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THE two founders of Atlas Obscura, Joshua Foer, left, and Dylan Thurau, center, with the site's new chief, David Plotz.

# Slate's Former Top Editor Takes Helm at Travel Site

By LESLIE KAUFMAN

As editor in chief of the pioneering online magazine Slate, David Plotz ran his own group of well-regarded writers, had a platform for podcasting and earned health insurance.

In short, in an industry shaken by turmoil, Mr. Plotz had it good. Then in July, after about six years at the helm of Slate, he walked away. He said it was simply time for something new—he just wasn't sure what.

Mr. Plotz made a list of more than 100 people to talk to. He included not only journalists, but also recruiters, financiers and people he found interesting, like Maria Popova, the author of the Brain Pickings blog on culture. He also wrote out a list of dream projects: starting a soccer magazine perhaps, or producing a Broadway musical based on the book and TV show "Friday Night Lights."

Although Mr. Plotz charted out a course for a long quest, he ended up at his destination with surprising speed. Last month, he became the chief executive of Atlas Obscura, a little-known travel website with monthly traffic that it says is nearly one million unique visitors.

"I expected it would really take a long time, that we would have to answer thousands of questions," said Michael Wertheim, a former executive at Upworthy and current advisor to Atlas, referring to the process to hire Mr. Plotz. "But he had a real passion for the brand and he just jumped on it."

Atlas Obscura is small, but it was already well known to Mr. Plotz. It showcases places from around the globe that don't make it into the average travel guide: the grave of Stonewall Jackson's arm, an island snake temple in a river in India or the small Polish village of Zalpie. Mr. Plotz liked the site so much that he brokered a deal in 2012 to have some of its content appear on Slate.

Among the site's most compelling selling points was its co-founder, the 32-year-old Joshua Foer. Mr. Plotz's good friend is Mr. Foer's brother Franklin, the editor of The New Republic. (A third Foer brother, Jonathan Safran Foer, is a novelist.)

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## Advertising

# Ad Agency and Charity Take Relationship to New Level

By STUART ELLIOTT

IF, as the saying goes, advertising is a relationship business, an agency, Sid Lee, and one of its clients, the men's health charity known as the **Movember Foundation**, have entered the cohabitation stage.

Two years after opening its first American office, in New York, Sid Lee, which was founded in Montreal in 1993, is arriving in Southern California with an office, named Sid Lee L.A., that is in the Culver City office of the foundation. Although it is not unheard-of for an agency to embed some employees in a client's office, or vice versa, the agreement between Sid Lee and the foundation calls for the agency not only to share space with the foundation but also to consider the foundation's office its home.

"We will be joining the Movember Foundation in the Culver City location as a partner, fully integrated in the space," said Will Travis, chief executive of the Sid Lee USA division of Sid Lee. "We will be located there until further growth demands otherwise, and then the expansion may be to gether."

Mr. Travis is dividing his time between the New York and Culver City offices of Sid Lee, which also has offices in Amsterdam, Paris and Toronto along with its Montreal headquarters. Two senior executives from Sid Lee in Montreal have been named to help Mr. Travis run Sid Lee L.A.: Nicolas Van Erum, managing partner, and Kristian Manchester, partner and global executive creative director.

Sid Lee L.A. is handling the foundation as a pro bono client; among the paying clients are Adidas, Facebook, Intel and 99 Cents Only Stores. When the office is fully up and running, Mr. Travis said, plans call for a total of 18 to 20 employees. The foundation's office "is fairly big, an open-plan warehouse, that can accommodate" that many people without difficulty, he said. Sid Lee is paying the foundation rent, Mr. Travis said, and donating time to support its charitable work.

The agency and the foundation are to announce their partnership on Monday as the foundation is completing its annual Movember fund-raising effort,



Will Travis, left, chief executive of Sid Lee USA; Mark Fewell, a senior vice president at the Movember Foundation; and Nicolas Van Erum, managing partner of Sid Lee Los Angeles.

which urges men to grow mustaches in November to raise money for and awareness of male health issues like prostate cancer and testicular cancer. (According to Mr. Travis, Mr. Van Erum has grown a mustache that makes him "look like a bad porn actor.") Movember began in Australia, where the foundation has its headquarters, and is taking place this year in more than 20 countries.

"Part of the reason we're doing what we're doing now," said Mark Fewell, senior vice president and head of market development for the foundation, who is based in Culver City, is that Sid Lee "offered to be a strategic resource for us not just in the U.S. but globally."

The goal is determining "how do you bring the Movember Foundation brand to life and at the same time celebrate the Movember campaign" each November, Mr. Fewell said. But Mr. Travis for a decade, dating to when Mr. Travis was a partner at

ethos and energy," he added. "There's a lot of brand-value alignment." In a good sign, Mr. Fewell said, laughing, although "not all the dogs in our office are always well behaved," they are getting along with the Sid Lee executives.

