



Jack O'Dwyer,  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of  
PR and Marketing  
Communications

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750  
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

August 1, 2016 Vol. 49 No. 31

## MARYLAND REVIEWS TOURISM PR

Maryland has kicked off a review of its tourism PR account with an open RFP process for a five-year pact.

The state's Office of Tourism and Maryland State Arts Council, under the Maryland Dept. of Commerce, recently wrapped up a five-year stretch of marketing via Baltimore agency Siquis and wants to shift its travel pitch.



New areas of focus include culinary tourism, the 2017 opening of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center, and ongoing attractions like scenic byways, outdoor recreation and events like Fleet Week.

The state has high expectations. It wants a PR firm to increase media placements by 40% over the course of the contract, including a 70% increase in new regional markets like Ohio, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Boston.

Proposals are due Aug. 29. RFP:  
<http://bit.ly/2aGXRb9>.

## EURO TRAVEL COMMISH SEEKS PR HELP

International tourism promotion body The European Travel Commission is seeking a PR agency with knowledge and experience in crisis management to help develop a crisis communication plan for the organization.

Brussels-based ETC, which is comprised of national tourism organizations from about three dozen EU partner countries, is seeking a communications agency that would help prepare the organization and its destinations with a response blueprint in the advent of a crisis (be it from terrorism, severe weather or civil unrest) and would mitigate those crises' potential effects on European tourism destinations.



An agency will be chosen based on a criteria of project implementation and methodology, experience/credentials and proposed timeframe and budget.

The chosen agency would commence work no later than January 2017. The ETC has allocated a maximum budget of €10,000 for the project.

Proposals are due by 24:00 (CET) on August 22 and should be submitted in electronic format.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/2amUWih>.

## FTI STRATEGIC COMMS REVENUE UP 15% IN Q2

FTI Consulting strategic communications revenue climbed 15.1% in the second quarter to \$49.9M as public affairs and financial communications assignments buoyed the unit.

Overall revenues at the consulting company — corporate finance/restructuring, forensic/litigation consulting, economic consulting, technology, and strategic comms. are its main business units — rose 2.5% to \$460.1M, or 3.7% excluding negative currency effects. Net income jumped 22.3% to \$26.5M.

President and CEO Steven Gunby said a strong second quarter, combined with a record first quarter, constituted the best first half in the company's history.

FTI said strategic communications, which rose 17.6% excluding currency effects, was driven by higher project-based revenues from PA and financial communications work in North America and the EMEA region.

## 'CHALLENGING QUARTER' FOR MDC

MDC Partners reported second quarter revenue inched up 0.1% to \$337M in a "challenging quarter" as the New York-based PR and marketing group lowered guidance for the year.

Net income fell to \$1.2M from \$29.6M a year earlier. Net loss for the first six months of the year was \$22.1M, up from \$2.5M in 2015.

Chairman and CEO Scott Kauffman called Q2 a "challenging quarter for our business" with results below expectations. He stressed a strong underlying business is positioned for growth in the second half.

MDC, which owns PR units like Allison+Partners and Kwittken, said net new business for the year was \$57M. Guidance for 2016 revenue was reduced by \$20M to a range of \$1.39B to \$1.42B.

## CRISIS PRO STEPNO EXITS BOOZ FOR APCO

Kelly Stepno, a senior associate for Booz Allen Hamilton, has moved to APCO Worldwide as senior director for crisis management and litigation communication.

Stepno spent five years at Booz with a specialty on data-driven decision making and risk mitigation. She was previously VP and corporate counsel for TMG Strategies in Arlington, the Publicis-owned crisis and reputation firm, where she focused on healthcare and pharmaceutical clients.

She is based in Washington for APCO.



Stepno

## **PHILLY WANTS PR COUNSEL FOR BEV TAX**

Philadelphia, the first major city in the nation to pass a sugary beverage tax, is looking for a PR firm to guide communications for its rollout.

The city released an RFP to handle communications and outreach for the Sweetened Beverage Tax, passed by the city council in June as a special levy of 1.5 cents per ounce on distributors of drinks like sodas, sport drinks and energy drinks with added sweeteners. It is also levied on syrups and concentrates used to make sweetened drinks.

The beverage industry, including heavyweights like PepsiCo and Dr. Pepper Snapple via the American Beverage Association, warn of large consumer price increases if the tax is implemented. They also argue such a tax is discriminatory.

Philadelphia plans to roll out the tax in January through its Dept. of Revenue. It wants a PR campaign to educate all affected taxpayers, as well as retailers, to ensure compliance

PR proposals are due Aug. 12. RFP: <http://bit.ly/2ar2Poo>.

