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PUBLICIS ACQUIRES EPSILON FOR \$4.4B

Publicis Groupe is acquiring Alliance Data's Epsilon unit for \$4.4B as part of its drive to become "a leader in the data-led, digital-first world."

CEO Arthur Sadoun said with the mainstreaming of direct-to-consumer brands and new data regulations, the Epsilon deal, which is expected to close during the third quarter, will enable Publicis to "deliver personalized experiences at scale."



Arthur Sadoun

Epsilon recorded 97 percent of its \$1.9B 2018 revenues from US clients. Its 9,000 staffers include 3,700 data scientists and 2,000 technology delivery experts in Bangalore.

Publicis will forge a strategic partnership with Alliance Data's remaining businesses.

Publicis also reported a 1.7 percent rise to Q1 revenues to \$2.7B. Organic growth dipped 1.8 percent. The flagship North America unit, which generates 53.8 percent of revenues, was flat, though down 4.6 percent on an organic basis. Sadoun blames advertising and media losses for the lackluster NA performance.

STATE DEPT. MERGES PA, PROPAGANDA UNITS

The State Dept. has merged its domestic PA bureau with the international information programs (public diplomacy) unit to form a new global public affairs shop of about 300 staffers.

The *Washington Post* calls the revamp "the biggest structural change at the State Dept. in 20 years," and an effort to counter disinformation campaigns by China and Russia.



Michelle Giuda

Michelle Giuda, acting under secretary for public policy and PA, engineered the overhaul, which had been contemplated for years but stymied by the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 that bars the government from targeting Americans with propaganda.

The Post noted that Smith-Mundt Act restrictions are less relevant in the digital age when US reporters report on State Dept. messaging overseas, and foreign journalists cover State Dept. briefings.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the restructuring marks a "critical change and evolution within our public diplomacy operation."

Before coming to the State Dept. in February 2018, Giuda was deputy press secretary for Newt Gingrich and senior VP-global communications at Weber Shandwick.

AUBURN, NY ISSUES MARKETING RFP

Auburn, New York, is seeking an agency that can develop and execute a brand identity campaign and marketing plan to support the city's new tourism promotion center, the Equal Rights Heritage Center.

Scope of the work includes advising the city on the development and implementation of marketing strategies and brand consistency for the Center; developing a marketing plan; providing graphic design and content development; providing web design, development, and content services; supplying branded material development and strategic campaign support; conducting social media strategy development, content, and execution; supporting Auburn's internal marketing needs; and reporting and measurement duties.

The contract period will be from May 2019 through fall 2020. Proposed budget shouldn't exceed \$150,000. Proposals are due by 3:00 p.m. (EST) April 30.

Proposals should be submitted to:

The Office of the City Clerk, first floor; Memorial City Hall; 24 South Street; Auburn, NY 13021

All bidding agencies should provide six hard copies of proposals. Mailed proposal envelopes should be labeled "Attn: NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center Marketing." Bidding agencies are required to send letter via email indicating intent to bid, at cmason@AuburnNY.gov no later than 4 p.m. on April 16. All questions should be forwarded by April 16 to city clerk Chuck Mason, cmason@auburnny.gov or 315/255-4101.

[Download the RFP \(PDF\).](#)

WELLS FARGO'S EX-PR CHIEF JOINS ZENO

Oscar Suris, the former PR chief at Wells Fargo who exited amid its fake accounts scandal, has joined Zeno Group as executive VP for corporate and crisis strategy.

At his departure from the embattled bank last August, Suris was executive VP and head of corporate relations and PR counsel to top management. Earlier, he was director of corporate communications at Ford Motor and AutoNation.

The latest Wells Fargo CEO, Tim Sloan, quit March 28 after a three-year run. Allen Parker, general counsel of the bank, is interim CEO.

Zeno Group, #5 on O'Dwyer's rankings, is a Daniel J. Edelman Co. Edelman represents Wells Fargo. It promoted the January launch of the new image campaign tagged "This is Wells Fargo" to highlight its commitment to customer service.



