



Kevin McCauley
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter



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

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ADASHEK SUCCEEDS DAY AT IBM

IBM has hired Jonathan Adashek, PR head for the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi global alliance, for the chief communications spot that is being vacated by Ray Day.

He reports to Martin Schroeter, senior VP-global markets.



Jonathan
Adashek

Adashek said he looks forward to working with IBM's world-class communicators and corporate citizenship teams. "I have long admired the company's position at the intersection of business and technology across industries around the world," he said in a statement.

He joined the auto alliance in 2018 from Nissan, where he was chief communications officer for four years.

Adashek also was general manager, strategy & communications at Microsoft, executive VP-global client relationship manager at Edelman, director of national delegate strategy at John Kerry for President and White House special assistant.

Day joined IBM in Dec. 2017 after retiring as group VP communications at Ford Motor Co. He made his PR mark at the computer giant when he swapped out Ketchum and Text100 for a Weber Shandwick-led team of SKDKnickerbocker, Civic Entertainment Group and Spectrum Science Communications.

FIAT CHRYSLER PICKS SPROULE TO DRIVE PR

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles has named Simon Sproule chief communications officer, effective Feb. 3.

Sproule will also serve as head of North America communications.

He succeeds former CCO Niel Golightly, who joined Boeing as senior VP-communications on Jan. 1.

Sproule was previously vice president and chief marketing at Aston Martin Lagonda, leading an integrated marketing and corporate communications function as well as overseeing the company's corporate



Simon Sproule

affairs and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

His prior positions included VP marketing and communications at Tesla. He also served as a corporate vice president at both Nissan and Microsoft.

"Simon brings a wealth of automotive experience including a deep understanding of both mass market and luxury brands," said FCA's CEO, Mike Manley.

Q CYBER HIRES MERCURY FOR HACKING SUIT

Israel's Q Cyber Technologies has signed Mercury Public Affairs to a \$1.2M contract for crisis communications, media outreach and government relations work regarding a federal suit filed in California that charges its technology was used to spy on WhatsApp users.

Filed by Facebook and its WhatsApp unit, the suit alleges that Q Cyber and its NSO Group property "used WhatsApp servers, located in the United States and elsewhere, to send malware to approximately 1,400 mobile phones and devices."



The suit filed Oct. 29 in US federal court for the Northern District of California charges the malware "was designed to infect the target devices for the purpose of conducting surveillance of specific WhatsApp users."

Q Cyber and NSO Group deny the allegations.

Mercury managing directors Nicole Flotteron, head of the global digital practice, and Ian McCaleb, a Fox News/CNN alum who was senior spokesperson for the Dept of Justice's criminal division, handle Q Cyber.

NSO Group also has been linked to the Saudi Arabia campaign against dissident and former Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi.

Omnicom owns Mercury.

FIRM SOUGHT TO GROW SOYBEAN MARKET

The U.S. Soybean Export Council, a partnership of soybean farmers, shippers, merchandisers and agricultural businesses that promotes and advocates the use of U.S. soybeans and soybean products, wants an agency that can implement a comprehensive marketing strategy targeting the Americas region for the 2020-2022 period.

The Chesterfield, MO-headquartered non-profit needs an agency that can identify and target influential importers and end-users within the Americas region as well as continue to develop, implement and execute strategies and programs of the USSEC's U.S. Soy Advantage marketing campaign.



Scope of the work includes reviewing and localizing existing U.S. Soy Advantage marketing materials, outlining a social media strategy and identifying social media influencers that can partner with USSEC Americas.

Proposals should be sent via email by 5 p.m. (CST) on Friday, Jan. 23 to americasRFP@ussec.org.

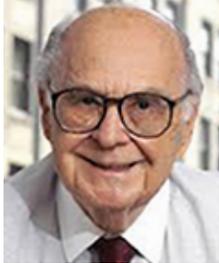
Questions should be sent to americasrfp@ussec.org by 5 p.m. (CST) on Jan. 20.

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

PR LEGEND HAROLD BURSON DIES AT 98

Harold Burson, co-founder of Burson-Marsteller and one of the most influential figures in PR history, has passed away at the age of 98.

BCW CEO Donna Imperato said Burson lived a giant life as a master of influence and was one of the true pioneers of PR and strategic communications. "He was the wisest person I knew, with the highest level of integrity, humility and kindness," she said. "His values and affinity for life will always be the core DNA of Burson Cohn & Wolfe."