## **AVOCADOS FROM MEXICO PICKS WEBER**

Avocados From Mexico, the top-selling avocado brand in the US, has picked Weber Shandwick to guide advertising and PR for the foodservice sector.

AFM is the Irving, Tex.-based marketing organization of the Mexican Haas Avocado Importers Association and the Association of Growers and Packers of Avocados From Mexico.

Ketchum has served as AOR for PR since the two associations combined in 2013. While it no longer handles the foodservice business, the firm maintains a substantial business supporting AFMs consumer PR work.

The foodservice PR pitch will stress the year-round availability of the fruit to restaurant operators via strategic communications, creative, media relations, events, thought leadership, content and paid media.

Susan Howe, who leads Weber's global consumer marketing unit, praised AFM's dedication to new and disruptive marketing. "Beyond providing a highly sought after, quality product, the company has the resources, market research and operational excellence needed to establish itself as an ideal partner to foodservice operators," she said.



## **MONTIETH AIDS EMBATTLED HEDGE FUND**

Embattled hedge fund Platinum Partners is relying on Montieth & Company for PR support as it faces prosecutors and regulators amid accusations of a bribery scheme and fraud.

The \$1.3B operation is liquidating its three funds. Probes into Platinum center on whether some investment gains were paid with funds from incoming investors, as well as the firm's alleged mis-valuation of assets.

Montieth & Co. principal Montieth Illingworth told the *Wall Street Journal* that Platinum stands by its performance record and practices.

Illingworth, who said the firm is cooperating with investigators, told the *New York Post* that Platinum used an "industry standard" to value assets. "Platinum Partners stands behind its performance record," he said. "Its ability to generate returns for investors derives in the effective management of the positions."

Fund manager Murray Huberfeld was arrested in June in an alleged scheme to bribe a New York City corrections union leader with \$60,000 in exchange for a \$20M investment in Platinum. He has pleaded not guilty to conspiracy and wire fraud charges and given up his stake in Platinum.

## **HUNTSWORTH SEES GAINS AMID REVAMP**

London-based Hunstworth reported first half revenues rose four percent to £86.6 million as its health, consumer and financial PR operations offset ongoing US restructuring and struggles in the Middle East and Africa.

On a like-for-like basis, overall revenue was up only 0.3% for the period. Hunstworth Health rose 11.4%, while Citigate Dewe Rogerson was up 4.4%. Grayling fell 14.7%.

Operating loss was £7.9M, down from a loss of £44.8M a year earlier.

CEO Paul Taaffe said a 20% profit increase in the first half came from increased growth at its Hunstworth Health, Red, and Citigate Dewe Rogerson operations. The health unit was especially strong in the US and offset a restructuring underway at Grayling in the US as well as any fallout from Brexit.

The Grayling revamp, which includes divesting its US state lobbying business, reducing overhead and focusing PR on longer-term and bigger client mandates, is expected to show an "upside" in 2017, Taaffe added. The overhaul included a charge of £15 for the first half.

## **EX-GINGRICH AIDE HEADS TO HERALD GROUP**

RC Hammond, a top aide to former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich, has joined Washington, D.C.-based public affairs and issues management shop The Herald Group as vice president.

Hammond arrives at The Herald Group from WPP global PR powerhouse Hill+Knowlton Strategies, which he joined in 2014 as vice president. Prior to running his own public affairs, crisis and media relations consulting outfit, which he founded in 2012, Hammond served as spokesperson during Gingrich's 2012 presidential

primary run. He was also a senior aide for former Oregon Senator Gordon Smith, former New Hampshire Senator John Sununu and West Virginia Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito.

Hammond will now provide strategic communications and advocacy counsel for The Herald Group's roster of corporate, industry coalition, associations and non-profit clients.



**Hammond**

**PARADIGM PR CHIEF TO EXIT**

Brad Turell, executive VP of corporate communications for Hollywood giant Paradigm Talent Agency, is leaving the company with plans to start his own shop.

Turell was executive VP of worldwide corporate communications at Turner Broadcasting and later led network communications for the WB TV Network.

He spent the past nine years at Paradigm and departs Sept. 1. "I thank everyone at Paradigm for a great decade and look forward to the new challenges and opportunities that lie ahead," he said.



Turell

Paradigm in a statement thanked Turell for his service and wished him well. The talent agency is led by Sam Gores, one of the top agents in Hollywood. Paradigm has expanded into music, comedy and books, among other fields.

**CW UPS HEWITT TO EVP OF COMMS**

The CW television network has elevated Paul Hewitt to executive VP of communications.