Oscar Suris

NJ GAMBLING AUTHORITY ROLLS WEB RFP

New Jersey's Casino Reinvestment Development Authority has issued an RFP for marketing and website services to promote a positive image of Atlantic City and increase hotel/resort occupancy rates.

The RFP calls for proposals to redesign, market, host and backup to the primary leisure site (atlanticcitynj.com), Restaurant Week microsite and the agency (njcrda.com) website.

Proposals, which are due April 26, go to: Delores Dolbrow; Purchasing Agent; Casino Reinvestment Development Authority; 15 S. Pennsylvania Ave.; Atlantic City, NJ 08401 The CRDA requires respondents to submit two complete original sealed proposals, clearly marked as "ORIGINAL" and three copies.

The exterior of the proposal's package must be labeled, "CRDA – Proposal for Website Design, Development, Management" and contain the April 26, 2019 opening date, plus the respondent's name and address.

H+K TOUTS OPPORTUNITIES IN GEORGIA

Hill+Knowlton Strategies is building awareness of the "tremendous economic opportunities" available in the former Soviet republic of Georgia under an agreement worth \$750K in fees. The pact became effective April 3 and runs through the end of the year.

Georgia is a major producer of grapes, citrus fruits, hazelnuts, wine, gold, copper and manganese.

H+K will assist the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia with outreach to US lawmakers, businesses and selected groups as it works to attract investment and boost trade.

Outreach may include print, TV and digital advertising. Georgia has agreed to shell out \$1.1M for paid media production and placement services.

The WPP unit will conduct opinion research, forge coalitions, organize roadshows, do media relations and reach out to state governments on behalf of its client.

Georgia signed a \$600K PA/government relations contract with Chartwell Strategy Group in 2018.

GOLDMAN SACHS' FARRIS SKIPS TO CARLYLE

Leigh Farris, managing director/CEO communications at Goldman Sachs, will join Carlyle Group, the \$216B investment giant, as global head of corporate communications later this spring.

She'll be in charge of corporate branding, media relations, issues management and employee/executive communications.

Farris did a five-year stint at Goldman, joining from GE, where she was director of corporate communications.

Earlier she was communications director at CBS News and PR director at Court TV. Farris began her PR journey at New York's Goodman Media International.

At Carlyle, Farris will work directly with Co-CEOs Glenn Younkin and Kewsong Lee.



Leigh Farris

ON THE MOVE

Brunswick Group has appointed **Kate Holgate**, formerly office head in Singapore, to lead its Hong Kong office. **Will Carnwath** will succeed her as office head in Singapore. Holgate, who joined Brunswick in 2000, worked in Brunswick's London office as head of its global property and professional services sector teams before setting up the Singapore office in 2013. She was previously at investment bank Kleinwort Benson. Carnwath has been with Brunswick since 2009. Before moving to Singapore to help establish the office in 2013, he spent three years as chief of staff to Brunswick chairman Alan Parker.



Kate Holgate

The **Hawaii Tourism Authority** has hired **Marisa Yamane** as director of communications and public relations. Yamane comes to HTA from KHON-TV in Honolulu, where she co-anchored the station's 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts. In her new post, she will oversee a contract with PR firm Anthology Marketing Group. According to HTA president Chris Tatum, Yamane's remit will be to showcase festivals and events, as well as supporting the authority's work with community groups that perpetuate Hawaiian culture and help protect the environment.

The **National Club Association**, which advocates for the private club industry, has hired **Joe Trauger** as vice president of government relations. Trauger joins the association from advocacy consulting firm Northfield Strategies, where he served as principal. He has also worked on Capitol Hill as senior policy advisor for then-House Majority Whip Roy Blunt (R-MO) and policy advisor for then-House Majority Leader Dick Army (R-TX). In his new post, Trauger will lead NCA's lobbying activities and ClubPAC, NCA's political action committee.