Harold Burson

Burson and Bill Marsteller started up Burson-Marsteller in 1953, which became one of the largest public relations companies in the world. In 1979 it became a subsidiary of Young & Rubicam, which in turn was later acquired by WPP. In 2018, it merged with Cohn & Wolfe and re-named Burson Cohn & Wolfe.

The family asks those wanting to celebrate Burson's life to make a donation to the Harold Burson Legacy Scholarship Fund at the School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi.

DOLE TABS PADILLA AS DIGITAL, SOCIAL AOR

The Dole Food Company, Inc. has named Padilla as its digital and social agency of record. The account win comes after a competitive national search.

The Westlake Village, CA agricultural giant, which was founded in 1851, is the largest producer of fruit and vegetables in the world.

Padilla will lead Dole's digital strategy, content creation, creative campaigns, email marketing, eCRM, paid media and community management for its U.S. and Canadian social platforms, the agency said in a statement.

Padilla last year accounted for more than \$41 million in net fees, according to *O'Dwyer's* rankings of PR firms. The agency in 2018 was acquired by Montreal-based holding company Avenir Global.

GRACE TO HEAD MEDIA AT MCKINSEY

McKinsey & Co has named Neil Grace head of media relations for North America.

Grace was previously press secretary and senior communications & policy advisor at the Federal Communications Commission. He also had a seven-year run as a director in Burson-Marsteller's issues & crisis management unit.



Neil Grace

McKinsey's blue-chip image has been the target of media criticism over its work for Saudi Arabia and US Immigration & Customs Enforcement.

On Dec. 4 the management consultant lashed out at a New York Times and ProPublica piece about its work for ICE, saying the article "fundamentally misrepresents McKinsey's work, disregards facts that we provided before publication and misleads readers about both the substance and goals of our work."

NEWS OF FIRMS

Michael Best Strategies has acquired Milwaukee-based strategic communications firm **Bottom Line Marketing & Public Relations**. Bottom Line owner Jeffrey Remsik, as well as senior PR counselor Ron Irwin and PR specialist Margaret Fritsch, will be coming on board at Michael Best Strategies and will move into the Michael Best Strategies offices in downtown Milwaukee. Remsik has specialized in serving clients in healthcare, financial services and real estate development. The Bottom Line name will phase out over the next few months.



Jeffrey Remsik

Affect, a New York-based technology, healthcare and professional services PR firm, has teamed up with European tech PR and marketing agency **With** to form the With Global Alliance, a global network of technology public relations agencies. In addition to Affect and With, the founding members of the alliance are Ideosphere (India), Bold (Southeast Asia) and WEdge (China). With agency founder and CEO Debbie Zaman becomes the global president of the alliance with an executive committee formed of the founders of Affect and Ideosphere as well as With VP International Joanna Derain, who serves as global company secretary.

LifeSci Public Relations has rebranded as **LifeSci Communications**. Founded in 2017, the agency is based in New York, and also has an office in Boston. LifeSci currently partners with more than 50 biotech, medtech and diagnostics clients, with its core services being in communications strategy, public relations, social and digital media and marketing communications.

Carolina Content & Media Relations Corporation, which provides media relations, editing and writing, and content marketing services for professionals in high-tech and sports business-to-business companies, launched Jan. 6. The agency will serve clients in the Davidson and Charlotte, NC areas as well as businesses across the U.S. Charles Hartley, who was previously Accenture communications manager, media and analyst relations, serves as president.

Gail Bergman PR is teaming up with **JnE Films** to launch a corporate video production service for clients across North America. Under the partnership, JnE will work under the direction of GBPR to create video content that can be integrated into branding, marketing and communications strategies. Toronto-based JnE Films produces work for both corporate and travel clients.



Charles Hartley

Entertainment public relations firm **Agency33** has launched a classic rock/pop "tour press" division that will cater to musicians who earn most of their revenue through touring. The new division works directly with management and agents to promote each date of an artist's tour schedule, researching and pitching local media in each.

CLICKS RULE IN COURT OF PUBLIC OPINION

Some of the institutions that faced a crisis in 2019 didn't fare so well. One key reason: transparency has entered the Age of Convergence. Social media, the 24-hour news cycle and instantaneous mobile technology connect individuals and lay out narratives side-by-side for all to examine. Suddenly, people who were isolated or compartmentalized can share experiences and challenge cultural icons, celebrities and CEOs. One voice can be magnified exponentially with the addition of a hashtag.

