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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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WPP HEAVYWEIGHT SHIFTS TO AT&T

Brian Lesser, North American CEO of WPP's GroupM media buying shop, is joining AT&T to lead a new advertising and analytics unit. He'll report to CEO Randall Stephenson.

"Brian is a terrific executive and one of the best there is in harnessing technology and data to create targeted advertising," said Stephenson in a statement. "Once we complete our acquisition of Time Warner Inc., we believe there is an opportunity to build an automated advertising platform that can do for premium video and TV advertising what the search and social media companies have done for digital advertising."

Lesser noted that advertising "is evolving from broad messages delivered through traditional media channels, to customized, individual content coordinated across all connected devices." He said AT&T "has amazing assets for creating engaging advertising experiences for consumers."

GroupM had worked for AT&T for a number of years, but lost the business last year to Omnicom.

Kelly Clark, GroupM's global CEO, will assume Lesser's duties until a successor is found.



Brian Lesser

OUSTED UBER CHIEF RIDES WITH TENEO

Travis Kalanick, the ousted Uber chief, has hired Teneo Holdings, which bills itself as a "global CEO advisory firm," according to a report in Recode.

Ireland-born Declan Kelly, former Financial Dynamics CEO, FTI Consulting executive VP, US Economic Envoy to Northern Ireland and Hillary Clinton confidante, co-founded Teneo with Doug Band, ex-counselor to President Clinton and former chief fundraiser for the Clinton Global Initiative.



Travis Kalanick

They have built an advisory panel of luminaries including Jim Hoge, ex-*New York Daily News* publisher and editor of Foreign Affairs; Brian Mulroney, former Canadian prime minister; Harvey Pitt, ex-Securities and Exchange Commission chief; Raymond Odierno, retired US Army general; George Mitchell, former US Senator from Maine, and Ursula Burns, ex-Xerox chief.

That expertise may come in handy for Kalanick, especially in light of last week's report that Uber knowingly leased unsafe cars to drivers in Singapore in 2016 to build market share.

H+K WINS WANDA

Hill+Knowlton Strategies is working for China's Dalian Wanda Group, the property and entertainment conglomerate, an account earned after a hotly contested pitch.

The WPP unit will handle global branding and projects throughout the world for Wanda, the world's largest operator of movie theaters with AMC in the US and Odeon and UCI in Europe.

"We are looking forward to partnering with Wanda Group as it leverages its incredible reputation and agility to aggressively reposition itself as one of the fastest growing international entertainment businesses," said Jack Martin, H+K CEO.

Variety reported last week that Wanda's "image has been dented" by moves by the Chinese government to reel in the overseas expansion of conglomerates. In 2016, China's government instituted capital controls to stem the outflow of cash from China.

In July, Wanda unloaded a big chunk of its hotel assets in a \$9B deal.



INVENTIV HEALTH, INC RESEARCH MERGE

New York-based Healthcare communications network **inVentiv Health Communications** has completed its merger with Raleigh, NC-based global contract research organization INC Research.

The merger, which was first announced earlier this year, brings together a collective of agencies spanning the public relations, advertising and strategic solutions sectors including PR firms Allidura Consumer, **Biosector 2**, **Chamberlain Healthcare PR** and **Chandler Chicco Agency**, as well as branding and advertising agencies such as Addison Whitney, GSW, PALIO and The Navicor Group.



The merger bills itself as the only fully integrated biopharmaceutical solutions organization to include an end-to-end CRO and COO, and effectively creates the second-largest biopharmaceutical outsourcing provider and the largest contract commercial organization by revenue, with combined net revenue at more than \$3 billion.

The combined entity will be known as INC Research/inVentiv Health on an interim basis, with a brand relaunch expected to occur in January.

(Continued on pg. 2)

INVENTIV HEALTH, INC RESEARCH MERGE

(Continued from pg. 1)

Its leadership team will consist of chief executive officer Alistair Macdonald (previously CEO of INC Research) chief financial officer Greg Rush (previously executive VP and CFO of INC Research) and board of directors executive chairman and commercial division president Michael Bell (formerly CEO of inVentiv).

“By coming together with INC Research, we’ll be able to infuse our best-in-class communications solutions earlier into the clinical development process,” Bell told *O’Dwyer’s*. “One example is our ability to leverage our communications and behavioral analysis expertise to streamline the clinical trial recruitment process. We’re able to reach the right patients quickly and communicate with them effectively, speeding up trial enrollment and the eventual delivery of therapies to those that need them the most.”

SV&C PROCESSES ADP’S DEFENSE

Sard Verbinnen & Co. is working with Automatic Data Processing Inc. as it rebuffs activist investor Bill Ackman’s demand to dump CEO Carlos Rodriguez and take half of the 10 board seats at the \$12.4B payroll/taxes/ benefits administrator.

