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Show your firm's expertise in such specialities as healthcare, tech and finances (as well as 17 others) by taking in part in O'Dwyer's 2023 Rankings of PR Firms. **The deadline to submit is Fri., Mar. 13.**
[View Rankings Instructions \(PDF\)](#).

CO SEEKS DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

The Colorado Tourism Office has budgeted \$300K to \$415K for development of a statewide destination stewardship program.



COLORADO
COME TO LIFE™

The effort is designed to protect The Centennial State's natural and cultural resources while advancing inclusiveness and creating a more welcoming experience for all travelers.

Colorado is a year-round travel destination for domestic and international visitors who spent \$22.5B there in 2021.

The destination stewardship effort "aims to be transformational and holistic, seeking harmony between quality of life for residents and strong visitor economy, while protecting Colorado's cultural and natural resources."

The contract period will run from April 2023 through June 2024.

Proposals are due Feb. 27.

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

HILTZIK'S WATKINS TAKES MSG POST

Jeremy Watkins, who manages the sports and gaming division at Hiltzik Strategies, is heading to Madison Square Garden Sports Corp., where he will take on the role of SVP-communications, effective March 6.

Watkins has been with Hiltzik since 2018, most recently serving as a VP. Before that, has was a senior account exec at DKC.



At MSG Sports, Watkins will oversee public relations activities across the company's portfolio of professional sports assets, including the New York Knicks and New York Rangers franchises. He will

also work with MSG Sports leadership to strengthen business priorities and help develop proactive media relations strategies, oversee major announcements and provide counsel for team management.

MSG Sports executive chairman James Dolan recently recruited former Trump spokesperson Hope Hicks to handle the controversy surrounding the use of facial recognition technology to keep his legal foes out of the Garden. Hicks' father, Paul Hicks, formerly ran communications and government affairs at the NFL and is now a partner at [FGS Global](#).

FINN ACQUIRES IRISH HEALTHCARE FIRM

[Finn Partners](#) has acquired Hyderus, Dublin-based health communications and policy firm.

Launched in 2002, Hyderus has worked in the areas of public health, drug development, marketing communications, risk perception, and crisis management.



Mark Chataway, Christopher Nial

Co-founders Mark Chataway and Christopher Nial will lead Finn Partners' EMEA public health group and report to Gil Bashe, chair global health and purpose.

As part of Finn Partners' global health practice, Chataway and Nial will work closely with Fern Lazar, managing partner & global health practice lead; and DC-based Richard Hatzfeld, senior partner & global public health lead.

Joining the New York-based independent firm is "a natural next step that formalizes an already strong connection," said Chataway.

Hyderus will be rebranded as Hyderus, a Finn Partners Company.

[Finn Partners ranks No. 6 on O'Dwyer's roster of health-care firms](#) with \$44.2M in fee income during 2021.

EDELMAN EXPANDS WORK FOR SAUDIS' NEOM

Edelman has inked a three-year deal to enhance the social media presence of executives at Neom Tech and Digital Co.

The effort kicked off this month and includes strategic counsel, social media copy and content development.

It is worth \$40K a month.

NT&D has launched Tonomus, a cognitive technology enterprise, as its first subsidiary.

Joseph Bradley, a 15-year veteran of Cisco and an expert in artificial intelligence, robotics, blockchain and the internet-of-things, heads Tonomus.

He is spearheading the development of the digital infrastructure that will be the operating system of Saudi Arabia's \$500B Neom mega-city project.

Edelman began working for Neom in 2020.



SOCIAL NOT THE ONLY ROAD TO READERSHIP

Social engagement may not be the best route to attracting readers to a piece of earned media, according to a new study from Memo, a platform that reports readership directly from publications.



Memo's "State of Media & Readership Report 2023" analyzed half a million articles in an attempt to uncover what strategies are most likely to draw readers to a piece of published content.

The study found that there is little correlation between the likes, clicks and tweets surrounding an article and the likelihood that potential readers will engage with the article itself. In one analysis of over 600 articles on multiple brands, less than 10 percent of article traffic was found to originate from social media.

