

UPDATE ON LEE'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

SECOND QUARTER FY2022 EARNINGS | MAY 2022



SAFE HARBOR

The information provided in this presentation may include forward-looking statements relating to future events or the future financial performance of the Company. Because such statements are subject to risks and uncertainties, actual results may differ materially from those expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. Words such as “aims”, “anticipates,” “plans,” “expects,” “intends,” “will,” “potential,” “hope” and similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements are based upon current expectations of the Company and involve assumptions that may never materialize or may prove to be incorrect. Actual results and the timing of events could differ materially from those anticipated in such forward-looking statements as a result of various risks and uncertainties. Detailed information regarding factors that may cause actual results to differ materially from the results expressed or implied by statements in report relating to the Company may be found in the Company’s periodic filings with the Commission, including the factors described in the sections entitled “Risk Factors,” copies of which may be obtained from the SEC’s website at www.sec.gov. The Company does not undertake any obligation to update forward-looking statements contained in this presentation.



LEE INVESTMENT THESIS

WE BELIEVE OUR THREE PILLAR DIGITAL GROWTH STRATEGY WILL CREATE SUBSTANTIAL VALUE:



Execute Three Pillar Digital Growth Strategy

Generate long-term sustainable digital revenue growth, margin expansion and strong free cash flow



Continued Debt Reduction & Strengthened Balance Sheet

Expect to reach <2.5x leverage target within five years



Increased Shareholder Value

Operating cash flow and profits are enhanced

Debt reduction drives shareholder value

Multiple expansion fueled by increased recurring, high-margin digital revenue



LEE'S STRATEGY FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: THE THREE PILLARS

LEE IS RAPIDLY TRANSFORMING FROM A PRINT-CENTRIC TO A DIGITAL-CENTRIC COMPANY

PILLAR 1

Expand digital audiences by transforming the presentation of local news and information

PILLAR 2

Expand digital subscription base and revenue

PILLAR 3

Diversify and expand offerings for local advertisers



Lee expects the Three Pillar Digital Growth strategy to drive more than \$435 million of recurring, sustainable digital revenue by 2026.



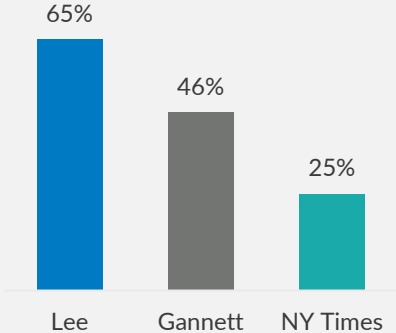
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: MARKET LEADING GROWTH

Digital Subscriber Growth Leads Industry

492K Current Digital-only Subscribers

9 quarters of leading digital subscriber growth

FY2021 YOY Growth

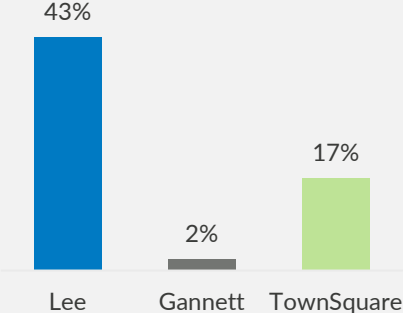


Digital Agency Revenue Growth Leads Industry

\$57M Amplified LTM Revenue

43% YOY growth at Amplified

FY2021 YOY Growth

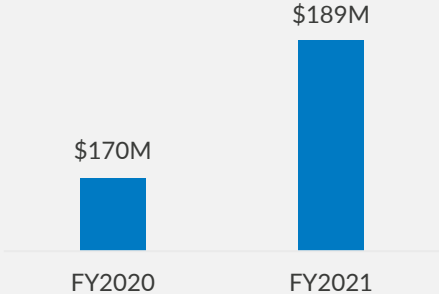


Total Digital Revenue Growing Significantly

\$211M of LTM Total Digital Revenue

Total Digital Revenue up 11% YOY

FY2021 YOY Growth



SECOND QUARTER 2022 RESULTS AND REAFFIRM 2022 OUTLOOK



Strong digital
revenue growth



Continued
excellent cost
control of legacy
business



Investments to
drive digital
transformation



On track to
achieve full year
targets for digital
revenue and
adjusted EBITDA



SECOND QUARTER 2022 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS & 2022 OUTLOOK

