in touch with our team to see how we can work together

Operative: <https://www.operative.com>

Imagine Communications:
<https://imaginecommunications.com/monetize-across-linear-digital>