Perhaps not surprisingly, certain types of subject matter provided to be big draws for readers. In the past year, readership levels spiked around such events as the midterm elections, the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the Russia-Ukraine war. The report's conclusion? "Bad news really does drive readership."

Memo offers several strategies to increase a piece of content's chances of connecting with readers. First off, communication pros are advised to look outside the most expected or popular media outlets. "The most-read publications for a given topic might surprise you," the report's authors say. One example: Fox Business is cited as a top source for readers searching out "tips, tricks and how-to guides for buying groceries and navigating supermarkets."

It also suggests paying close attention to when a story is published. Weekends are deemed to be the top time for consumers browsing content about potential purchases, or searching for information about dining and restaurants.

Content syndicators are also mentioned as a worthwhile tool. "Article readership is 41.8 percent higher on these aggregator sites compared to the originally published articles," the report says.

The power of the right headline is also stressed. "Headlines that broke through the noise typically consist of live updates, recounts or details of news events."

JOELE FRANK WORKS TRAVEL CENTERS DEAL

Joelle Frank handles Travel Centers of America as the nation's biggest truck stop/convenience store chain gets acquired by British energy giant BP in a deal pegged at \$1.3B.

BP is shelling out \$86 cash per share for TA, which represents a whopping 84 percent premium over its 30-day average trading priced ended Feb. 15.



TA CEO Jonathan Pertchik said BP's offer follows "the successful implementation of our turnaround and strategic plans," which includes the launch of the eTA alternative fuels program.

The Westlake, OH-based company posted a 54.7 percent revenue boost to \$8.2B during the nine-month period ended Sept. 30. Net income soared 158.4 percent to \$117.2M.

TA, which operates 281 truck stops in 44 states, had received unsolicited takeover bids from companies other than BP.

Joelle Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher has Andrew Segel and Jack Kelleher representing TA.

ON THE MOVE

The NCAA names **Tim Buckley** senior vice president of external affairs, effective March 1. Buckley was most recently chief of staff to incoming NCAA president Charlie Baker while Baker served as governor of Massachusetts. He was also communications director for Baker's successful 2014 campaign and served as both communications director and senior advisor to the former governor. At the NCAA, Buckley will oversee the association's government relations and communications efforts to strengthen relationships with key constituents at the state and federal levels. He will also engage membership, media, policymakers, coalitions and other stakeholders.

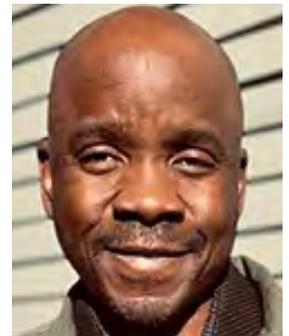
FleishmanHillard promotes **Courtney Quaye** to general manager of its Chicago office. Quaye has been a part of the firm's Chicago office since 2009, most recently leading its PepsiCo work as senior vice president and partner. Prior to joining FleishmanHillard, he played significant roles in building, reinforcing and maintaining the reputations for major brands across industries including food, personal care and sports.

Houston Dynamo Football Club, a Major League Soccer team, hires **SJ (Sarah Jo) Luedtke** as chief marketing officer. Luedtke was most recently vp of marketing for the NTT IndyCar Series. In her new post, Luedtke will oversee media relations, creative content, advertising, retail, youth programs, community engagement and fan development for the Dynamo, Dash (the organization's National Women's Soccer League team), Shell Energy Stadium and Houston Sports Park.

360PR+ hires **Kara Armit** as vice president, human resources. Armit was most recently vice president of HR for AVENIR GLOBAL US brands AXON Communications, Padilla and SHIFT Communications. In her new position, she will direct all aspects of talent planning and recruitment, employee engagement, professional development and benefits for 360PR+. "Kara is a strategic leader who brings the experience to help us build 360 for the future," said 360PR+ CEO Laura Tomasetti.