Q2 FY2022 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- Total Operating Revenue was \$190 million in the second quarter, a 1.3% YOY decline
 - Total Digital Revenue was \$58 million, up 33% YOY
 - Digital-only subscription revenue increased 45% YOY and totaled \$10 million
 - Digital-only subscribers increased 59% YOY and now total 492,000
 - Digital advertising and marketing services revenue increased 36% YOY and totaled \$43 million
 - Amplified revenue increased 108% YOY totaling \$19 million
 - Total Print Revenue was \$132 million in the second quarter, a 11% YOY decline
- Operating expenses totaled \$195 million and Cash Costs⁽¹⁾ were up 3.0% YOY due to:
 - Increases in investments in digital talent and technology tied to our digital growth strategy and digital cost of goods sold;
 - Cycling one-time cost benefits realized in the prior year; and
 - Partially offset by a reduction in expenses that support our print revenue streams.
- Net loss totaled \$6.7M and Adjusted EBITDA⁽¹⁾ totaled \$16.9M

FY2022 OUTLOOK

495,000

Total Digital Only Subscribers

\$33M

Digital Only Subscription Revenue

\$175M

Digital Advertising & Marketing Services Revenue

\$95 – 98M

Adjusted EBITDA

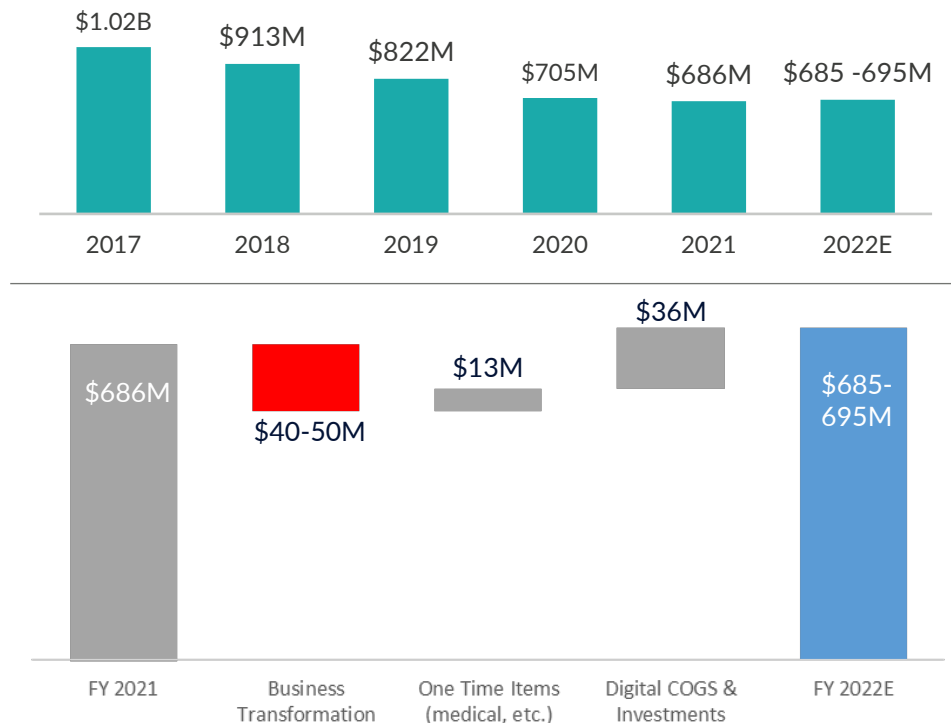


⁽¹⁾ Adjusted EBITDA and Cash Costs are non-GAAP financial measures. See appendix.