The title bump from SVP oversees media relations, program publicity, corporate communications, talent relations and internal communications.

Hewitt joined The CW in 2006 after the VP, comms., slot at CW predecessor UPN, which was merged with The WB. He started out with Fox Broadcasting and rose to manager of corporate communications before departing for UPN.



Hewitt

At The CW, which is jointly owned by CBS Corp. and Warner Bros., he reports to network president Mark Pedowitz.

**TWITTER SEES DOUBLE DIGIT USER GROWTH**

Twitter will see global users gains of about 11 percent this year, bringing the micro-blogging site's total active monthly population to about 286.3 million by the end of 2016, according to recent estimates by digital market research company eMarketer.

Growth at the San Francisco-based social messaging operation, which saw gains of about 9.8 percent in 2015, will bring the site's total population to about 370 million global users by 2020, eMarketer predicts, though gains are expected to begin tapering off after this year.

The majority of this growth will happen overseas. Fewer than one in five Twitter users are now in the U.S., according to eMarketer, with non-U.S. Twitter users accounting for 78.9 percent of the site's user base in 2014 and expected to comprise 80.9 percent by 2018. Only 34.2 percent of Twitter's ad revenues currently comes from overseas, however, with the U.S. still maintaining Twitter's largest spending base (about 63 percent), though non-U.S. ad revenues are expected to grow to 38.9 percent by 2018.

Brazil has recently become home to the second-largest Twitter population in the world, with 27.7 million users, followed by Japan (25.9 million) and Mexico (23.5 million), according to eMarketer. eMarketer further predicts that massive recent user gains in India could see that country tie Brazil for second-largest non-U.S. Twitter base by 2019.

eMarketer also predicted in July that Facebook would take the lion's share of global social media net ad spending this year, with more than two-thirds of ad revenues (67.9 percent) going to that social media giant (about \$22.4 billion), while Twitter is expected to take in only 7.9 percent globally.

**FOOD CRITIC AXED FOR PLAGIARISM**

The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* has parted ways with freelance restaurant reviewer Elliott Shaffner after finding some of her reviews contained material that was not original.

Executive editor Paige Mudd apologized in a note to readers July 28 and said that it was brought to the paper's attention that a recent dining review contained sections copied from a 2011 *L.A. Weekly* restaurant review. After further investigation, the paper found other instances by Shaffner, who has been the paper's critic since the start of the year.

Mudd said the paper has removed Shaffner's reviews from its website and that she will no longer write for the paper.

"In this case, we have unknowingly run material that was not original," wrote Mudd. "This violation of trust by one of our freelance writers is unfair to our readers, and it's unfair to our news colleagues who pride themselves on their reputations as trusted journalists."

Shaffner in an open letter to the paper apologized to readers "for making a senseless mistake" and to the *L.A. Weekly* critic Jonathan Gold.

Shaffner said "in a flurry of desperation, time management, lack of good judgment, I unwittingly put someone else's words into work under my name. Did I have malicious intent? No. Did I even recognize what I was doing was plagiarism? I did not. But to see now, that I have taken words from one of the people I most respect hurts my soul."

**POPE NAMED EDITOR OF CJR**

Veteran reporter and editor Kyle Pope was named editor and publisher of the *Columbia Journalism Review*.

He takes over for Elizabeth Spayd, who was named public editor for the *New York Times* in May. Spayd held the editor/publisher role since 2014.

Columbia Journalism School dean Steve Coll and CJR board chair Steve Adler called Pope a "wonderful journalist and editorial leader with wide-ranging experience."

Pope, most recently editor-in-chief of the local Manhattan newspaper chain Straus News, was a reporter, foreign correspondent and editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, deputy editor of Conde Nast's defunct *Portfolio*, and editor-in-chief of the *New York Observer*.

## **PR & SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS & VIEWS**

### **THOUGHTS ON THE REPUBLICAN CONV.**

By Robert Dilenschneider

Thousands of editorials have been written regarding what took place at the Republican Convention in Cleveland. Here are some views that might be helpful and can serve as a supplement to what you've already read and seen.

1. Going into the GOP convention, Hillary Clinton was leading Donald Trump by five points and was ahead in most of the crucial swing states. Polls released last week showed Trump's convention "bounce" has put him in front, but you can expect Clinton to get her own bounce, so the lead could switch yet again. Much will depend upon how sharp a contrast the Democrats can show between themselves and the Republicans, whose convention was not as focused as it could have been. But the Democrats are off to their own stumbling start with leaked emails forcing the resignation of the party's National Chairman, so we may be in for another week of turmoil.