Washington, D.C.-based **Clyde Group** has hired **Anthony LaFauce** as a senior vice president and **Kate Greer** as a senior director. LaFauce comes to the Clyde Group from Porter Novelli, where he was vice president in the digital communications group. In his new post, he will lead the launch and development of Clyde Group's agricultural practice. Greer previously served as chief communications lead on policy issues including Brexit, trade, economy, technology, science and innovation for the British Embassy in Washington and served at the British Consulate in Atlanta.



Anthony LaFauce

APCO Worldwide has added **Burhan Al-Gailani**, **Amy Selman** and **Maram Alkadhi** to its UK-based team. Al-Gailani, who will join the firm as a director, most recently served as head of public affairs for Brands2Life. Selman, who most recently served as a special adviser for the former UK Minister for London and Rail, joins APCO as an associate director, supporting projects in the Gulf region. Alkadhi, who is joining the firm as an associate director, was most recently a senior consultant for H+K Strategies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He will also focus on supporting projects in the Gulf region.

A CRISIS PRIMER FOR THE SOCIAL MEDIA ERA

“You never want a serious crisis to go to waste.”

These words from President Obama’s chief of staff Rahm Emmanuel have been taken out of context for cynical opportunism. Try making that declaration to Boeing, as its stock price drops in the wake of the 737 Max Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes or any organization fighting to maintain its reputation during a public conflagration. Even if a crisis doesn’t involve loss of life,



Peter Burger

leadership simply wants it to go away.

In the digital-social media age, scandals are spread and remain memorialized a few clicks away. Recent examples include H&M selling a racist t-shirt; Oxfam’s workers paying for sex while working in Haiti; and Tesla CEO Elon Musk running afoul of the SEC with his tweets and smoking weed during a video podcast.

These debacles metastasized across the web as memes, acquiring a life of their own that companies could do little to stop. Indeed, today every crisis is digital, moving at a velocity that could tarnish even the most pristine brand halo. Social platforms have turned the print media’s 24-hour news cycle into a relic. Yet the average PR team clings to the old mission of “controlling the narrative” by communicating the corporate story early and often.

This approach doesn’t work. According to Eric Dezenhall, CEO of Washington, D.C.-based crisis management firm Dezenhall Resources, during a full-blown crisis it doesn’t matter how mellifluously a company’s spokesperson talks and how precise its tweets are. “No matter what they do, for a while every action will be considered a misstep,” Dezenhall said. It’s time to take a tough look at the PR crisis communications rulebook.

Shattering the PR crystal ball

Let’s start by examining a tenet of public relations: the crisis communications plan. When a predicament occurs, the company implements the corresponding plan to blunt public outcry, avoid product recalls, arrest a plummeting stock price and preserve brand equity. All in a good few months’ work. Theoretically.

No PR director ever got fired for developing a crisis plan. But that doesn’t mean that plans work, according to Dezenhall. “Most preparation — not all — is worthless because nothing is predictable, according to Dezenhall.

Less conversation, more action

While a big crisis plan might make you feel confident today, it likely won’t help you cure an actual future crisis. “It’s more useful to have a response apparatus and strong leadership than a good plan,” Dezenhall said.

To stem a crisis, you need to be able to solve problems with the business rather than engage in the usually futile efforts of trying to control a narrative with words. The de facto crisis leader is the chief executive, not the PR chief. Only executive actions that solve operational and business issues will make a measurable difference.

Going (anti)social

You need to stay away from communicating via social media during a true viral crisis. According to Dezenhall, “Social media is a vehicle for dispersion. Crisis

management is a discipline of containment.”

In certain situations, social media can be effective. But when it comes to getting out your message during turmoil, one need only examine the snarky comments filling up Twitter feeds to see how social can be misused.

Friends, foes, “stakeholders”

Crises aren’t orderly affairs in which everyone speaks when it’s their turn and plays by preset rules. That’s why “you have to run certain crisis campaigns like political campaigns because you need friends,” Dezenhall said.