STRONG TRACK RECORD OF SUSTAINABLE COST MANAGEMENT

- Proficient in driving efficiencies
 - Current base of +\$300M of direct costs associated with our legacy revenue streams that will be managed with associated revenue trends
 - Executed \$45M in annualized cash cost reductions early in Q3 FY22; FY22 impact \$20M
 - Ongoing initiatives aimed at optimizing manufacturing, distribution, and corporate services
- Thoughtful investments in digital future
 - Significant investments made in talent and technology to fund successful execution of three-pillar strategy
 - Acquisition and retention of top talent focused on digital subscriber growth and expanding reach of Amplified Digital
 - Increase in digital COGS driven by rapid growth in digital revenue

Total Cash Costs⁽¹⁾



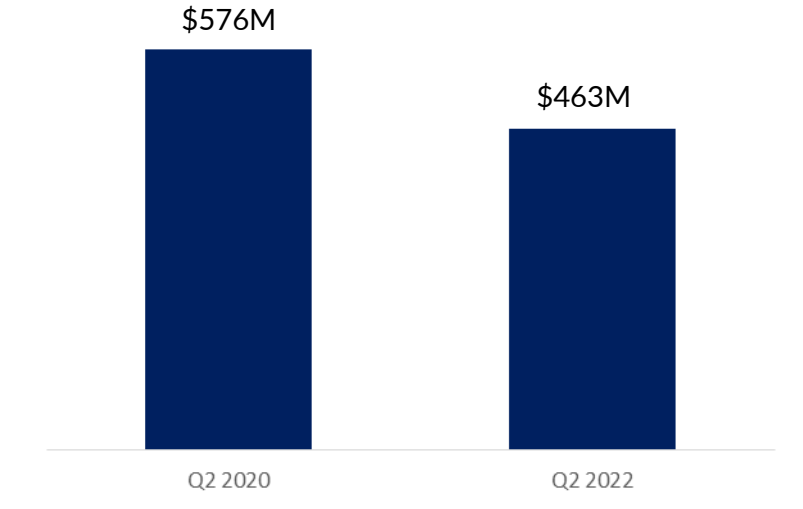
Optimizing operating structure by investing in the digital future & managing the legacy business

⁽¹⁾ Adjusted EBITDA and Cash Costs are non-GAAP financial measures. See appendix.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FIVE YEAR OUTLOOK: STRENGTHENED BALANCE SHEET

- \$20M in debt reduction in first half of 2022 and \$113M since refinancing in March 2020
- Favorable credit agreement with Berkshire Hathaway
 - 25-year runway w/ no breakage costs or prepayment penalties
 - Fixed annual interest rate, no financial performance covenants and no fixed amortization
- Pension plans now **frozen** and **fully funded** in the aggregate and not expecting any material pension contributions in 2022
- Asset sales of \$25M over the last two years and targeting \$20-30M in 2022. \$14M already closed in first half of 2022

Significant Gross Debt Reduction



Achieve long-term leverage target of under 2.5x in five years



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: FIVE-YEAR OUTLOOK

	2021	2022	2026
Digital Only Subscribers	402,000	495,000	900,000
YoY	65%	23%	5 YEAR CAGR 17%
Digital Only Subscription Revenue	\$28M	\$33M	\$100M
YoY	46%	18%	5 YEAR CAGR 29%
Digital Advertising and Marketing Services Revenue	\$141M	\$175M	\$310M
YoY	7%	24%	5 YEAR CAGR 17%
Total Digital Revenue (including other digital services)	\$189M	\$230M	\$435M



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**LEE'S STRATEGY FOR DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION:
THREE PILLAR DIGITAL
GROWTH STRATEGY**



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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: EXPAND DIGITAL AUDIENCES

ENHANCING DIGITAL PRESENTATIONS TO PROVIDE BEST-IN-CLASS USER EXPERIENCE OF LOCAL NEWS, WITH MULTIFORMAT, RICH CONTENT

PILLAR 1

PILLAR 2

PILLAR 3

- Creating cohesive digital experience across all platforms by investing in user-experience design talent
- Improving multimedia presentation
 - Emphasis on video and audio to drive engagement and monetization
 - Expand regional and statewide collaboration to enhance video and audio content
- Enabling cross-platform integration to track usage
- Creating new channels (apps, podcasts) to utilize our unique content and expertise (e.g. local sports)

