

# AppNexus + Underdog Media

Underdog Media Implements Custom Header Bidding Solution To Eliminate Latency And Maximize Yield

## THE CHALLENGE

**Underdog Media needed a technology solution capable of improving its effective CPMs.**

Underdog Media is a media technology company that generates incremental ad revenues for more than 500 digital publishers. Through a proprietary solution, Underdog automatically populates blank space on customer web pages with high-impact, user-friendly ad units, which it then sells to programmatic buyers via its own ad-serving technology.

Despite all the quality inventory it creates, Underdog Media was struggling to satisfy its publisher clients heading into 2016. Due to its inefficient waterfall adserver setup, the company frequently sold impressions beneath their true market value and endured major discrepancies between its own accounting and that of its demand partners. This damaged the effective CPMs Underdog Media was able to pass along to its publishers, causing significant turnover among its client roster.

In order to continue growing its business, Underdog Media needed a technology solution that could raise its effective CPMs. Crucially, this new adserver setup would need to sell each impression to the highest bidder and eliminate the latency that was causing Underdog's discrepancies. Otherwise, the company would have no choice but to prepare for more defections.

## THE SOLUTION

**Underdog Media uses Prebid.js to build a custom header bidding solution for faster allocation and higher yield.**

Underdog Media chose to replace its waterfall with a custom header bidding solution. Using AppNexus' open-source Prebid.js code as a base, the firm built its own technology for holding a true, open auction within its ad units. Whereas the old waterfall required the publisher to call on each demand source one by one, header bidding makes a single call, which then solicits bids from buyers simultaneously.

By implementing this custom header bidding solution, Underdog Media created a level playing field for its various network and exchange partners. Now that each partner has equal access to its inventory, the company regularly accepts high-value bids from buyers who otherwise might not have seen the impression due to their place inside the waterfall.

The **inefficient waterfall setup** meant the company was selling impressions far **beneath their true market value.**

HEADER BIDDING PUTS UNDERDOG MEDIA'S BUSINESS INTO **OVERDRIVE.**

Most importantly, their custom header bidding solution has vastly reduced Underdog's latency and the discrepancies that came with it. Instead of wasting ads on users who leave the page while the impression is being passed back and forth along the waterfall, Underdog Media's new setup ensures that the ad is served right as the page is loading.

## THE RESULTS

Underdog Media's header bidding solution has had a dramatic effect on Underdog Media's business. By boosting bid prices and virtually eliminating the need for discrepancy-based refunds, the firm's new monetization strategy has allowed it to generate a whole lot more revenue for its clients.

**In fact, in the first two months after implementation, Underdog Media's effective CPMs grew by a staggering 51%.**

And because Underdog employees no longer need to spend hours each week ironing out discrepancies, the company has more time than ever to work on improving its products and services. Today, Underdog Media isn't just retaining its old clients — it's adding new ones day after day.



### About Underdog Media

Underdog Media delivers direct response and branding initiatives for marketers to increase conversion and grow ad space revenue.

For more information, follow us at [@underdogmedia](https://twitter.com/underdogmedia) or visit our website at [www.underdogmedia.com](http://www.underdogmedia.com)

*"Header bidding really took off and **accelerated our business** considerably. Publishers are seeing what we've done on other people's sites, and then they're signing up with us on their own. I don't know where we would be right now without it."*

**Mike Tarpey**, Chief Operating Officer, Underdog Media



### 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.

For more information, follow us at [@appnexus](https://twitter.com/appnexus) or visit our website at [www.appnexus.com](http://www.appnexus.com)