Whether you’re a bank, consumer products company or an energy conglomerate, you must not hesitate from enlisting your most powerful constituencies.

Who’re you going to call?

“Make love not war” isn’t a strategy that works when you’re in a war of ideas. Accordingly, “There are peacetime advisors and wartime advisors,” Dezenhall said, which is why “the skill set and temperament it takes to run a PR campaign to promote a product is different from the skill set required to do battle.”

The people you want on your side are individuals who’ve been subpoenaed, sued and fired — not merely those who’ve been at companies under siege, but people who’ve been through the eye of the storm. Dezenhall recommends people who’ve been in politics.

Beware the glass jaw

It doesn’t matter how beloved an organization is, how strong its brand, how lofty its market valuation. During a crisis, it can do no right. Dezenhall used boxing terms to describe the phenomenon. “All companies have ‘glass jaws’ under the wrong set of circumstances.”

An aerospace company with an excellent safety record was recently described by the following *New York Times* headline: “As Boeing Confronted a Swelling Crisis, It Had Little to Say.” Fair enough. But facing an environment in which every word is being digitally parsed, the airline has studiously resisted overcommunicating.

A more trenchant take came from PR Week, which named Boeing’s response its “Flop of the month” for the aircraft manufacturer delaying grounding the 737 Max only after the UK, China, India and Australia — and finally President Trump in the U.S. — grounded the plane.

Boeing is now handling the crisis in a clinical manner, with its CEO claiming the problem is a technical one, searching for a software remedy while emphasizing that the company itself is the proper authority to arrive at the solution and cutting production of the jet.

No words can change the post-crash situation. Better to take the approach of a management consultant to identify the problem, fix it, compensate victims, regain confidence from airlines and regulators and demonstrate over time that the aircraft and software function.

Crisis management isn’t the same as PR. It’s not about building the brand but rather preserving it by navigating through the thorny situation at hand.

Peter Burger is an omnichannel content consultant and communications writer who brings narrative life to brands, products and services, organizational cultures and people. He’s worked with the likes of EY, Deloitte, JPMorgan Chase, New York Life and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. View his portfolio at aislewpeter.com.

FL DEP FLOATS GRAPHIC DESIGN RFP

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is seeking proposals from multiple agencies specializing in creative content development.

The FDEP is looking to retain one or multiple vendors specializing in graphic design services, as well as video and photography services, to create materials to be used for marketing purposes by the Department to position the FDEP as the state's foremost environmental authority while driving the public to visit Florida State Parks.

The FDEP needs an agency specializing in graphic design that can create a suite of graphics, including a campaign logo, for use on digital and print platforms (a billboard, two posters, and graphics formatted for Facebook, Instagram and Twitter posts) for an outreach campaign promoting Florida's parks.

The Department is additionally seeking a production company that can collaborate with the Florida State Parks marketing campaign manager to storyboard, stage and shoot high-end, cinema-quality videos capturing footage of four state parks. It also needs a photography company to capture, develop and edit high-res images of various parks across the state.

Terms of the contract(s) run for a period of five years, without the option of renewal. Deadline for proposals is 3 p.m. (EST) on May 2.

Proposals should be sent to:

Belinda Croft, FCCM

Bureau of General Services - Procurement Section

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

3800 Commonwealth Blvd, MS#93

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

All questions should be forwarded to procurement officer Belinda Croft, Belinda.Croft@dep.state.fl.us, or 850/245-2467.

Download the RFP (PDF).

DE BLASIO PRESS SECRETARY JUMPS SHIP

Eric Phillips, press secretary for New York mayor Bill de Blasio, is joining Edelman as senior VP in its crisis and reputation unit. He joined Team de Blasio in 2016 from SKDKnickerbocker.

Earlier, Phillips was a top communications advisor/speechwriter to now Congresswoman Kathleen Rice of Long Island.