Ackman’s Pershing Square Capital Management, owners of an eight percent stake in Roseland, NJ-based ADP, wants an extension of the Aug. 10 deadline to nominate directors to the company’s board.

ADP claims Ackman first contacted it on Aug. 1 with his request to extend the deadline for up to 45 days.

The company says while it’s open to “constructive criticism,” the 2017 deadline has been public for a year and changing it would not be in the best interests of shareholders. “We believe our current Board has an effective balance of leadership continuity and fresh perspectives that will help us to continue this strong track record of delivering value to shareholders,” said ADP’s statement.

ADP also touted the leadership of Rodriguez, noting a 202 percent in total shareholder return during his six years of leadership.

SV&C’s George Sard, Liz Zale and Jared Levy represent ADP.

ICMA ISSUES RFP FOR PR, MEDIA RELATIONS

The International County Management Assn. wants to hire a PR firm to help position the DC-based group as the leader for best practices in local government management. Founded in 1914, ICMA provides publications, data, training and professional development to more than 11,000 members.

According to the RFP, ICMA media relations efforts are haphazard and reactive. Staffers develop 20-30 press releases a year and field inquiries from reporters. As a result, “the organization continues to maintain a relatively low brand recognition profile among media and organizational thought leaders.”

ICMA finds it increasingly difficult to compete for visibility and brand awareness against other groups “perceived as having a much ‘sexier’ brand.”

Proposals are due Aug. 25. [Download RFP \(PDF\)](#)

THE MEDIA CONTACT WHO GOT AWAY

By Bob Brody, earned media strategist at [Weber Shandwick’s](#) Powell Tate



Every once in a while, a PR person gets to know a member of the media who develops into what we like to call a contact. Such was the case for me and Joe Rago, a long-time editorial-page editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, who died last month at the age of 34.

Joe mainly contributed editorials about healthcare to the Journal. He critiqued the U.S. healthcare system and its policies, particularly The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. As such, his views influenced decision-makers from Capitol Hill to the corporate C-suite. Senators and CEOs alike read, cited and indeed quoted his editorials.



Joe Rago

Our connection to each other was basic. Almost any time our agency represented a healthcare client with a strong, perhaps surprising point of view about a healthcare issue, I would recommend a desk side briefing with Joe. If a client agreed, I then reached out to Joe to introduce said client and offer a rationale for a face-to-

face meeting.

Joe always said “yes.” I only wish other media I’ve pitched during my 26 years in PR were consistently as welcoming.

Over the last seven years, then, I scheduled briefings with Joe for more than a dozen of our healthcare clients. Patient advocates. Hospital consultants. Insurance leaders. Medical-device manufacturers. Venture capitalists.

There, in those encounters, Joe turned out to be every inch both a student and a scholar. He asked his guests question after hard, informed question, and never hesitated to take issue.

Our clients were typically thrilled at these opportunities. So were my colleagues, and so, for that matter, was I.

To what, then, did I owe these modest successes? My personal magnetism? My genius at pitching? Hardly.

I was highly selective about which clients qualified for a briefing with Joe. I pitched those clients matter-of-factly, not only free of hyperbole but also heavy on understatement. All I ever expected — and received — was a fair hearing, plus an understanding of our client’s position.

But mostly I credit Joe. His curiosity about the nuances of healthcare, no matter how fine the small print, was quite simply insatiable. He routinely subjected his most dearly held convictions to discussion and debate. He took on all comers, everyone with an equal right to a day in the court of public opinion, demonstrating his faith in desk side briefings as acts of democracy

But what impressed me most about Joe Rago was how he acted at those briefings. He listened closely. He never interrupted. If he disagreed, it was done politely. Afterwards, he thanked all attendees.

With me, too, he was a model of decorum, whether in an email or over lunch. He treated me as if I were the important person in our relationship, whereas I often felt

(Continued on pg. 3)

THE MEDIA CONTACT WHO GOT AWAY

(Continued from pg. 2)

otherwise. If he took two days to answer an email from me, he invariably apologized. He was modest beyond reason, even after he won a Pulitzer Prize for his editorials at the age of 28.

As media contacts go, Joe ranked as perfect. But as my wife once told me, perfect never lasts. Rather, this is yet another reminder to prize the reporters whose trust and respect we've earned. And to maintain the same high standards, both professional and personal, that they usually do.

I'll miss taking our clients to meet Joe. But mostly I'll miss him.