2. Donald Trump likes to seize the moment and make news every day. That said, there wasn't a unified message coming out of Cleveland.

3. Keep in mind as we move toward November that no Republican has ever won the White House without winning Ohio. Right now, Trump and Clinton are in a dead heat in the Buckeye State. Ohio Governor John Kasich did not attend the convention and refused to endorse Trump. Whether in the weeks ahead he changes his mind or not will be critical.

4. The brushing aside of the rules to deny delegates the chance to vote for other candidates — even though it was a far-fetched effort — may make it harder for Trump in another key swing state, Colorado.

5. The plagiarism of Michelle Obama's speech by Melania Trump will not be an issue in November.

6. The choice of Mike Pence will result in more support in the Midwest for Trump, because Pence will appeal to evangelicals.

7. Trump's views on NATO, China and protectionism in an increasingly global world may win him some votes. But law and order, immigration, job creation and rebuilding the middle class are issues that are most likely to capture the imagination of voters.

8. Curiously, there was little mention at the Republican convention of healthcare (soon to be in excess of 25 percent of the U.S. economy) or of education. Both will be key issues for the next administration.

9. While there was talk about how to help our veterans, there was little discussion as to what our role should be going forward in the Middle East.

10. Continued bashing of Clinton will not have an impact on voters who have become numb to endless charges against her. Republicans will make a serious mistake if they think attacking her is all they have to do.

Bottom line: This will be a close election. Clinton's well-organized ground game gives her an advantage over Trump's still-building campaign. But Trump has a knack for capitalizing on unexpected events like terrorist attack, riots and police shootings. And who knows how an "October surprise" might work in one candidate's favor.

*Robert L. Dilenschneider is chairman and founder of the Dilenschneider Group, Inc.*

### **CLINTON'S 'SAFE' VP IS RISKIEST MOVE YET**

By Jon Gingerich

Are you excited yet? Now that the nominating conventions are over and this wild election cycle has entered its final stretch, it seems we've finally returned to a political process we're used to: two disappointing candidates who remain widely unpopular and disliked by large factions of the electorate have been formally named their respective party's presidential representatives. Consider it a new tagline for the nation: "America, better living through lower expectations."

As we've noted before, themes of populism and a resistance against the status quo have taken this election cycle asunder. Many Americans now seem less intent on expressing views than pathologies, and this has proven to be the sine qua non for Donald Trump's incredible ascendancy. Hillary Clinton, on the other hand — who, like Trump, enters the general election as one of the most unpopular presidential nominees in modern history — personifies the establishment candidate, and as a result, finds herself uniquely disadvantaged: to conservatives, she represents a continuation of the last eight years; to liberals, she's insufficiently progressive, too hawkish on military policy and largely unconcerned on issues pertaining to income inequality, Wall Street and campaign finance reform.

The hold-your-nose-and-vote prospect facing so many Americans is made slightly more tolerable by candidates' VP picks, where each contender basically has a chance to perform some final edits on his/her campaign message for the masses and work in spaces where there exists a perception deficit. Trump, who epitomizes everything that's wrong with our society, needed a vice presidential nominee to reel him in. Clinton, who embodies everything that's wrong with our government, needed someone to spread her out.

It seems Clinton's choice of Senator Tim Kaine didn't exactly blow America's collective hair back. On first glance, I didn't understand why the Clinton camp, given the themes that have characterized this election cycle, would choose a running mate who appeals to centrists and GOP apostates turned off by the Trump ticket instead of working to galvanize a Democratic party that has made a marked shift to the left in the last twenty years. Clinton's primary order of business, from my perspective, was to pick a VP who would rouse Sanders' sizable base, and the strategy of instead creating a safe establishment ticket that pitches to waffling Republicans seemed to ignore where the energy is.

As it turns out, Kaine is no slouch. He practiced civil rights law for nearly two decades and is a strong supporter of immigration reform, Planned Parenthood and the Affordable Care Act. Gun control has been a key part of his political platform (he currently holds an "F" rating from the NRA, a good sign if I've ever seen one). He's also never lost an election, which is great, because Clinton will need Virginia. He's no Bernie Sanders, but he gets things done, even if his record doesn't make for great TV. Still, theories abound as to why other, more popular names didn't make the cut.

(Continued on page 6)

**NEWS OF PR FIRMS****FITZGIBBON ALUMS, VAN JONES IN PR SHOP**

Political pundit and social activist Van Jones has teamed with progressive PR pro Molly Haigh to form Megaphone Strategies, a Washington-based media strategy firm.