Phillips got high marks for boosting de Blasio's social media profile and taking on the press via Twitter about critical coverage of the mayor.

De Blasio is mulling a long-shot run for the Democratic nomination for president. He's been traveling to key primary states, drawing scant crowds.

New Yorkers also aren't exactly urging Hizzoner to launch a run for the White House.

A recent Quinnipiac poll found that 76 percent of New York voters don't think the mayor should run for president. Forty-six percent of them say a de Blasio presidential campaign would be bad for NYC.

Freddi Goldstein, who handles communications for first deputy mayor Dean Fuleihan, will succeed Phillips.



Eric Phillips

FACEBOOK SCORES MARKS FOR RELEVANCE

Facebook came out on top in W2O's newly released 2018 Relevance Index of Fortune 100 companies. The index measures how well companies engage and interact with consumers. Not only did Facebook head up the list, it was the only company to rank as "resilient," the index's top category, indicating a "well-established, enduring, resistant, tenable" organization.



Tech companies dominated the upper reaches of the index. In the number-two spot behind Facebook was Google, and Microsoft, Amazon and Apple rounded out the top five. Facebook, Google and Microsoft were also the top three companies in the 2017 index.

Overall, the index shows that most Fortune 100 companies could do a much better job at achieving that relevance. Only eight companies ranked as resilient or strong, with 51 registering as either susceptible or weak, which according to W2O's study means "they need to take significant, immediate, clear, genuine and sustained actions to engage with stakeholders who matter on the topics that matter to them."

21CF'S BROWN MOVES TO DISCOVERY

Nathaniel Brown, who was senior VP-corporate affairs & media relations at 21st Century Fox, has shifted to Discovery Inc. as executive VP-global communications.

Walt Disney Co. completed the acquisition of key 21CF assets on March 20. At 21CF, Brown also served as deputy global communications chief for its cable, broadcast, film and pay assets.

Based in New York, Brown will report to David Leavy, Discovery's chief corporate operations officer.

Prior to 21CF, Brown led corporate communications for MTV, served as senior VP-communications at XM Satellite Radio and worked in Sony BMG's PR unit.

He began his career at Dan Klores Communications.

Discovery earned \$594M on \$10.5B revenues in 2018.

NATION EDITOR STEPS DOWN

Katrina vanden Heuvel, who has been editor of *The Nation* since 1995, is stepping down as of June 15. One of the publication's owners, vanden Heuvel will remain publisher and editorial director. Her successor is D. D. Guttenplan, who has been with *The Nation* since 1997, most recently as editor-at-large.

The Nation's circulation is currently about 132,000—down from a peak of 186,000 in 2006, according to the *New York Times*. Under vanden Heuvel's leadership, *The Nation* transformed itself into a multi-platform operation, with a Twitter feed it says has more than 1.24 million followers. In addition, over 30 percent of its online audience (theNation.com along with Facebook and Instagram pages) consists of readers between 18 and 34 years old.



Katrina vanden Heuvel

MMGY ACQUIRES DIGITAL SPRING

MMGY Global has acquired Digital Spring, a London-based content, media and creative solutions agency for travel and tourism brands.

Digital Spring will be part of the company's European integrated services brand, MMGY, working with sister U.K.-based brands Hills Balfour, Grifco and Ophir.

Agency founders Rob Jolliffe, Rob Llewellyn and Dominique Moseley will remain part of the business.

MMGY says that the acquisition will allow it to provide its clients full media services across both digital and traditional channels as part of its European offering. It will now also offer a suite of proprietary media products geared toward specific U.K. and European travelers.

Digital Spring is the sixth acquisition by MMGY Global since private equity firm Peninsula Capital Partners made a significant equity investment in the company in 2016. In addition to Hills Balfour, Grifco and Ophir, prior acquisitions included DK Shifflet & Associates, Myriad Marketing and Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations.

BG'S STENSON TO GLADSTONE PLACE

Christina Stenson has joined New York's Gladstone Place Partners in its San Francisco outpost.