Alloy names **Jenni McDonough** as chief people officer. McDonough comes to the agency from 22squared, where she was senior vice president, director of talent. In her new position, McDonough will lead talent attraction and retention, drive innovation through strategic employee relations, and nurture the firm's culture.

The CW Network has named former chief marketing officer of WarnerMedia Entertainment **Chris Spadaccini** as its CMO. At Warner Media Entertainment, Spadaccini oversaw marketing for such brands as HBO, TBS, TNT, truTV, as well as aspects of brand and content marketing for HBO Max, the company's direct-to-consumer streaming platform. He was most recently CMO at CAMP, an early-stage retail-entertainment company targeting young families.



Courtney Quaye



Jenni McDonough

HOW TO BRING BACK EMPLOYEE LOYALTY

Google—12,000. Amazon—18,000. Walt Disney Company—7,000. IBM—4,000.

Those are the layoffs announced recently by some of the biggest global companies in the most visible industries.



Gary Grates

Put aside the sheer numbers and focus on how these leaders decided to inform impacted people—e-mails, Zoom, third-parties, external sources—and it's no wonder employees have long ditched loyalty.

To help get that loyalty back, below is a framework of recapturing corporate loyalty and achieving organizational viability:

Daily affirmation: The world is moving too fast, and people need a daily update on the business—accomplishments, challenges, failures, competitive threats, societal shifts, etc.

Co-creation: People want a say in their work and careers. Decisions need to be moved closer to the work and away from corporate leaders.

Communications standard: Every company should enforce a communications standard that promises a level of dialogue, discussion and debate among all levels of the business.

Leadership interaction: A healthy organization is one where leaders and employees have a regular and real relationship based on visibility, approachability and communications.

Regular policy calibration: Updating employment policies is an essential part of remaining a relevant organization. Having employees involved is key.

Customer and marketplace visibility: Making the marketplace central to your internal discussion keeps the workforce agile and knowledgeable.

Empathy: COVID reinforced the importance of empathy. People are working extremely hard today to keep pace. Being understanding and compassionate unleashes the human side of people causing positive and productive results.

Stronger manager-employee relationships: Ground Zero of an enterprise in terms of relationships is the manager/supervisor-employee dynamic. Fix this and all else turns positive.

Core internal communications is about business and people storytelling: Done right, internal communications provides the infrastructure necessary to lead and manage while allowing the workforce to operate seamlessly and synergistically against the business priorities.

Retention—promotion, recognition: Operationally, when it comes to loyalty, employees are most concerned with the fair treatment of people about promotions and recognition.

Recruitment—talent, attitudinal: Bringing in people who don't espouse the company's values only divides people. Involving the appropriate employees in the process ensures the result will be accepted and applauded internally.

Placing responsibility and accountability at the right doorstep: Those laid off or let go without a reason are the shield protecting the culprits who caused the situation to form in the first place. A healthy organization does not hide from the truth.

Diversity, Inclusion: Superficial or hollow messages regarding DE&I will only erect a barrier to loyalty and trust.

Social and Environmental Issues: Organizations are now expected to engage with societal challenges and questions. From the environment to inequality, from racism to waste or

fraud, CEOs and the companies they lead are looked to for perspective, insight and action.

Regaining Loyalty in the Workplace

Running through all these measures is one word: RESPECT.

Employing respect for every person culminates in respect back to the organization. Even when drastic measures such as lay-offs or furloughs are necessary, how these actions are conducted—open, honest, transparent, fair and empathetic—maintain employee loyalty.

Much like fashion (think: bell-bottom jeans) company loyalty is back in vogue. And not a minute too soon!

Gary F. Grates is principal at Grates Consulting Group, a consulting and advisory firm specializing in business transformation, corporate communications, crisis mitigation, corporate relevance/reputation, CEO positioning, ESG, and employee communications/engagement.