The duo said the firm will be run "'for purpose' not profit" offering media relations, strategy and media training to organizations and individuals focused on social change. Start-up clients include the Working Families Party, Vote.org, Demand Progress and the Women Donors Network, among others.

Haigh called the agency a "social justice PR firm founded to lift up new and diverse voices working for social good."

Jones will chair MS' four-member board. Haigh, a former FitzGibbon Media staffer, is joined by former colleague Jessica Ann Mitchell Aiwuyor, Bernie Sanders campaign alum Diane May, Lacy Crawford, ex-comms. director for Security Works, labor activist Carlos Vera, and PAC vet Edil de Los Reyes.

Added Jones: "It might seem like our world is coming apart, and in too many ways it is," said Jones. "But everywhere we look, we discover courageous people finding ways to break down barriers and solve tough problems. We need to hear their voices, and we need to elevate their work."



**Haigh, Jones**

**JOELE FRANK LEADS FIRST HALF M&A FIRMS**

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher led deal PR advisers in the first half of 2016 with 47 transactions, according to The Deal.

Joele Frank counseled 27 sellers in the 47 deals.

Sard Verbinnen & Co. tallied 40 transactions, 22 in which it represented the selling company.

Abernathy MacGregor Group and Kekst and Company each advised 19 deals, while Brunswick Group was involved in 17.

The report said Brexit fears, pre- and post-vote, didn't have a large impact on M&A activity in the second quarter, but the publication expects more of an impact in the second half. Regulators and failed negotiations also scuttled several large mergers in Q2.

The Deal said Innisfree M&A was the top proxy solicitor with 31 transactions, following by MacKenzie Partners at 17 and D.F. King & Co. with 16.

Goldman Sachs was the top investment bank with 48 transactions, while law firm Kirkland & Ellis topped its peers with 49 deals.

Global M&A volume in the second quarter fell 34% to \$287.9B but the number of deals surged 71% to 812 on a spate of middle-market transactions.

Among deals that fell apart were Pfizer's acquisition of Dublin's Allergan for \$160B, Halliburton Co.'s \$38B merger with Baker Hughes, and Mondelez' failed \$23B offer for Hershey Co.

**NEW ACCOUNTS****New York Area**

**Missy Farren & Associates**, New York/Traeger Grills, wood-fired grill maker, as AOR. Traeger was founded in 1985 and invented the wood-pellet grill. It currently manufactures a line of about 20 different grilling units, and last year relocated its global headquarters from Portland, Oregon, to Salt Lake City, Utah. Mfa has been tasked with building awareness of the Traeger brand in the barbeque, outdoor and culinary markets. The New York-based agency will also handle new product launches, event promotion and brand initiatives, and will also support leadership positioning and media requests.

**Abelow PR**, New York/Knowland, hospitality technology company in the meetings and incentives industry and globally recognized provider of group data, to publicize its acquisition of Meeting Intelligence (formerly known as HIS) from Newmarket International Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Amadeus. Abelow said it locked up more than 150 stories on the news in major hotel industry media outlets as well as newspapers across the country and websites of TV stations.

**Zenergy Communications**, New York/Valkee, medical device company, as AOR for the development and execution of a North American media relations campaign for its HumanCharger, a light therapy device that can be used to help fight the "winter blues," increase mental alertness, reduce jet lag and improve overall mood through helping the body reset its circadian rhythm.

**Finn Partners**, New York/DOCa Rioja region of Spain wines, to enhance the Rioja brand, directing an ongoing marketing communications campaign targeting multiple consumer audiences and focusing on trade/retail relations in major US and Canadian markets.

**5W PR**, New York/Dr. Pete Sulack, stress expert, as AOR for PR. Sulack has logged more than one million patient visits over the last 14 years. His studies on the effects of chemical, mental, physical and emotional stress, along with testimonials from patients and attention in medical communities have garnered him the title of "America's Leading Stress Expert."

**Midwest**

**Spong**, Minneapolis/The Marvin Family of Brands, as PR and social media agency for the Marvin Windows and Doors and Integrity Windows and Doors brands, following a competitive pitch process. Brett Boyum, VP of marketing for Marvin, said the company wanted a firm that understood its industry and key audiences, and "had proven results in delivering impactful, strategic campaigns that build brand awareness and conversion."

**Mountain West**

**Momentum Media PR**, Boulder, Colo./OMEALS, a premium outdoor foods brand with self-heating, fully cooked meals and snacks, as AOR for PR.

**West**

**Christie & Co**, Santa Barbara, Calif./Aquation Enterprises, as AOR to promote the line of bottled water formulations and home/office water delivery services.