Christina Stenson

She spent a dozen years at Brunswick Group, handling financings and governance issues for large and emerging technology companies.

Stenson worked IPOs for SurveyMonkey and Stitch Fix, M&A activities like Microsoft's acquisition of Skype and Brocade's sale to Broadcom, and shareholder activism at Yahoo.

Steve Lipin, former Brunswick senior partner and *Wall Street Journal* alum, launched Gladstone in October 2017. He said Stenson "brings a wealth of knowledge and experience working at the intersection of technology and finance" to Gladstone.

BGR TO BACK HONG KONG TRADE TALKS

BGR Government Affairs has signed a \$360,000 pact with The Hong Kong Trade Development Council, the statutory body responsible for promoting Hong Kong trade, to advocate China's trade interests with the U.S.

HKTDC has hired BGR to provide counsel on U.S. policies as well as economic and trade issues affecting the interests of Hong Kong, as well as monitor legislative and administrative activities and conduct outreach to U.S. government officials and members of the media, according to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed in April.

The retainer comes amid the Trump admin's ongoing trade dispute with China, which has roiled the financial markets since Trump began imposing tariffs on billions worth of Chinese products in early 2018, which escalated when Beijing retaliated with its own tariffs.

The year-long agreement brings BGR a total of \$360,000, to be paid in 12 monthly installments. BGR is the firm founded by former Mississippi Governor and Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour.

WHY YOU NEED A LOCAL MEDIA STRATEGY

When it comes to news publications, size isn't everything. According to a recent study conducted by Pew Research, 73 percent of Americans still follow their local news outlets, highlighting the significant role local news still plays in the media landscape. While national publications allow for maximum media exposure, properly harnessing the power of local media publications allows you to craft your message to a narrower and more well-defined target audience.



Ron Bonjean

Policy makers look first and foremost to local news in order to determine what their constituents care about. According to the Pew study, 74 percent of Americans agree that local news is important in informing them on issues in government and politics.

With the constantly moving news cycle, it can be hard to gain enough traction to get your message through to national reporters. While national publications shift between issues, mainly covering the big picture, local news publications are able to dive further into your story and revisit the issue if necessary.

While TV news remains the cornerstone of local news, digital media platforms have revolutionized the distribution power of local news publications. By strategically placing local news stories on publications that are distributed digitally, you can harness their distribution power to drive a low-cost social media campaign.

When developing a public affairs campaign strategy, effectively utilizing local news publications is vital. Local news outlets offer a host of advantages to effectively driving your message over national publications. By investing your resources in a strategic mix of both local and national news outlets, you'll position yourself as a force to be reckoned with.

Ron Bonjean is a partner of the bipartisan public affairs firm ROKK Solutions.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Constellation Agency has been named the first digital agency of record for **Foodtown Stores**, part of independent supermarket cooperative Allegiance Retail Services. The agency will work with Foodtown to develop digital marketing strategies that provide brand support and drive traffic at the local store level. "Digital channels have an expanding role in today's meal planning and grocery shopping," said Allegiance Retail Services chief marketing officer Donna Zambo. "We are partnering with Constellation Agency to ensure that Allegiance and Foodtown are able to meet these needs now and into the future."

Magrino PR has been named agency of record for culinary appliance and cookware brand **Cuisinart**. The relationship will emphasize public relations strategy and social media influencer campaigns in the U.S. market. Magrino will provide Cuisinart with communications strategy, including product launch campaigns, media and influencer relations, and industry leadership positioning, to support the brand's mission and educate consumers.

COMMENTARY

These are glorious days for US corporate crisis managers due to the “bad smell hanging over a number of powerful companies,” says *The Economist* of April 6.

While the magazine says it’s tempting to blame bad luck, human error, negligence or criminality for corporate scandals, other factors are in play.