LSC NEEDS HELP PUBLICIZING 'JUSTICE GAP'

The Legal Services Corp. is seeking bids for a communications campaign tied to its 50th anniversary that will aim to increase awareness of the "justice gap" that thwarts low-income people from getting legal representation.

The mission of DC-based LSC is to fund high-quality attorneys to represent low-income people for free in basic civil matters such as divorce, child custody and eviction. It does not provide direct legal services.

LSC wants to use its 50th anniversary, slated for 2024, to boost fund-raising for privately funded initiatives that are not bankrolled by its annual Congressional appropriation.

The LSC wants its PR push targeted at business, legal and faith-based communities, policymakers and the public.

The outreach effort will include PSAs, op-eds, social media and talking points.

Responses are due Feb. 24. They go to Helen Gerostathos Guyton, senior associate general counsel, at rfpresponse@lsc.gov and Carl Rauscher, director of communications, at rauscherc@lsc.gov.

[Read the RFI \(PDF\).](#)



KEKST REPS PUBLIC STORAGE TAKEOVER BID

[Kekst CNC](#) handles Public Storage, the nation's biggest self-storage operator, as it launches a hostile \$11B all-stock bid for its smaller competitor Life Storage.

The target company notes that Public Storage's bid is similar to one that it had earlier received and rejected.

Life Storage promises to review the current proposal and recommends that shareholders take no action at this time.

Public Storage encourages Life Storage's board to "engage in good-faith discussions regarding its proposed value-maximizing transaction."

Glendale-based Public Storage has interests in 2,836 self-storage facilities in 40 states. Life Storage, which is headquartered in Buffalo, has 1,100 sites in 37 states.

Kekst CNC's Jeremy Fielding, Lyndsey Estin and Nicholas Capuano represent Public Storage.

[Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher](#)'s Andrew Siegel and Dan Moore handle Life Storage.



PORTSMOUTH AIRPORT NEEDS PR, MARKETING

Portsmouth International Airport at Pease is requesting proposals from agencies providing public relations and marketing services.



The joint civil and military use airport, which is located west of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was formerly known as Pease International Airport.

The Pease Development Authority seeks a consultant to help design and implement a cost-effective marketing strategy, create marketing materials and assist on public relations matters, all on an on-call / as needed basis.

Scope of the work also includes photography and video work; digital and social media planning and development; developing concepts and creative materials for promoting PDA programs.

Proposals are due by 2 p.m. (EST) on February 28 and should be mailed or delivered to: Pease Development Authority; Attn: Public Relations & Marketing RFP; 55 International Drive; Portsmouth, NH 03801

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

QORVIS VETS LAUNCH SABLE STRATEGY

Qorvis Communications veterans Elissa Dodge and Philippa Levenberg have launched Sable Strategy, a strategic communications shop.

During her nearly 20-year run at Qorvis, Dodge rose to the executive VP/chief client officer position.

Levenberg led digital communications in her three-year run. She also held digital posts at Story Partners, North Bridge Communications and Levick.



Sable Strategy, which is staffed by women executives, focuses on PA/ issues management, executive communications, crisis management, social media, influencer activations, graphics,

website design, media training, and event planning.

Publicis Groupe sold Qorvis effective Dec. 31 to a management group headed by long-time executive Matt Lauer.

LONGACRE REPS TUESDAY MORNING REORG

Longacre Square Partners is working the Chapter 11 filing of Tuesday Morning Corp., the Dallas-based discount retailer pressured by a crushing debt load, supply chain woes and shifting consumer tastes.

It is the second bankruptcy filing in less than three years for the marketer of home goods and decor.



CEO Andrew Berger plans to close more than half of the retailer's 464 stores in low-traffic regions while concentrating resources in high-traffic areas. He also will revamp distribution channels and adopt a more cost-effective inventory acquisition strategy.

Invictus Global Management, which looks forward to playing a key role in Tuesday Morning's transformation, has agreed to provide \$51.5 million in loans to carry the company through Chapter 11.

