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## Rapp on the ‘disintegration of integration’

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San Diego — Direct marketing veteran Stan Rapp continues to work overtime brainstorming ideas for direct marketing, including promoting a new conception of direct-digital synergism at the Direct Marketing Association’s annual conference and exhibition, running through Wednesday here.

The New York-based chairman of Atlanta-based marketing agency holding company Engauge, who is to deliver a keynote address Wednesday at DMA09, sat down with BtoB to explain his concept of “the disintegration of integration” and how direct marketing needs to go digital to survive.

“It’s impossible to truly integrate all the channels that marketers must contend with, including search, e-mail, mobile and social,” Rapp said.

“We’re putting media ahead of strategy, talking about how to run this mobile campaign or that e-mail campaign,” he said. “But where are the big ideas? No wonder CMOs are going crazy.”

Rapp’s solution is to package direct marketing into two “pillars”—digital and direct—a concept he dubbed “iDirect.”

“Without interactive marketing, direct marketing will go under,” Rapp said. “The Internet gives direct marketing affordability and accessibility. Direct provides a framework of accountability and addressability. Put them together and we’re seeing the birth of a new marketing discipline.”

Rapp founded direct marketing agency Rapp Collins Worldwide and later served as CEO of McCann Relationship Marketing. He launched Engauge two years ago, acquiring an assortment of specialty marketing agencies.

Many of his ideas on the confluence of digital and direct marketing, he said, are laid out in a new book, “Reinventing Interactive and Direct Marketing” (McGraw-Hill, 2009), that contains marketing observations by Rapp as well as a number of other digital and direct experts.

To explore ways that digital and direct marketing are informing each other, Rapp and others approached DMA this year to create the iDirect Leadership Committee. It is co-chaired by Rapp and Tim Suther, senior VP-global multichannel marketing services at marketing services company Acxiom.

“Digital is direct and vice versa,” Suther told BtoB, expanding on Rapp’s explanations. “The concept is: Successful digital marketing must include the principles of direct. We see some measurement today with digital marketing, but compared to direct it’s child’s play.”

Suther said the new iDirect committee has developed several sub-committees to explore public policy and marketer education, in order “to take our ideas and make them real for marketers.”