## NEWS OF SERVICES

### HSMAI HIRES VOX

Las Vegas-based tourism and hospitality agency Vox Solid Communications has been named agency of record for the Las Vegas chapter of the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International.

With more than 7,000 members and over 40 chapters throughout the United States, McLean, Virginia-based HSMAI is the leading professional development association for the hospitality industry.



The association hosts the annual Adrian Awards, which recognizes sales and marketing in the hospitality industry and is a popular draw among the PR industry for its respected competition and judging process.

The organization's Las Vegas chapter was founded in 2013.

Vox will be responsible developing HSMAI's PR and social media campaigns.

### CLINTON'S CHOICE IS RISKIEST YET (Cont'd from 4)

The decision to bypass two top-shelf politicians -- Sens. Corey Booker and Sherrod Brown -- illustrates, I think, what's going on here.

Clinton and her team have created a ticket aimed not only at a Democratic White House but a Democratic Senate, and this means she wants to keep the heavy hitters where they're most effective while setting the foundation for a progressive administration that will be supported eventually by a similarly progressive Congress.

Clinton has sidestepped a last-minute splash in the polls to work on the larger picture.

In an election where beneath-the-belt-insults are mistaken for policy, Clinton has subverted our new reality TV political climate by offering a longterm plan and vision. A novel concept.

Call it risk disguised as safety. In an unconventional election, Clinton is taking the biggest gamble of all by hoping voters, when faced with the prospect of a Trump presidency, will come to their collective senses, just like how Clinton supporters eventually backed Obama in '08. She's hoping the "Bernie or Bust" crowd is all talk and will pull the lever, regardless of their grievances.

Indeed, a large part of her stirring acceptance speech last night included a rousing refrain for Sanders supporters to "join us." Clinton's notion that "your cause is our cause" is shorthand for "we might not align on every issue, but if you want to defeat Donald Trump, I'm the only way to do it."

And, of course, she's right. I feel that once people begin thinking about what's truly at stake here and what a threat to the country a Trump presidency could be, even those staunchly dissatisfied with establishment politics will see that, when faced with the prospect of an entertainer or a life-long public servant leading the country, the choice is clear.

It won't be a contest.

I'm willing to bet money on it.

*Jon Gingerich is an editor for O'Dwyer's.*

## PEOPLE

### Joined

**Bridget Starkey**, VP for consumer accounts at Zeno Group, has shifted to Lyft to head consumer communications as a director for the New York-based ride-hailing service. Starkey handled accounts like Netflix, Jockey and Campbell Soup Company in two years at Zeno in New York. She previously spent nearly eight years at Current Lifestyle Marketing, departing in 2014 as a director. She started out at The Grossman Group. Brandon McCormick, a communications vet of Facebook, WhatsApp and Google, is VP of communications for Lyft.



**Starkey**

**Laura Braden Quigley**, who managed business communications for the Sacramento Kings, has moved to the California Medical Association as VP of communications for the Sacramento-based group Quigley, who has been running her own shop for the past nine months, oversees internal and external communications for the CMA, which counts more than 41,000 members. Prior to the Kings, she was a VP at Mercury Public Affairs and deputy communications director in the administration of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. She was deputy director for operations/planning for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential bid and earlier worked on the agency side with DCI Group in Washington.



**Quigley**

**Laura Johnston**, senior internal comms. specialist, Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, to The Carpenter Health Network, Baton Rouge, La., as communications director. The post includes internal and external corporate comms., media relations, website management and social media engagement for the networks Gulf Coast healthcare facilities.

### Promoted

**Alyson Marks** to director of destinations, group & leisure, Diamond PR, Miami. She joined as a senior A/E in 2014 from Myriad Travel Marketing in New York and has led accounts like the island of Curaçao, Renaissance Tuscan II Ciocco Resort & Spa, NYAH in Key West, Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center, and French Leave Resort in Eleuthera.



**Marks**

**Haley Metcalfe** to senior A/E, E. Boineau & Company, Charleston, S.C. She joined in 2014 after working comms. for Cru Catering. **Nancy Lucas**, who advises clients on web design and other digital work, was named webmaster. **BerlinRosen**, New York, has named four new executive VPs: **Stephanie Mueller**, head of its D.C. office and national issue advocacy practice; **Jeremy Soffin**, head of real estate, transportation and infrastructure; **Ben Wyskida**, leader of its philanthropy, media and culture practice, and **Lynsey Kryzwick**, who heads BR's labor unit.