Longacre Square has partners Joe Germani, Charlotte Kiaie and VP Ashley Areopagita working the Chapter XI proceedings.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

FINN Partners picks up communications and digital marketing in the UK for **Little Caesars**, which is launching in the country this year. The UK brief for 2023 will focus on building brand awareness, supporting the company with country-wide venue openings, and ensuring that its product USPs are brought to life through an integrated approach encompassing PR, digital strategy, social media, content creation and SEO. The FINN London team will work in close collaboration with the agency's Chicago team on the account. The agency's partnership with Little Caesars currently includes market entries in Spain, Colombia, Russia, South America and Portugal, as well as in the U.S.



The Pollack Group signs on to work with **YouHodler**, a Swiss-based international fintech platform providing various Web3 crypto and fiat services. TPG will work to bolster YouHodler's brand in the fintech space as a pioneer of Web3 banking, focusing its efforts on promoting the company's subject matter experts. YouHodler's platform streamlines trading and management of both fiat and crypto assets through such services as Multi HODL, crypto loans, crypto staking and Web3 wallets.

The James Collective, which has offices in New York City and the San Francisco Bay Area, adds food and home company **Food52** to its client roster. The agency will lead integrated public relations, thought leadership, gatekeeper and earned influencer partnerships, and communications strategy for Food52, while also supporting its family of companies, including Dansk and Schoolhouse.

DiGo (DiMassimo Goldstein) signs on as AOR for the **University of New Haven**. DiGo will promote the University's specialized academic colleges and schools, ensuring that prospective students know about how the University's range of programs can swiftly and comprehensively ready them for their careers. Founded in 1920 on the campus of Yale, the University of New Haven is a private, coeducational university with more than 8,800 students, offering more than 100 academic programs all grounded in a long-standing commitment to collaborative, interdisciplinary, project-based learning.

5WPR is named public relations agency of record for **Attain**, a permissioned consumer data platform. 5WPR is responsible for managing media relations and content development for the company, formerly known as Klover, which recently underwent a rebrand that 5W also helped support. Powered by a financial services app, retail loyalty account linking, SKU level APIs and survey responses, Attain provides insights on consumer purchasing.



AMP Agency takes on agency of record duties for **Nature's Bakery**. The agency's scope of work will include media relations, strategic partnership management, thought leadership and contributed content development and product launch support. The partnership will focus on increasing overall awareness of the snack brand and its lineup of products.

MORE AMERICANS DISTRUST NEWS THAN EVER

A survey by the Knight Foundation and opinion poll giant Gallup shows Americans' confidence in the fourth estate has sunk to shocking new lows.



The annual survey found that 50 percent of Americans now believe most national news organizations deliberately mislead, misinform or work to persuade the public. More than half (53 percent) of those polled said they hold an unfavorable view

of the press, and only 26 percent reported having a favorable opinion of the media, the lowest level Gallup/Knight have recorded since they began tracking news trust in 2017.

Even those who trust the news perceive some bias in it: 84 percent of Americans with high emotional trust in national news organizations believe bias is present in the news, and while nearly three-quarters (72 percent) believe national news organizations have the resources to report the news accurately and fairly, only about a third (35 percent) think most national news organizations can be relied on to deliver the information Americans need.

That distrust extends across mediums. Nearly half (47 percent) of those who said they get their news mainly from online outlets reported low emotional trust in national news organizations, and 45 percent who get their news primarily from a cable outlet exhibited low emotional trust in national news groups. The outlier seemed to come from consumers of network news outlets (such as ABC, CBS or NBC). Only 17 percent of people who get their news from those sources distrust national news organizations.

One group driving this trend is independents, who now report more distrust and perceived bias in news coverage than ever. Two-thirds (66 percent) of independents now hold a very or somewhat unfavorable view of the press, up from less than half (48 percent) recorded in Gallup/Knight's late 2019-early 2020 iteration of the same study.

Even Democrats, who have consistently expressed a significantly more favorable view of news organizations than members of other political parties since Gallup/Knight began analyzing news trust five years ago, appear to have experienced a change of heart. Only 45 percent of Democrats currently hold a favorable view of the press, compared to 51 percent in 2019-early 2020 and 54 percent in 2017.