AMERICANS DIVIDED ON WHAT IS 'FAKE NEWS'

Americans appear united in their concerns regarding the fake news phenomenon, but disagree pointedly on what constitutes fake news and how they determine whether or not a news report is bogus, according to a recent study on Americans' perceptions of media bias and trustworthiness released by San Francisco-based tech PR firm Bospar.

According to Bospar's Fake News study, Americans remains more or less in agreement on the potential dangers of fake news, with about half — 49 percent — claiming that trust in mainstream media will continue to erode if fake news continues at its current levels unchecked, and nearly the same number — 47 percent — claiming the government hasn't been effective in investigating and curbing the practice.



However, many Americans seem confused about what the "fake news" label means, with 36 percent of those polled claiming that the perceived political views of the source determines whether they deem an article "fake" or not. More than half — 57 percent — claimed that fake news is simply misinformation deliberately created by a mainstream news outlet.

Case in point: 19 percent of Americans said they consider any negative coverage of President Trump to be fake news, and nearly the same number — 15 percent — claimed that any positive coverage of the President is fake.

Partisanship seems to be a reliable indicator regarding what media outlets Americans trust and which ones will provoke their incredulity. Nearly two-thirds — 62 percent — of Democrats consider CNN a trustworthy source, while only 22 percent of Republicans do. More than half — 57 percent — of Democrats consider *New York Times* to be a trustworthy news source, while only 20 percent of Republicans agree. On the other hand, 53 percent of Republicans consider Fox News trustworthy, compared to only 29 percent of Democrats.

However, Republicans appear far more inclined to believe that the political persuasion of a media outlet determines whether or not something is "fake news": 44

percent of Republicans claimed that the political views of the source is an indicator of whether or not something is spurious, compared to only 36 percent of Democrats who believe this.

Republicans were also far more likely than Democrats to hold the position that fake news simply means misinformation that's deliberately manufactured by a mainstream news outlet (74 percent, versus 46 percent). Incredibly, while relatively few Americans consider Donald Trump's Twitter feed to be a reliable news source, the study found that 21 percent of Republicans actually said they find Trump's tweets trustworthy — compared to only four percent of Democrats who believe this — meaning that Republicans, statistically, trust Trump's tweets more than they trust reporting from the *New York Times*.

The study also discovered that 59 percent of those polled admitted having believed a news story only to later discover that it was "fake." Respondents said they typically evaluate whether an article is bogus by checking the story's URL (34 percent), determining whether the news is either too good or too bad to be true (32 percent), Googling the journalist's name (28 percent), considering the reputation of the person who shared the article (24 percent), checking Snopes.com (22 percent) or looking for typos (21 percent).

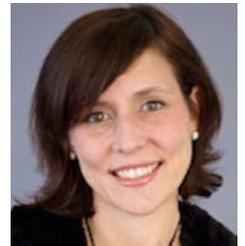
Of those polled, 20 percent — or one-in-five Americans — said they no longer consider any news sources trustworthy.

The Bospar Fake News Study was conducted in late June by market research company Propeller Insights and polled more than 1,000 U.S. residents online.

CORCORAN TAPPED FOR TWIST PRES. ROLE

Mary Corcoran, former chief operating officer in **Edelman's** New York headquarters, has been named president of **W2O Group's** Twist unit.

Corcoran succeeds Annalise Coady, who served as Twist president for more than two years after being global EMEA practice lead at W2O's WCG operation. Coady now becomes president of W2O's EMEA region, and will be based in the marketing and communications network's London office.



Mary Corcoran

Corcoran joined Edelman in 2006, initially serving as EVP and general manager of the number-one independent firm's San Francisco outpost, where she launched its digital health business. She was named COO in 2014.

Corcoran previously held stints as a finance director for the Democratic National Committee and an analyst at JP Morgan Chase.

Twist, the second-largest firm in the W2O Group network, is an evidence-based marketing communications company focusing on brands in the healthcare, beauty, technology, telecommunications, financial services, consumer, corporate and entertainment industries.

San Francisco-headquartered W2O also owns agencies Brewlife, WCG, Pure Communications, Sentient Interactive and Marketeching Solutions.

Carl Byoir & Assocs., third largest PR firm, vanished in the maw of WPP and also casualties were nine PR media and 16 New York PR groups.

The **high-spirited culture of Byoir**, staffed by many ex-journalists who delighted in helping reporters, was replaced by an information-stingy ad culture.

Not only did PR media and PR groups disappear, but so did ordinary civility, replaced by a harsh, “all business” and “bottom line” culture. Unreturned reporter phone calls and emails became standard corporate, agency and PR association practice.

Nine PR media stopped publishing, some of them continuing to carry news on their websites. The ad conglomerates pursued a policy of giving almost all their ads to *PR Week/U.S.*, which had been founded in 1998 by Haymarket, major U.K. publisher.

