

People

Q&A: Catena Media's new CEO on his first day in the office

Per Hellberg chats to EGR Marketing about Catena's World Cup strategy and relocating his family to Malta

Jake Evans | 05 June 2018

It was announced in March that Per Hellberg would be the next permanent CEO of Catena Media.

Taking over from interim chief Henrik Persson Ekdahl, Hellberg served his first official day in the job yesterday having left magazine subscription firm Readly this summer.

Hellberg is now charged with supporting Catena's aggressive M&A strategy, ramping up World Cup retention efforts and delivering growth in the US following the repeal of PASPA.

Catena's new CEO spoke to *EGR Marketing* about his future vision for the lead generation giant, providing real value for operator partners and relocating his family to Malta from Stockholm.

EGR Marketing: *How was your first day in office?*

Per Hellberg: "I have had some time to get to know the company during my notice period from my previous employer so I had a whole day last week to reprogram my brain so-to-speak.

"With Catena being a PLC, I cannot give any detailed statements until I am fully onboard, but I've managed to pick up a good idea of the company, its strategy and what we should focus on.

"It has been a good start though and I spent most of my day yesterday talking to business contacts and investors."

EGR Marketing: *What are your main responsibilities during the first few weeks/months?*

PH: "You have to consider the kind of company you are joining, whether it is a company facing big problems or facing big opportunities.

“Obviously Catena is growing very quickly and has a very aggressive plan moving forwards, so I need to learn the dynamics of the company and make sure that resources continue to be used in the right way, but there is no need for me to come in and change everything.

“We are extremely active in the M&A scene but we also want to push our internal organic growth, especially with the World Cup coming up which is super important for the entire industry.”

EGR Marketing: *Will the World Cup or the prospect of US sports betting take up most of your time?*

PH: “The fun part is that you need to do a bit of everything. We have an extremely good team of people in place to run all of these different elements.

“We have a great sports team operating out of the UK and a very good team in the US focusing on gaming and now financing.

“My role is to make sure they get the resources they need to continue their work, not only in training and business but also so they can play an active part in our acquisition strategy.”

EGR Marketing: *How will Catena capitalise on the World Cup?*

PH: “We are trying to adapt to ensure that our business partners are getting the most out of the tournament.

“The traditional, above-the-line media landscape gets bought out pretty early on, so it can be tough to get your brand some recognition.

“We are adding live content and YouTube shows with famous sports people to get more attention from people out there and to get them to stay on the site for longer – we want them to be better informed so we can send more leads to our partners.

EGR Marketing: *How will Catena provide value for operators during the tournament?*

“It is ever so difficult for operators during the World Cup because there are a lot of customers coming to do a one-time bet, but then there are those coming in who could be high-rollers.

“It can be hard for operators to understand whether to go for CPA or rev share, and if they only select one then we are limiting them.

“Another big thing will be fixed fees, where the operator will pay to promote their brand on our sites with a focus on creating awareness, so that operators can get their brand visualised with us during such an intense period.”

EGR Marketing: *Did you work in Malta during your time at Nordic Bet?*

PH: “Last time I worked in gambling we had offices in Malta but due to personal reasons I couldn’t move down there so I ended up travelling a lot but we had a small office in the Nordics as well.

“From 2010-2013 I spent a lot of time there, so for me it was a fairly easy decision to decide to relocate because I already had a good idea of the lifestyle in Malta.

EGR Marketing: *How difficult is relocating to Malta from Stockholm?*

PH: “We took the decision very quickly to move as for our kids it is a great opportunity for them to live abroad, learn English really well and experience life somewhere less cold than Sweden!

“We are moving down in July but we have had fantastic support, Catena has an extraordinary HR department that really helps you get on board.

“Your key focus is the business, but also to make sure that your family adapts and doing both of those things can be quite tough but Catena have helped in that respect and been extremely good.

“I am talking to all of my new colleagues and people I know on the island who have moved on in various positions since 2013, so with that kind of network it becomes quite simple.

“Even though it is difficult to find housing and schools, we managed to solve everything in one day so I am free to focus on the work now as it all went very smoothly.”

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