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A News
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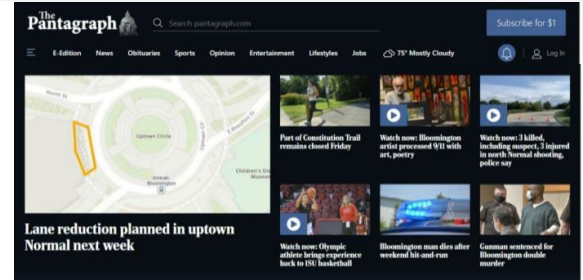
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The
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The Latest



Central Illinois speaks up: Letters to the editor for the week of Sep. 3, 2021



Illinois man gets 96 years in 2017 killing, dismemberment



Emmett Till marker in Mississippi supplied but not vandalized



What you missed this week in notable Central Illinois crimes and court cases

Latest Video



You want a Super Bowl, you'll need premier quarterback



Trio of Red River piglets go crazy over new toys at San Diego Zoo



Five of the best exercises for stress relief



Kaley Cuoco and husband Karl Cook split after three years of marriage

Sports



Watch now: Illinois State football opens season against Butler



Watch now: Illinois' Calvin Hart Jr. out for season; Arur Sikowodi named starter



Watch now: Illinois Wesleyan football team ready to 'line up for season opener against Franklin