## **OLD DOMINION U. SEEKS AGENCY**

Old Dominion University, the Norfolk, Va.-based public research institution of 25,000 students, is on the hunt for an agency to work with its office of strategic communications.

Educational Marketing Group is the 10-year incumbent.

The seven-college school enacted a new five-year strategic plan in 2014 focused on expanding its research agenda. It seeks a firm to handle marketing, communications, branding, PR, crisis counsel and advertising under an integrated approach, according to an RFP released July 26.

Proposals are due Aug. 26.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/2aF0A3A>.



## **GILLESPIE TO LEAD MED DEVICE BIZ AT W20**

Angela Gillespie, former VP of marketing for NeuWave Medical, has returned to W20 Group as chief strategy officer of its global MedTech practice, a new post overseeing its medical device business across the firm's agencies.

Gillespie started San Francisco-based W20's medical device practice in 2007. She will be based in Minneapolis with a mandate to double the firm's partnerships with medtech companies over the next five years.

W20 chief client officer Jennifer Gottlieb said factors like personalized medicine, digital health and medical device and diagnostics have the medtech sector poised for rapid growth over the next decade. She said Gillespie knows the sector "cold" and will "galvanize" the firm's offering.

Prior to NeuWave, which was acquired by Johnson & Johnson in April, Gillespie was senior market development leader for Covidien's peripheral and venous vascular business units, since acquired by Medtronic.

On the agency side, she earlier advised medical device clients at MDMC and was a VP at FischerHealth and account manager at Porter Novelli.



**Gillespie**

## **CLARK TO EXIT MD GOV'S OFFICE FOR FTI**

Matthew Clark, communications director to Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, is leaving the administration to return to FTI Consulting.

Clark is a 10-year FTI alum dating back to its predecessor strategic communications firm Financial Dynamics in Ireland. He will return to a managing director slot at FTI in Washington, D.C. His client experience includes AIG, Tata Group and HSBC, among scores of others.

Clark joined Republican Hogan's administration at the beginning in January 2015, overseeing all aspects of communications, including crisis, internal,



**Clark**

media relations and social media for the state.

"Matt has been a trusted advisor to myself, Lt. Governor Rutherford, as well as to members of my cabinet and has been an important leader on my staff during the key moments of our administration," Hogan said in a statement.

Deputy Douglass Mayer will take over the governor's communications operation on Aug. 16.

## **BURSON FORMS VENEZUELA UNIT**

Amid economic and political crisis in Venezuela, Burson-Marsteller has formed a specialty unit to advise clients on the business climate in the country.

The so-called "specialty team" includes staff from its Caracas office, Latin American regional team in Miami, and its public affairs and crisis pros in Washington and New York.

"Collectively, we have a unique perspective on and deep insights into the local, regional and global environment in which our clients are making critical business decisions, and can offer counsel on the development of crisis plans and key messaging as well as support labor, government or media relations efforts," executive VP and Miami managing director Jorge Ortega said in an email.

Severe food shortages in the country sparked riots in June as the *New York Times* declared, "Venezuela is convulsing from hunger." The Times reported June 20 that an economic collapse of recent years left the country unable to produce enough food on its own or import what it needs, a dire situation that led to an emergency decree from President Nicolas Maduro and militarization of cities.

Ortega said that while the international community addresses the economic, political and social environment in Venezuela, companies should assess their short, medium and long-term situations.



**Maduro**

## **HDMI FINDS FEINTUCH**

HDMI Licensing, LLC, the agent that oversees licensing and global industry implementation of proprietary audio/video interface HDMI, has named New York-based tech agency Feintuch Communications its North American PR agency of record.

HDMI technology, now the audio-video digital interface standard for televisions, computer monitors, video projectors and game systems, was established in 2003 through a partnership between Hitachi, Panasonic, Philips, Sony, Thomson, RCA, Toshiba and Sunnyvale, CA-based semiconductor manufacturer Silicon Image Inc. The latter company is parent company of HDMI Licensing.

Feintuch will offer ongoing media relations support for HDMI Licensing and will implement a series of projects to promote the HDMI standard and the interface's use across all segments of the trade and consumer markets.

Feintuch Communications in 2015 accounted for nearly \$820,000 in net fees, according to O'Dwyer's ranking of PR firms.

**“Branded” content, advertiser written stories** that look like regular editorial matter, is getting lots of media attention, most of it good but some of it negative.

One booster is the *New York Times*, which headlined July 25, “In Media Company Advertising, Sponsored Content Is Becoming King.”

NYT may be whistling in the dark since it posted July 28 a loss of \$211,000 for Q2 vs. a profit of \$16.4 million a year earlier. Stock is at \$12.75 when it used to be in the \$50's. Digital ads were down 6.8% and total ads off 11.7%.