In many cases where scandal rocked a company and would not go away, there are strong similarities. Some companies have not been seen to take real ownership of their mistakes or hesitate in formulating a response, which is seen as walking away from responsibility. Others responded quickly, but with qualifiers and legalese that made the audience feel as though there was no one at the helm, only a team of corporate counselors.

This is seen as a "non-apology" apology. These approaches may seem at first to distance the company that made the mistake from the act itself, but they do the opposite, tying the perceived offender more closely to their offense. Both responses create distance and distrust between the company and its audience.



Gil Bashe

In this Age of Convergence, if a company leaves any distance, that opening will be filled, digitally and at the speed of a keypad click. Audiences once geographically and demographically distant from one another find themselves on common ground in

an online community, and disparate digital voices can contribute to a new truth narrative.

For the Hallmark Channel, a convergence of individual perspectives meant one person's opinion on or experience with discrimination could be affirmed by many others. A few tweets, a blog comment or two, followed by the drumbeat of others adding their voices, turned into such a groundswell of outrage that the network immediately caved to a moral watchdog group and dropped an ad depicting a same-sex kiss in a wedding ceremony.

It's too soon to tell if Hallmark's mishandling of their crisis will have long term impact on their bottom line, but in Boeing's case, the self-inflicted 737 Max crisis, in which the aircraft manufacturer was never fully transparent, has caused a halt to Boeing production and shaken their previously rock-solid image.

For pharma leaders, it's time to acknowledge that we live in the same digital ecosystem, where there are few secrets and little that can be hidden. Transparency is the coin of communications today, and when our image of events conflict with patients', physicians', payers' and policymakers' versions, we can expect that these audiences will converge, and their voices will emerge online.

Avoiding a reputation crisis is not easy, but companies weather the storm much better when they embrace their responsibility and share transparently. While legal counsellors must be involved during a crisis, it's critical that a place at the strategy table should be reserved for PR practitioners—especially when litigation is at hand.

These six pillars of communications offer a framework to understand and manage the flow of the dynamic.

Authenticate—The first step is to differentiate assumptions and feelings from fact: For example, in liability situations, why were there no cases at dozens of other area hospitals that had also received the same product? How was the product received, stored, handled and administered? With patient safety paramount, these questions set the tone for ensuring that people stop pointing fingers and—most importantly—begin to think about how to guard against immediate risks.

Accuracy—Get the facts right first, then move fast to disseminate. One company worked diligently to guard its reputation by using the media to show its transparency in determining the facts, and then working carefully to share its findings openly.

Align—Once answers to those questions are determined, communicators must agree. Ensure that everyone in the company's legal, management, marketing, and sales teams convey the same truths whenever and wherever they interface with customers.

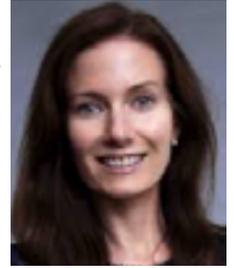
Ally—After core messaging has been established, ally with experts who can share and amplify those truths through their platforms. Cultivate and leverage third-party support, ideally before there is an issue. Always remember that whether they agree with your position or have their own point of view, advocacy groups will be called upon to comment. If they have no background, they are apt to play it safe even at your expense.

Assess—During a trial or crisis, it's vital to monitor in real time for related news. In all crises and legal cases, assessing the mainstream and social media horizon 24/7, preparing and updating standby statements and making executives available for media inquiries is imperative.

Achieve—Think about the endgame, not the struggle! Do not panic every time you see unfavorable coverage or blog posts. But do not stand idly by either. Make sure key bloggers and reporters have the right information and connect with them to share facts. Aligning opinions requires that people have accurate information, so act when information is incorrect.

Public relations and public affairs professionals should have a key role in corporate crisis situations and keep company officers on track with the company's values and mission as a guide. PR experts must ensure that not just shareholders, but also customers, influencers, policymakers, employees and supply-chain partners trust a client's actions. They may not all agree; however, there should be no doubt that what you are saying is true and therefore, you are providing the other side of a complete story.

Gil Bashe is Managing Partner of Global Health at Finn Partners. Kristie Kuhl, JD, is Managing Partner of Biopharma at Finn Partners. Jessica Berk-Ross is Managing Partner of Public Affairs at Finn Partners.



Kristie Kuhl



**Jessica Berk
Ross**

UNIV. OF HOUSTON SEEKS MARKETING FIRM

The University of Houston is looking for a marketing firm that can develop and execute strategic marketing services for its Bauer College of Business.