5 YEARS AGO: Max Moews, Central Catholic turn back University High



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: STRATEGIES TO DRIVE SUBSCRIPTION REVENUE

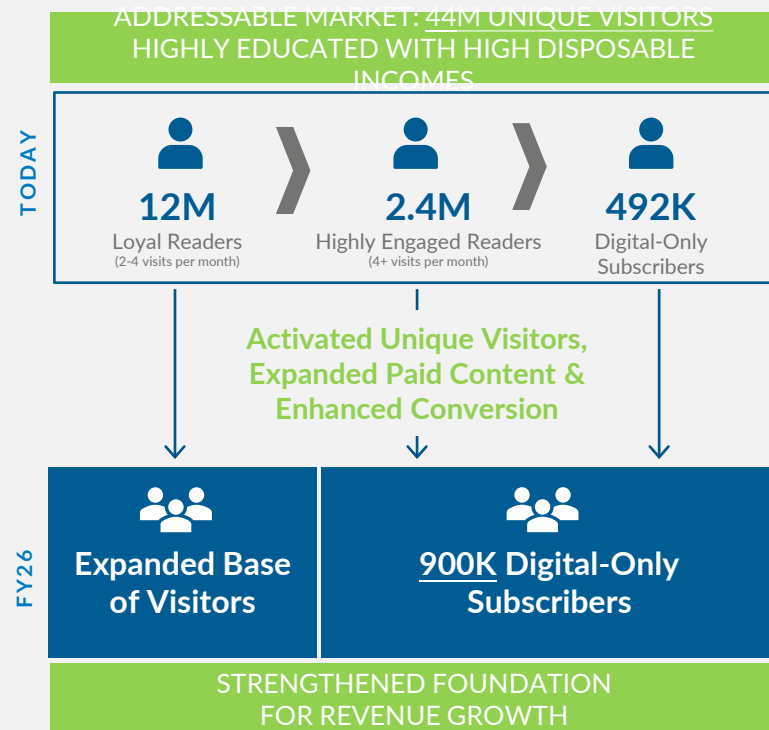
ENHANCING CONVERSION WITHIN LEE'S ADDRESSABLE MARKET

PILLAR 1

PILLAR 2

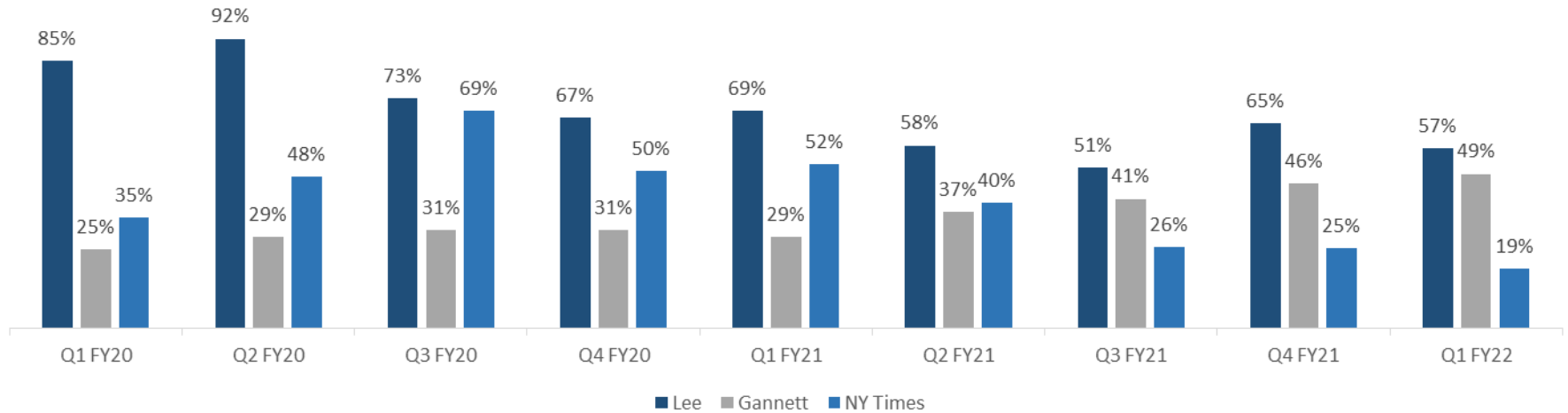
PILLAR 3

- Convert more of our addressable market to digital content subscribers
 - Leverage embedded position in 77 attractive markets to grow audiences and share of total addressable market
 - Convert more of the 2.4M highly engaged readers to digital subscribers
 - Provide attractive niche subscriptions for targeted audiences
- Implement data-driven, dynamic content metering to drive subscription conversion
 - Digital segmentation and targeted offers based on usage
 - Maximizing conversions from email, search, social media referrals
 - Leveraging TownNews dynamic meter to drive conversions



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: LEE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION GROWTH LEADS THE INDUSTRY

Digital Subscription Growth YoY



Digital subscriber growth has outpaced industry peers for 9 quarters



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: FIVE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION GROWTH OUTLOOK

LEE IS CONFIDENT IN ITS PLAN TO GROW DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS AND ARPU

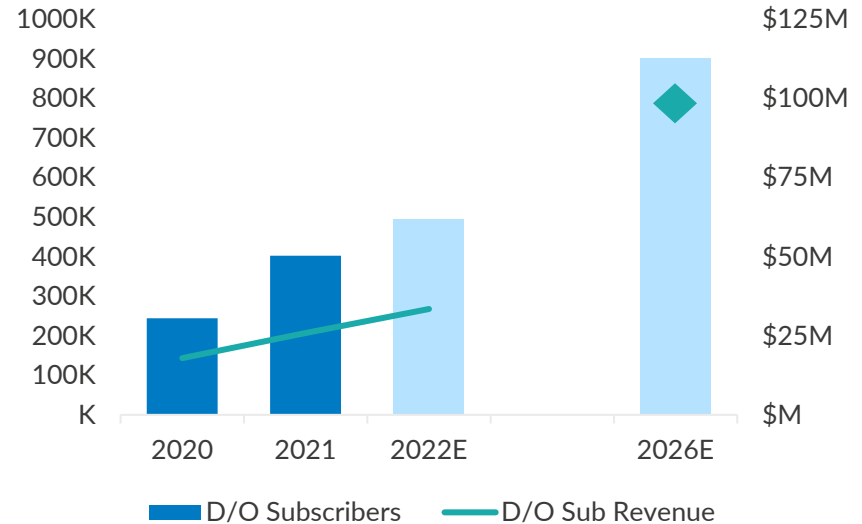
We expect significant growth in digital subscribers:

- Convert more visitors to our core digital products
- Launch new digital niche subscription products
- Continued conversion of audiences to digital subscribers
- Expect 900,000 digital subscribers by 2026, assuming modest penetration of the current addressable market

We expect to drive digital subscription revenue even faster:

- Expect ARPU expansion as introductory pricing becomes a smaller piece of the subscriber base
- Maximizing ARPU through data and sophisticated analytics
- Niche digital products expected to carry higher ARPU

Digital Subscriptions – 5 Year Outlook



Lee expects \$100M of digital subscription revenue in 2026



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR SUBSCRIPTION REVENUE

1

Lee is the fastest growing digital subscription platform with a strong track record of accelerating digital subscription growth.