Facebook, meanwhile, which allows virtually any opinion to be posted, said sales in Q2 grew 59% to \$6.44 billion while profits were up nearly a third to \$2.06B.

NYT said publications large and small “have invested in teams to make sponsored content—written stories, videos or podcasts that look and feel like journalistic content—hoping to make up for declines in conventional ads.”

It notes *The Atlantic* says it gets three-quarters of its ad revenues that way. Slate, the web publisher, gets half of its ad revenue from branded. Hearst says it is “rolling out its native digital ad product to all 84 of its markets, buoyed by the success it has had in the U.S. with its ‘shared spaces’ product that lets advertisers inhabit the same area as editorial content.”

Comedian John Oliver, on his Aug. 3, 2014 show, said the practice is a threat to the editorial independence of newsrooms, tends to mislead readers, and erodes trust.

“Ads are baked into content like chocolate chips into a cookie,” he said in an 11-minute segment, adding, “Except it’s more like raisins into a cookie—because nobody f---ing wants them there.” Surveys show that “half the time” readers are not aware that they are reading “camouflaged ads,” he said.

He compared the mingling of news and ads as akin to dipping Twizzlers in guacamole, calling it “really gross,” and compared the results to botched heart surgery. Highlighted was the Scientology sponsored article that appeared on *The Atlantic*’s website in January 2013. The magazine pulled the article, which lauded the church and claimed a huge growth rate, “after an outcry.”

### **Mag Dissects Media but Skips Branded**

*New York mag*’s July 25-Aug. 7 issue has a cover story on “The Case Against the Media by the Media.

The 14-page article quotes 30 journalists on journalism’s problems but there is no mention of branded advertising as one of the reasons for the decline in the credibility of media.

The mag quotes Gallup as finding in 1974 that 69% of Americans trusted the media. That was the year that President Nixon resigned after an expose by *The Washington Post*’s Carl Woodward and Bob Bernstein.

A Gallup poll last year found that “the only institutions Americans have less faith in than TV news (21%) and newspapers (20%) are Congress and ‘big business.’”

That is “humiliatingly low, especially for a group of people who fancy themselves members of ‘the Fourth Es-

tate” which is supposed to “balance” the other three—clergy, aristocracy and well-to-do, says the mag.

It faults its own self for not publishing last October Steven Brill’s investigation into Trump University, which was then picked up by *Time*. “We thought, wrongly, that Trump was fading and that the story had been told,” says the mag.

“Social Media Rules Everything Now,” headlines a segment in the article by Frank Rich, ex-NYT and now at *New York mag*.

“The Power of Facebook to adjudicate what is news and what is not is extraordinary and, I think, unprecedented in the history of modern media,” he writes. “No media titan or institution has ever had this kind of reach and power.”

Rich is looking for “an antidote of stronger competition” to keep Facebook “honest” although he does not called Facebook dishonest.

A *New York mag* poll of 113 journalists found the “No. 1 reason people distrust the media now” is because “Our public discourse is more politically polarized,” which was agreed to by 50% of respondents.

They agreed, by a 53% margin, that media have become “a broken business model that leaves journalists insufficiently funded to do good work.” Media “pander to audiences,” said 50% of them.

This website has found that Facebook fills in holes left by mainstream media which are often governed by what is “politically correct” and which avoid important subjects because advertisers might be offended.

One such topic is the health threat of pulsed microwave radiation from numerous sources from cell-phones, computers dependent on wireless access and cordless phones, to industrial-grade routers in schools, libraries, business and government offices, the 5,000+ cell-phone towers that are a danger to anyone nearby, and Google’s Project Loon that would blanket the earth with high-flying Wi-Fi emitting balloons. It is a scandal that almost all media dodge this issue, says Jerry Flynn, retired Canadian Army captain who supervised Canada’s pulsed radiation war unit for many years.

Our postings on the dangers of radiation have been picked up and circulated by numerous participants on Facebook. Many have lambasted the failure of governments and media to examine this issue and participants have sent us many leads on the issue that have proved to be valuable.

It’s no mystery to those on Facebook why NYT and other media ignore the health threats of pulsed radiation—three of the five biggest advertisers are telecom companies—AT&T, Verizon and Comcast. Major advertisers include Apple, Samsung and other internet hardware and software companies.

NYT is not only promoting its own “T Brand Studio” branded ad function but is touting its own “virtual reality” product that requires a box to be fitted on the head of the user which then bombards the brain with electrical impulses.

– Jack O’Dwyer