The trend of Republican media distrust has continued, with 79 percent of Republicans viewing the news media unfavorably, up from 67 percent in late 2019-early 2020.

One silver lining: the Gallup/Knight poll found that Americans' trust in the local news remains higher than their trust in national news. More than half of respondents (53 percent) said most local news organizations care about how their reporting affects their community, and 52 percent believe most local news organizations can be relied on to deliver the information they need.

Nearly half (44 percent) of Americans also said they have high emotional trust in local news organizations, compared with less than a quarter (21 percent) who reported high emotional trust in national news companies.

The Gallup/Knight Foundation's "American Views 2022" report was based on a series of web and mail surveys of more than 5,500 U.S. adults conducted between May and July 2022.

REMEMBERING GINGER REEDER

The news of Bruce Willis' frontotemporal dementia diagnosis hit me like a ton of bricks. No, I never represented him; I've never even seen him in person at an event.

The news reminded me of the importance of strong client-agency relationships that do not die, even if the brain does.

My firm represented Neiman Marcus for 15 years and worked closely with Ginger Reeder, its VP-corporate communications. She of great intelligence, energy and style, has the same dreaded disease.

If this article were put in front of her today, she wouldn't be able to comprehend its contents or even recognize my name, despite having been joined at the hip for all of those great years.

When we placed Ginger on The TODAY Show for the first time who knew that the segment for TODAY would become one of the longest-running feature segments in the show's history.

Ginger was the gift guru who found the wildest and most interesting gifts for the Neiman Marcus Christmas Book.

She regaled about each fantasy gift on TODAY as if it were her own child. Her enthusiasm and excitement made her a mainstay on the show, and many other programs as well. The producers and talent loved her. We did, too.

All of that, except the memories, is gone. I have visited Ginger, who retired from Neiman Marcus in 2017, in her assisted living facility in Dallas, and hope to return soon.

On each visit I would present her with flowers, knowing that she no longer knew me. But I told her I loved her, and cried each time on the way out. —Tom Goodman, founder, president & CEO of Goodman Media International in New York.



Ginger Reeder

NEWS OF FIRMS

H/Advisors, the global strategic advisory offering of the Havas Network, launches H/Advisors Public Affairs. The new offering will provide clients with public policy and regulatory affairs consultancy across major global health markets in partnership with Havas Health & You, the firm's global health network. It will support clients in areas including ESG, supply chain, digital transformation, technological innovation, and corporate finance.

Novitas Communications launches the Novitas Diverse Voices Scholarship, which will support the career development of historically underrepresented and marginalized students pursuing a career in PR and communications. The scholarship is open for applications through May 25 on [Bold.org](#), a scholarship network. Applicants should be high school seniors or undergraduate students, and consider themselves low-income, first generation, BIPOC or LGBTQ+.

WPP is now a consulting partner within the Stripe Partner Ecosystem, a financial infrastructure platform that works with such businesses as Amazon, Ford and Shopify. The partnership will engage in strategy and consulting to provide a range of initiatives including digital transformation, new product launches, e-commerce design and development, mobile applications and payments infrastructure.



COMMENTARY



Norfolk Southern stiff people of East Palestine... Railroad officials skipped an informational meeting on Feb. 16 that was supposed to calm fears about the Feb. 3 derailment of a Norfolk Southern freight train filled with toxic chemicals that caused a huge inferno.

Hundreds of the Ohio town's residents turned out for the meeting expecting to square off with Norfolk Southern officials.

They were outraged that the executives were no-shows.

Chris Wallace, a longtime East Palestine resident, told the BBC that people were concerned at the speed of the trains going through the town, as well as overworked crews.

"They should be here answering questions," he said.

"They've got a lot to hide."

Prior to the event, Norfolk Southern released this statement:

"We have become increasingly concerned about the growing physical threat to our employees and members of the community around this event stemming from the increasing likelihood of the participation of outside parties."