UH's business school wants to collaborate with a firm to recommend, develop and execute strategies for its Office of Graduate & Professional Programs, including its MBA and MS programs. The selected firm will be expected to work in conjunction with existing contractors who handle specific smaller components within the umbrella of college marketing activities.

Scope of the work includes marketing and advertising; digital marketing; and account management and reporting work. The contract is set to run for one year, with the option to renew for up to four more one-year terms.

Proposals should be delivered by 2:00 p.m. (CST) on Jan. 27 to: University of Houston Technology Bridge 1; Purchasing Department, Attn: Selene Cisneros; 5000 Gulf Freeway, Building 1, Room 214; Houston, TX 77204-5015.

Bids should contain an original "signed" hardbound proposal in a three-ring binder, plus one hardbound copy and one electronic copy on a USB memory drive. Proposals and HUB Subcontracting Plan must be in separate envelopes. All envelopes should be marked "RFP730-20046 Bauer College Marketing Strategy and Service."

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

[Download the accompanying purchasing agreement \(PDF\).](#)

NBA SEEKS PR PLAYER FOR AFRICA LEAGUE

The National Basketball Association is looking to hire a PR executive to oversee communications strategy and execution for its Basketball Africa League set to tip off in March with a dozen teams from six nations.

Based in Dakar, the executive will help drive fan/media attendance at BAL games/events; secure placements in sports, consumer, business, technology, health & wellness, lifestyle and news outlets; handle social media; write press releases and interface with NBA headquarters in New York.

He/she will have 10 years of communications experience, possess contacts in the African media and be fluent in English and French.

Apply for the job [at LinkedIn](#):

The BAL will field 12 teams from a dozen countries during its inaugural season.

Nike and Jordan Brand have signed on as exclusive outfitters for the 2020 season.

The NBA ranks as the most international of US sports leagues. Its 2019/2020 season features 108 foreign-born players from 38 countries. The league has established a games/programming presence in 215 countries.

In conjunction with the International Basketball Federation, the NBA has promised to support the continued development of Africa's basketball infrastructure, including training for players, coaches and referees.

Pan-African communications shop APO Group handles the BAL.



SORRELL JOINS CIRCUS

S4 Capital chief Martin Sorrell has acquired Mexico City-based Circus Marketing digital content shop to expand his push into Latin America.

Circus, which will be merged into MediaMonks, has 350 staffers in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Chile, US (Los Angeles) and Spain.

The 15-year-old firm counts Facebook, Google, Uber, Spotify and Netflix among its clients and will kick in a projected \$38M in revenues and \$20M in profit.

Bruno Lambertini, Circus founder/CEO, said the deal would let his firm showcase its "unique point-of-view" and creativity to the world.

Sorrell, former WPP chief, likes Circus because it embraces his "data-driven holy trinity model and embodies faster, better, cheaper or speed, quality and value."

The Circus deal is S4's eleventh acquisition over the past 18 months. On the Latin American front, S4 in 2019 merged its MightyHive programmatic unit with Brazil-based ProgMedia.



Martin Sorrell

SOLOMON MCCOWN NAMES CEO, REBRANDS

Solomon McCown & Company has named PR strategist and government relations veteran Daniel Cence chief executive officer and managing partner. The agency will now be known as a Solomon McCown & Cence.

Cence succeeds Helene Solomon in the CEO position. Solomon moves into the role of founder and co-president. Ashley McCown also serves as co-president.

Cence joined SM&C in 2016 as senior vice president. He previously led his own political consulting and government affairs firm, Cence Cincotti Strategies.

Earlier in his career, Cence was an aide to former Boston city councilor Tom Keane and government and community affairs director to long-time Suffolk County, MA district attorney Dan Conley. He was also part of the reelection team for former Boston mayor Tom Menino.

W2O'S MATTOX JOINS ZIMMER BIOMET

Kerri Mattox, who was global lead for integrated corporate communications at W2O Group, has joined Zimmer Biomet as senior VP/IR & chief communications officer, a new post.

At W2O, she handled IR, crisis communications, board engagement, purpose and philanthropy initiatives.

Earlier, Mattox was VP-corporate & IR at healthcare products distributor AmerisourceBergen, senior VP-IR & corporate affairs at Endo Pharmaceuticals, senior VP-IR & corporate communications at Auxilium Pharmaceuticals and executive VP at Pure Communications.

Based in Warsaw, IN, Zimmer Biomet is a leading producer of orthopedic reconstructive products (knees, hips), marketing its goods in 180 countries.