In the 10-month period from November 2004 to September 2005, the O’Dwyer magazine got one ad from a conglomerate-owned PR firm **while 44 pages worth \$307,120 were placed in PRW/U.S.** by conglomerate units.

PRSA CEO Ray Gaulke and 1995 president John Beardsley had gone twice to London to urge Haymarket to publish *PR Week/U.S.*, promising use of the 19,000 membership list of PRSA for initial circulation. Gaulke, in a letter, **urged PRSA’s advertisers to advertise in PRW** and its members to subscribe.

Steve Pisinski, 2000 PRSA president, **condemned the help given to PRW/U.S.** as a violation of PRSA’s required neutrality to media. Pisinski, angered at what he said was misleading PRSA financial statements, started booking PRSA dues over a 12-month period instead of booking them as cash, which had greatly increased the “net assets” of the Society.

He was able to boost the deferred dues account from \$198,746 to \$813,116 in 2000, cutting net assets. The auditor that accepted the revised figure, Deloitte & Touche, one of “Big Four” CPA firms (244,000 employees) was fired the next year, replaced by Sobel & Co., Livingston, N.J. The DD quickly headed down again to the low six figures.

U.S. a “Rude Society”

PR veteran Rene Henry, author of ten books, wrote one on the decline of civility called **Customer Service: the Cornerstone of Success**. He was especially hard on those who don’t return phone calls or emails. They are “rude, inconsiderate and breaching all aspects of good, old-fashioned courtesy,” he wrote. They should be “censured and possibly terminated.” Henry returned all calls and emails within 24 hours including those by vendors “because it was the polite and professional thing to do.” Such politeness paid off in business tips.

“The U.S. is becoming a rude society,” he wrote. “Fewer people care about or expect good customer service. Too many companies are living on past reputations. A new generation of senior executives has no idea what customer service is all about. I attribute this to a society of people who constantly thumb their pods, pads and berries and are oblivious to the world around them.”

Chapters cover basics such as listening, responding,

telephone etiquette, and the problem of gate guardians. Programs praised include those of Amazon, Amica Mutual Insurance Co., Marriott and Crystal Cruise Lines.

O’Dwyer’s Modern History of PR, a book that will cover the dramatic changes in PR over the past 50 years, will show that the happy, considerate and polite Byoir culture was by no means unique.

Numerous PR firms and corporate PR depts. had enthusiastic relationships with reporters and reporter groups including H&K, Edelman, Manning, Selvage & Lee, Doremus, Rowland Co., Creamer Dickson Basford, Rockey Co., to name some.

Corporate Events Listed

The July 1989 *O’Dwyer’s* magazine catalogued some of the numerous annual events of the blue chips including:

--**Mobil’s “Summer Garden Party”** for the press at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

--**Annual “Press Dinner”** of Standard Oil Co. at the St. Regis Hotel Roof, New York.

--**ITT Annual Brussels Boys’ Club Dinner** at the St. Regis Roof plus annual picnics in Nutley, N.J., for 200+ reporters and their families.

--**RCA Corp. hosting reporters** at distance places including Puerto Rico as part of product introductions.

--**Texaco each year took a bus load of reporters to the Army-Navy game** in Philadelphia, treating them to dinner in New York at day’s end.

--**W.R. Grace & Co. had an annual St. Patrick’s Day party** in New York for more than 100 reporters and spouses. Peter Grace often attended.

--**Hoechst Celanese each year hosted** more than 100 fashion and trade press at its East Side New York townhouse.

Manning, Selvage & Lee, Doremus & Co. and Carlson, Rockey & Assocs., had annual golf outings for reporters. Many ad agencies invited press to holiday parties.

George Whipple, PR head at Benson & Bowles, took press and ad agency execs to lunches and urged reporters to call up the execs at any time without going through him. Trade groups such as the Ad Club of New York, Ad Women of New York, and PR Society of America invited press to their annual banquets. PRSA not only invited press to its Silver Anvil Awards banquet but included reporters as judges. This writer was an Anvil judge three times in the 1970s.

PCNY Active Under Himler

Publicity Club of New York, which had nearly 800 members in the 1980s, electing a new slate of officers each year, has continued under the presidency of Peter Himler for the past 15 years. “Meet the Media” programs are held every six weeks.

Many major PR firms, having been acquired by the ad conglomerates, went “dark,” withholding information that previously had been disseminated. Their employees were discouraged from participating in outside groups.

The conglomerates are highly security-conscious, fearing leaks about ad campaigns that have budgets in the hundreds of millions. Their clients demand a leak-proof environment. PR groups, it was thought, were not only leaky but places where employees might hear of other jobs.

– *Jack O’Dwyer*