2

Lee is halfway to the goal of reaching 900,000 paid digital only subscribers assuming a modest penetration of the total addressable market.

3

Lee's digital transformation strategy is expected to generate recurring sustainable digital subscription revenue, expecting \$100M in 2026.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: EXPAND DIGITAL ADVERTISING SERVICES

LEVERAGE “FIRST TO MARKET” POSITION WITH ARRAY OF DIGITAL PRODUCT OFFERINGS, SERVICES AND MARKETING SOLUTIONS

PILLAR 1

PILLAR 2

PILLAR 3

Diversify and Expand Offerings to Local Advertisers

Amplified: Lee’s Omnichannel Marketing Solution

Amplified offers omnichannel digital marketing solutions for local advertisers (e.g., consulting, media buying, analytics) through its **Vision platform**

Competitive Advantages of Amplified:

- **Data driven ad tech** that efficiently feeds customized proposals to sales reps through Lee’s **Vision platform**
- **Specialized category expertise** – automotive and healthcare
- **Scalable custom video content** from **Brand Ave. Studios**
- **First party data** to drive **premium eCPMs** and create recurring revenue
- Creates a pipeline for providing **e-commerce solutions** from custom website development and agency services supporting major e-commerce platforms

Maximize Revenue on Lee’s Digital Platforms

Massive audiences on our **owned and operated websites (O&O)** provide a growing opportunity to drive **high margin** digital advertising revenue

Competitive Advantages of O&O:

- Audience to leverage Lee’s **Vision platform** in order to:
 - Increase local market penetration increasing customer counts
 - Increase sell-thru rates and eCPM’s to drive higher value digital advertising revenue
- Promote **video** digital banner, sponsorship and **branded content**



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: AMPLIFIED IS GROWING RAPIDLY

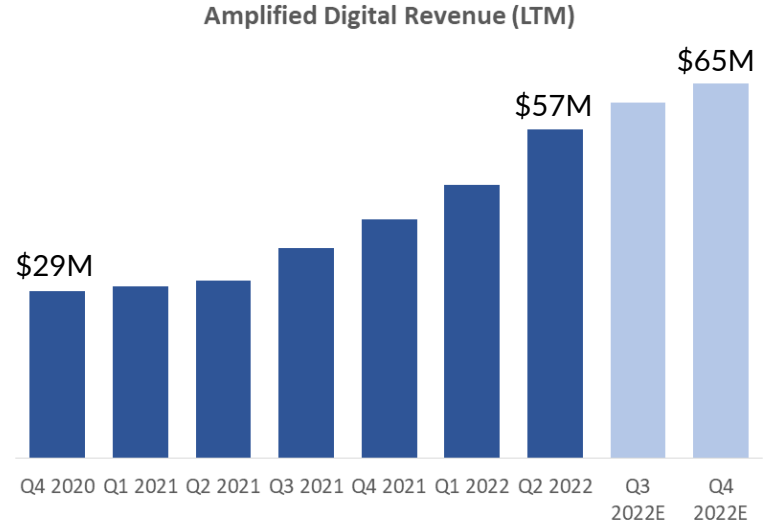
AMPLIFIED – LEE'S FULL-SERVICE DIGITAL AGENCY IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO GROW SIGNIFICANTLY

- Overview of Amplified:

- Provides **full suite of digital services** such as omnichannel marketing solutions, audience targeted display, SEM, social audience targeting, social media management, email marketing, banner, video streaming, and much more
- Creates sophisticated websites for local, regional, and national customers – **2,000 websites** developed
- Supports ecommerce solutions and leverages **first party data** to drive premium eCPMs
- Delivers **key analytics** to customers via Amplified Insights
- Develops **custom video content** through Brand Avenue Studios

- Amplified in Numbers:

- Over **6,500 customers**, up **66%** over the last twelve months
- Amplified customers in **49 states**



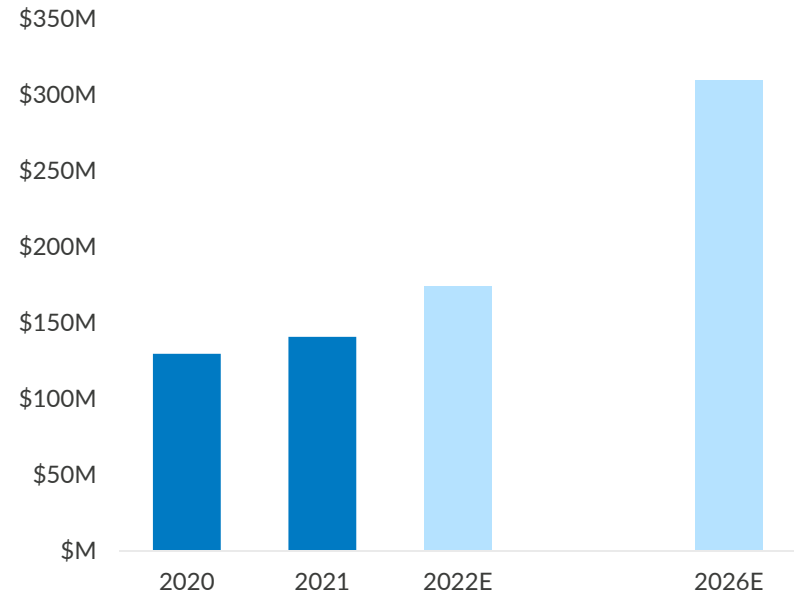
Amplified generated \$57 million in revenue (LTM) and is expected to reach \$100 million in 2024

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: FIVE-YEAR DIGITAL ADVERTISING OUTLOOK

DIGITAL ADVERTISING GROWTH IS FUELED BY AMPLIFIED

- Amplified will drive digital marketing services revenue growth.
 - Rapidly growing digital marketing services provider with \$57M of revenue over the last twelve months, up 86%
 - Leverage local market presence to expand client base from 6,500 customers
 - Increase advertiser spending due to:
 - Growing demand for omnichannel digital advertising
 - Lee's Vision platform leverages data and derives value for local advertisers
 - Expect \$200M of Amplified revenue in 2026
- Our owned and operated digital products provides a unique opportunity to grow high margin digital advertising revenue.
 - Increase local market penetration increasing customer counts
 - Leverage Lee's **Vision** platform to increase sell-thru rates and eCPM's to drive higher value digital advertising revenue

Digital Advertising Outlook



Lee expects \$310M of Digital Advertising & Marketing Services Revenue in 2026



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR ADVERTISING REVENUE GROWTH

1

Amplified is a major growth engine for Lee's digital advertising transformation.

2

Lee's sophisticated Vision platform uniquely positions us to capitalize on the double-digit growth in omnichannel digital advertising.

3

Lee's strategy is expected to generate recurring sustainable digital revenue, exceeding \$310M in digital advertising revenue in 2026.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: REQUIRED INVESTMENTS

LEE IS MAKING VALUE-ADDED INVESTMENTS TO DRIVE ITS DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

TALENT AND TEAM

- Data and technology team with AI expertise
- Brand development and strategic marketing experts
- User experience experts
- Digital product development talent
- Acquisition and retention talent Top talent focused on digital subscriber acquisition and retention
- Executive producers to curate custom video content
- Digital advertising agency talent
- Digital advertising vertical category management experts

SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Data lake technology to store customer data
- Demographic and propensity scoring software
- Consolidated ID technology for subscription access, ad targeting, frequency capping & content recommendations
- Data visualization tools for our newsrooms to drive reader engagement
- Machine learning technology to personalize experiences for our readers
- Business intelligence & visualization tools
- Marketing insight technology
- Front end ad tech that drives efficiencies and improves ARPU