Kerri Mattox

THESSALUS CAPITAL SEEKS MEDIA COVERAGE

Thessalus Capital, an investment firm focused on the life-sciences sector, is looking for a PR firm to help it secure media coverage.

Focused on the pharmaceutical, biotech, diagnostic tools and devices categories, Thessalus says it oversees “a quantitatively optimized portfolio with competitive advantages in science and clinical affairs, information pipelines, research process, and management background.”

Kenneth Ng, co-founder & managing director, is looking for coverage in top-tiered outlets like the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, Bloomberg, CNBC and *Financial Times* over the next three-to-six months.

He’s also interested in business publications like *Fortune*, *Forbes*, and *Barron’s*.

Ng is willing to “budget \$5K for a feature in a major outlet and less for a less reputable outlet.”

He can be reached at kng@thessaluscapital.com.

NEUBURGER DROPS UBER FOR LULULEMON

Lululemon Athletica has named Nikki Neuburger chief brand officer in charge of communications, marketing, creative, sustainability and storytelling initiatives. It’s a new position.

She’ll join the athletic apparel company following a two-year stint as global head of marketing at Uber Eats, where she expanded that brand to 36 countries.



Nikki Neuburger

Earlier, Neuburger did a 14-year run as global VP of Nike Running, responsible for product innovation, digital services and community-building.

Neuburger will report to Lululemon CEO Calvin McDonald where she joins the Vancouver-based company on Jan. 20.

ICR handles investor relations duty for NASDAQ-traded Lululemon, while Brunswick Group has media responsibilities.

The company earned \$347M on \$2.6B revenues during the nine-month period ended Nov. 3.

ST. HELENA TAPS WEILL FOR TOURIST PITCH

Saint Helena, which is among the world’s most remote populated islands, has hired travel specialist Geoffrey Weill Assocs. to help put it on the tourism map.

Uninhabited when discovered in 1502 by Portuguese explorers, the 47-sq. mile volcanic island is 1,200 miles from Africa and 1,800 miles from South America.

Saint Helena fell under British rule in 1657, and Napoleon Bonaparte generated buzz for the island after he was exiled there following his defeat at Waterloo in 1815. He died there in 1821.

Weill told the Travel Daily News site that he became fascinated with Saint Helena after reading Simon Winchester’s “The Sun Never Sets: Travels to the Remaining Outposts of the British Empire” about three decades ago.

Until 2017, the British Overseas Territory was accessible every three weeks via a five-day voyage from Cape Town on a Royal Mail ship. Regular flights from Johannesburg will begin this year.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

PAN Communications has added UK-based tech startup **VibePay**, which lets users send and receive money with no need to share bank account numbers or sort codes, to its fintech client roster. PAN’s UK team will provide the brand with integrated marketing and PR support during its nationwide consumer launch. The agency will also assist VibePay with its earned media strategy as the company expands its payment offerings into the B2B payment space.



Version 2.0 Communications has added Boston-based **Building Engines** and **Plymouth Rock** to its roster of technology clients. For Building Engines, a building operations platform for commercial real estate owners, operators and occupants, V2 will work to help the company establish itself as an innovator in the building experience category. Home and auto insurance provider Plymouth Rock has enlisted V2 to work on the launch of its new home insurance product, @Home.

Global Results Communications has been engaged by **Mercatus**, a Silicon Valley company that has created a mobile-enabled data platform aimed at helping private market equity firms make investment decisions more quickly. GRC will provide a full-service communication strategy augmented by media and analyst relations to generate coverage in news and industry trade publications.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

Metro New York, a free daily distributed in the New York City area, has been acquired by Schneps Media, which already owns the paper’s main competitor, *amNewYork*. The two papers are being consolidated into a single edition, which will be known as *am-NewYork Metro*. Schneps says that the combined paper will have a daily weekday circulation of 175,000. *Metro Boston*, which was not part of the deal, ceased operations on Jan. 8.



An attempt by **Facebook** to shore up its reputation through a piece of sponsored content on the Teen Vogue website touting the company’s efforts to safeguard political speech appears to have backfired. When the article first appeared on *teenvogue.com* on Jan. 8, it was not labeled as sponsored content. Soon after, a “sponsored editorial content” label appeared above the article, and shortly after that, the piece was taken off the site completely. While it was up Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg shared it, calling it a “Great Teen Vogue piece about five incredible women protecting elections on Facebook.”

Former First Lady **Michelle Obama** is coming to a smartphone near you with an IGTV series that focuses on the daily struggles of college freshmen. “A Year of Firsts,” is the result of a partnership between digital media company ATTN: and Reach Higher, an initiative founded by Obama during her time at the White House to inspire and support students to pursue higher education. The series is set to start streaming on Instagram’s video app later this month, and a trailer for it was released on Jan. 7.