The Atlanta-based railroad also released a letter from CEO Alan Shaw, addressed to the East Palestine community.

He assured them the derailment site is being cleaned "thoroughly, responsibly and safely" and that the company has established a \$1M community support fund as a down payment on a rebuilding fund.

Shaw wrote: "I know you're tired. I know you're worried. We will not let you down."

He certainly let them down on Feb. 16 by not taking those questions in person.

DeSantis targets PR elites... Ron DeSantis, the pride of Yale and Harvard who rules over the "Free State of Florida," is railing against the elites who are drawing up ESG financial metrics to push their "radical ideological agenda."

Paul Renner, DeSantis' soulmate and Speaker of Florida's House, prefers to refer to ESG proponents as "martini millionaires" who are hellbent on bypassing democracy and transforming capitalism to serve ideological purposes.

DeSantis introduced legislation on Feb. 13 to prohibit banks and other financial institutions from discriminating against customers for their religious, political or social beliefs, including support for securing the border, owning a firearm or increasing our energy independence.

Sounds like Ron is interested in raising an armed militia to patrol the southern border and perhaps take over a couple of Mexican oil fields.

The anti-ESG warriors in the Republican party are finding that blacklisting investment firms or companies supporting enlightened environmental, social and governance practices comes with a price.

A report by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and Federal Reserve found that Texas municipalities shelled out an additional \$303M to \$532M in bond interest due to

decisions by Citigroup and JPMorgan to exit the state.

Their departure decreased the competition for underwriting deals and pushed interest rates higher.

Seeing the handwriting on the wall, North Dakota overwhelmingly voted down a bill on Feb. 1 that would have triggered boycotts of financial biggies such as BlackRock, Credit Suisse and UBS Group for their ESG practices.

Sanity prevailed in The Peace Garden State.

Amnesia Nikki... In a light-as-air three-minute video announcing her quixotic quest for the presidency, former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley said:

"I don't put up with bullies. And when you kick back, it hurts them more if you're wearing heels."

Cute but spare us.

The 51-year-old forgets that she faithfully served Donald Trump, one of the biggest bullies around, as his US ambassador to the United Nations.

She now thinks Republicans need a new generation of leaders after the party lost the popular vote in seven of the last eight presidential elections.

That's true. Fresh blood is what the GOP needs, but it isn't going to flow from the arms of Haley.

In fact, she has as much of a chance to become the Republican presidential nominee as Liz Cheney, who was booted from party leadership, does.

A poll by North Star Opinion Research finds Cheney and Haley tied at four percent in the race for the GOP nod.

Trump ditches "Meatball Ron" moniker. Trump had been testing the "Meatball Ron" nickname for the woke warrior of the Sunshine State.

On Feb. 18, Trump realized that the use of "Meatball Ron" is even below his in-the-gutter standards so he ended the test.

He posted on Truth Social.

"I will never call Ron DeSanctimonious 'Meatball' Ron, as the Fake News is insisting I will, It would be totally inappropriate to use the word 'meatball' as a moniker for Ron!"

What was Trump thinking? The seriously overweight stable genius had to be referring to DeSantis' pudgy psychic. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black.

Or did Trump want to impugn DeSantis' Italian heritage? Would that have eventually evolved to "Mafiosi Ron" next?

Congratulations to Edelman as it becomes the first PR firm to crack the \$1B in annual fee income.

Richard Edelman reports global income grew 9.6 percent to 1.07B during 2022, the firm's 70th anniversary year.

The firm fell a tad short of the billion mark in 2021 as revenues clocked in at \$985M.

Edelman's US revenue rose a healthy 13.8 percent to \$703.4M, powered by the Los Angeles office (+24 percent), DC (+22 percent) and Chicago (+14 percent).

The firm's No. 2 market, EMEA, showed 1.1 percent growth, led by good performances in Spain, Middle East and the UK.

For Edelman, it's on to the \$2B mark. —Kevin McCauley