\$15M of incremental investments expected in FY22



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RECONCILIATION OF NON-GAAP FINANCIAL MEASURES

(Millions of Dollars)	Q2 FY2022
Net Income (loss)	(7)
Adjusted to exclude	
Income tax benefit	(3)
Non-operating expenses, net	7
Equity in earnings of TNI and MNI	(1)
Loss (gain) on sale of assets and other, net	-
Depreciation and amortization	9
Restructuring costs and other	11
Stock compensation	1
Add	
Ownership share of TNI and MNI EBITDA (50%)	2
Adjusted EBITDA	17

Adjusted EBITDA is a non-GAAP financial performance measure that enhances financial statement users overall understanding of the operating performance of the Company. The measure isolates unusual, infrequent or non-cash transactions from the operating performance of the business. This allows users to easily compare operating performance among various fiscal periods and how management measures the performance of the business. This measure also provides users with a benchmark that can be used when forecasting future operating performance of the Company that excludes unusual, nonrecurring or one time transactions. Adjusted EBITDA is a component of the calculation used by stockholders and analysts to determine the value of our business when using the market approach, which applies a market multiple to financial metrics. It is also a measure used to calculate the leverage ratio of the Company, which is a key financial ratio monitored and used by the Company and its investors. Adjusted EBITDA is defined as net income (loss), plus non-operating expenses, income tax expense, depreciation and amortization, assets loss (gain) on sales, impairments and other, restructuring costs and other, stock compensation and our 50% share of EBITDA from TNI and MNI, minus equity in earnings of TNI and MNI.

Total Digital Revenue - Total Digital Revenue in the prior year was reclassified to conform to the current year presentation. Total Digital Revenue is defined as digital advertising and marketing services revenue (including Amplified), digital-only subscription revenue and digital services revenue. Previously other digital subscription revenue was included. The reclassification was made to conform with a similar metric of the Company's peers. All periods have been restated for the reclassification.



RECONCILIATION OF NON-GAAP FINANCIAL MEASURES

(Millions of Dollars)	Q2 FY2022	Q2 FY2021	FY2021
Operating Expenses	195	185	745
Adjusted to exclude			
Depreciation and amortization	9	13	44
Assets loss (gain) on sale of assets and other, net	(0)	1	8
Restructuring costs and other	11	1	7
Cash Costs	175	170	686

Cash Costs is a non-GAAP financial performance measure represent a non-GAAP financial performance measure of operating expenses which are measured on an accrual basis and settled in cash. This measure is useful to investors in understanding the components of the Company's cash-settled operating costs. Periodically, the Company provides forward-looking guidance of Cash Costs, which can be used by financial statement users to assess the Company's ability to manage and control its operating cost structure. Cash Costs are defined as compensation, newsprint and ink and other operating expenses. Depreciation and amortization, assets loss (gain) on sales, impairments and other, other non-cash operating expenses and other expenses are excluded. Cash Costs also exclude restructuring costs and other, which are typically paid in cash.



Important Additional information

The Company has filed a definitive proxy statement and form of WHITE proxy card with the SEC with respect to the Company's 2022 Annual Meeting of Shareholders. The Company's shareholders are strongly encouraged to read the Definitive Proxy Statement, the accompanying WHITE proxy card and other documents filed with the SEC carefully in their entirety because they will contain important information. The Company's shareholders will be able to obtain the Definitive Proxy Statement, any amendments or supplements to the Definitive Proxy Statement and other documents filed by the Company with the SEC free of charge at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. Copies will also be available free of charge at the Company's website at www.lee.net.

Certain Information Regarding Participants

The Company, its directors and certain of its executive officers are participants in the solicitation of proxies from the Company's shareholders in connection with the matters to be considered at the Company's 2022 Annual Meeting of Shareholders. Information about the Company's directors and executive officers is available in the Definitive Proxy Statement filed with the SEC on January 24, 2022, and, with respect to directors and executive officers appointed following such date, will be available in certain of the Company's other SEC filings made subsequent to the date of the Definitive Proxy Statement. To the extent holdings of the Company's securities by such directors or executive officers have changed since the amounts printed in the Definitive Proxy Statement, such changes have been or will be reflected on Statements of Changes in Beneficial Ownership on Form 4 filed with the SEC.