The foundation is known for a cheeky informality, in keeping with its Australian roots. And the agency is, as far as can be determined, the only one in the world that has a circus as a part owner; in 2012, Cirque du Soleil bought a minority stake in Sid Lee that has been estimated at 20 percent. The foundation's decision to share the Culver City space is part of a philosophy to operate the office "colaboratively," Mr. Fewell said, which includes hosting "a lot of events" that bring in "creative perspectives" from outside and "get Movember in front of people who maybe haven't heard of it."

Sid Lee said he had known Mr. Travis for a decade, dating to when Mr. Travis was a partner at

Attk, a British digital and design agency, and led its expansion to the United States with offices in New York and San Francisco. (It is no surprise, then, that Mr. Travis said he would consider opening, at some point, an office for Sid Lee in San Francisco.)

In another connection between Sid Lee and the foundation, Adam Garone, chief executive of the foundation, is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the annual C2 Montreal conference sponsored by the agency, scheduled for May 28 to 29 next year.

Sid Lee joins a long list of agencies opening offices in the Los Angeles market, which is getting renewed attention because of what the trade publication Adweek called "the growing collaboration among entertainment, agencies and tech." That assessment was made last week in a special "L.A. Issue" of Adweek that featured on the cover the actor, musician and "digital entrepreneur" Jared Leto.

## Most Wanted

### BROADCAST TELEVISION

Nov. 10 through 16.\*

TITLE	NETWORK	RATING
N.F.L.: Patriots vs. Colts	NBC	11.9
NCIS	CBS	9.1
NCIS: New Orleans	CBS	8.4
The Big Bang Theory	CBS	7.6
60 Minutes	CBS	7.3
Dancing With the Stars	ABC	7.3
Madam Secretary	CBS	6.9
The O.C. (Sun., 7-35 p.m.; 25 mins.)	Fox	6.0
Mom	CBS	5.9
The Voice (Tuesday)	NBC	5.9

### CABLE TELEVISION

Nov. 10 through 16.\*

TITLE	NETWORK	RATING
N.F.L.: Panthers vs. Eagles	ESPN	7.2
Walking Dead	AMC	7.0
N.F.L.: Bills vs. Dolphins	NFLN	4.8
Nascar: Sprint Cup/Homestead	ESPN	3.1
Talking Dead	AMC	2.8
Sons of Anarchy	Fox	2.7
Call. Foot. Auburn vs. Georgia	ESPN	2.6
Angels & Demons (Sat., 8 p.m.)	Hall	2.5
WWE (Mon., 8 and 9 p.m.)	USA	2.4
Gold Rush	Disc.	2.4

### MOVIE BOX OFFICE

Weekend estimates in millions.

TITLE (WEEKS OUT)	WEEKEND	TOTAL
Hunger ... Mockingjay / 1 (1)	\$123.0	\$123.0
Big Hero 6 (3)	20.1	135.7
Interstellar (3)	15.1	120.7
Dumb and Dumber To (2)	13.8	57.5
Gone Girl (8)	2.8	156.8
Beyond the Lights (2)	2.6	10.1
St. Vincent (7)	2.4	36.6
Fury (6)	1.9	79.2
Birdman (6)	1.9	14.4
The Theory of Everything (3)	1.5	2.8

### DVD RENTALS

Nov. 10 through 16.\*

TITLE (DAYS OUT)	RENTALS
X-Men: Days of Future Past (33)	Edge of Tomorrow (40)
Maleficent (12)	Hercules — 2014 (12)
Mr. Peabody & Sherman (33)	A Million Ways to Die in the West (40)
Sex Tape (26)	Neighbors (54)
Most Wanted Man (12)	Deliver Us From Evil (19)

### MAGAZINES (Print/Digital)

Audience in millions, September.

FOOD	AUDIENCE	CHANGE
Alteceps	40.5	+20.2%
Taste of Home	24.3	+24.8
Food Network Magazine	16.3	+ 5.5
Cooking Light	15.5	+ 3.3
Food & Wine	11.8	+17.9

### MUSIC ALBUMS

Nov. 10 through 16.

TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1989	Taylor Swift	Big Machine
Sonic Highways	Foo Fighters	RCA
Endless River	Pink Floyd	Columbia
Man Against ...	Garth Brooks	RCA
Cadillac/Steak	Big K.R.I.T.	Def Jam
Nick Jonas	Nick Jonas	Island
Now ... Music 52	Various	Now/Univ.
That's ... to Me	Penetration	RCA
In the Lonely ...	Sam Smith	Capitol
Cowboy Rides ...	George Strait	MCA/Univ.

### MUSIC DOWNLOADS

Nov. 10 through 16.

TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
Blank Space	Taylor Swift	Big Machine
Take Me ...	Hozier	Columbia
All ... Bass	Meghan Trainor	Epic
Animals	Maroon 5	222/Inter.
Shake It Off	Taylor Swift	Big Machine
I'm Not ...	Sam Smith	Capitol
Jealous	Nick Jonas	Island
Bang Bang	Ariana Grande	Univ./Rep.
Tuesday	I Love Makonnen	OVO/War.
Centuries	Fall Out Boy	Island

Sources: Nielsen (television); General Settlement (Popular Demand); State Street (movies); NPD Media (music); Billboard (rentals).