The rash of high-profile scandals include Boeing (claims it loaded its 737 Max planes with lousy software), Wells Fargo (fake accounts), Monsanto (California jury rules it failed to warn of cancer-causing agents in its weed killer), Equifax (personal data theft), Purdue Pharma (Oxycontin maker) and McKesson (opioid distributor).

And American companies are more scandal-plagued than their cousins “across the pond.” The Economist reports the market value of US firms caught in scandal since 2016 is \$1.5T, compared to less than \$600B for European firms.

While US scandals earn headlines, trigger outrage on social media and calls for reforms in Congress, there is little financial cost for the companies involved.

So what’s up? American capitalism is simply out-of-kilter. While American companies “test the boundaries of what is possible and permissible,” the traditional corporate restraining forces (regulation, competition and litigation) have been weakened.

The referees have left the playing field.

On regulation: The Federal Aviation Administration allows Boeing to inspect itself, while the Food & Drug Administration allows opioids to be sold to the masses.

“Criminal cases leading to jail terms for top executives are as rare as socialists at Goldman Sachs,” observes *The Economist*. Class action lawyers complain financial penalties have shrunk to a pittance vis-à-vis the value of companies. A threat of a multi-billion-dollar settlement “doesn’t move the needle anymore,” said a lawyer.

As for competition, forget it. Boeing rules the skies as Airbus lacks spare capacity. Social media giants like Facebook and Google pretty much stand alone. “Pesticides and herbicides, credit-checking, drug distribution and drug retailing have grown more concentrated, too,” notes the magazine.

The Economist hopes the rash of crises may prompt corporate soul-searching because if it doesn’t public confidence in capitalism may suffer another blow.

PR may have a major role to play in restoring the confidence in capitalism, but that won’t happen until regulatory, legal and competitive corporate watchdogs learn how to bite once again.

Strange but true...but then again since this is the Trump White House... let’s make it stranger than truth.

President Trump is going to tout his environmental

credentials during his run for re-election. Say, what?

Bloomberg reported April 8 that Team Trump “is developing talking points on climate change and cultivating a list of environmental “success stories” from clean air to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.”

And the point man in the campaign: Andrew Wheeler, former coal lobbyist who succeeded the disgraced Scott Pruitt Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

Trump may be the most toxic president when it comes to environmental protection.

Any recent US progress on environmental protection flows from the regulations and safeguards that were put into place by president Barack Obama.

And since his January 2017 inauguration, Trump has been hellbent on rolling back anything remotely connected to the Obama legacy.

On the environmental front, he has targeted Obama regulations regarding clean power, fuel efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions.

Trump, who believes the jury remains out on global warming, reveled in his plan to withdraw from the Paris climate treaty.

“The Paris Agreement handicaps the United States economy in order to win praise from the very foreign capitals and global activists that have long sought to gain wealth at our country’s expense,” Trump said June 1, 2017 in the Rose Garden.” They don’t put America first. I do, and I always will.”

The president has opened up federal lands for energy development and now wants to do the same for offshore drilling.

Taking a page from Don Quixote, Trump recently turned his attention to wind turbines, suggesting they cause cancer, reduce property values and are unreliable.

“Let’s put up some windmills,” he told an Ohio rally last month. “When the wind doesn’t blow, just turn off the television, darling, please. There’s no wind. Please turn off the television quickly.” That’s nuts.

The *New York Times* reported April 3 that electrical grid operators use a diverse array of power sources, so if the wind stops blowing, lights and TVs stay on.

But truth doesn’t matter to Trump, who blamed Obama for establishing a child separation policy at the southern border, which, of course, our hero stopped.

“President Obama separated children. They had child separation. I was the one that changed it, okay,” Trup said April 9.

That’s not okay.

The *Washington Post* gave Trump a four Pinocchio rating, its highest ranking, for his child separation whopper. Once Trump starts taking credit for environmental progress, the DC Post will have to come up with a higher Pinocchio score, or establish a new category.

How about a ten smokestack or oily bird category?

—Kevin McCauley