COMMENTARY



PR legend Harold Burson, who passed January 10 at age of 98, disproved the notion that “nice guys finish last.”

Along with marketing communications wizard Dan Edelman, Harold set the foundation for what evolved into today’s PR business.

He forged the first global PR firm and “professionalized” the business by offering counsel to CEOs at blue-chip companies, such as Johnson & Johnson (Tylenol) and Union Carbide (Bhopal toxic gas explosion), during their time of crisis.

DuPont CEO Edgar Woolard memorialized Burson as “the man to call when major problems appeared” because “he always cooled the issues.”

More important, Harold was basically a nice guy who was always generous with his time and counsel. The pride of Memphis was a southern gentleman.

Jack O’Dwyer viewed Burson as PR’s gold standard, a reliable sounding board for potential story ideas.

Earlier during my career at *O’Dwyer’s*, Jack frequently told me to bounce something off Harold. If it received his imprimatur, I was on the right track.

Harold left some pretty big shoes to fill. It’s up to the PR business to live up to his high standards and commitment to ethics.

Facebook, which has admitted that it ran more than 450 “inauthentic” pages and accounts that operated out of Russia during the 2016 presidential election, resorted to a PR ploy on Jan. 6 in announcing that it would do whatever it takes to ban deepfakes from its site.

That move came ahead of the Jan. 8 House Energy & Commerce Committee’s subcommittee on consumer protection & commerce hearing called “Americans at Risk: Manipulation and Deception in the Digital Age.” Congress is looking at you, Facebook.

The deepfake ban is a good start, but the TechCrunch technology site points out that Facebook will allow edits or splices to video that curtail, slow down or change the order of a speaker’s words—a policy that would allow the infamous video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in which her speech was slowed down by 75 percent, making it appear that she was drunk and slurring her words.

TechCrunch dismisses Facebook’s updated position on manipulated media as “no to malicious deepfakes but spin doctors please carry on.”

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg has got to do better.

Goldman Sachs gets PR religion, promising a new era of openness and transparency in the hopes of giving a boost to its sluggish stock price.

The investment banker plans to “peel back the cur-

tain” on its lending and proprietary bets and fashion its quarterly reports along the lines of competitors like JP-Morgan Chase, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

CEO David Solomon, reported the WSJ, told an off-site meeting last year that the company’s stock should be trading for at least \$400. It now changes hands at \$235.

Goldman slates its first investor day later this month, where it will flesh out the policy. Let’s hope the new PR policy will result in gold for Goldman’s investors.

Bill Clinton has work to do on his PR pitch. The former president tried to give some PR love to the Dominican Republic, which has been reeling on the tourism front since the mysterious deaths of nine tourists last year.

Taking a break at the Playa Grande Golf Course on Jan. 7, the president called the DR “beautiful” and a “great place to be.” He also said, “I think the Dominican Republic is well on its way to full recovery from the little hiccup we had over the tourism.”

Families and friends of the dead Americans would surely take umbrage at the little hiccup reference.

The ex-president went on to say, “There are 58 countries in the world which are less safe for American tourists than the Dominican Republic—and that’s what the tests show, so people should come here and have a good time.” Yikes!

Is Bill’s message, Americans who were eyeing a vacation in Damascus should consider the DR instead?

The DR’s consulate general in New York and the Ministry of Tourism are distributing a transcript of his homage to the DR and a video via Rubenstein PR and BVK PR. In seizing upon Clinton’s “plug,” the DR is grasping at straws.

While the DR scrambles for visitors, the upsurge in tourism is becoming a concern for the travel business.

Falling airfares and globalization have sparked a huge spike in the number of international/domestic travelers from 1B to 8B today. Places like Venice are choked by the number of day-trippers, leading to calls to restrict the number of visitors. And try to take a stroll in midtown Manhattan during the ever-expanding tourist season.

MMGY, a travel PR firm, released a survey Jan. 8 that shows Americans are increasingly aware of the impact of tourism in the age of global warming, but people aren’t going to cancel their travel plans any time soon.

About four-in-ten (37 percent) of travelers say overcrowding is a serious issue.

MMGY’s respondents, however, believe travel helps them better understand the global warming problem. Only 12 percent, who say travel negatively impacts the environment, regret making their last trip.

Bon voyage, glacier and coastal cities.

—Kevin McCauley