



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

Jan. 26, 2015 Vol. 48 No. 4

FINN ACQUIRES DVL, SEIGENTHALER COMBO

Finn Partners is acquiring Nashville's DVL Public Relations & Advertising and Seigenthaler PR, which have merged.

The recast DVL Seigenthaler, a Finn Partners Company, becomes the No. 1 firm in Music City and a powerhouse in the Southeast with fees of \$11M and 80 staffers.

The acquisition positions the New York-based firm with \$65M in fees and 450 people.

Nashville, which *Time* last year called "the south's red-hot town," has an "economy on fire," booming cultural scene, world-class medical facilities and rising universities, according to Peter Finn.

Praising the business philosophies and work quality of DVL chief Ronald Roberts and Beth Seigenthaler Courtney, Finn looks forward to joining forces with them.

Roberts will helm DVL Seigenthaler with Courtney as president. They report to Richard Funes, senior managing partner.

DVL and Seigenthaler clients include Airbus DS Communications, Bridgestone Americas, Brown Forman, Electronic Recyclers International, Goodwill Industries, JM Smucker, LifePoint Hospitals, Metropolitan Nashville Airport Authority, Nashville Electric Service, Natural Resources Defense Council, Regions Financial, and Singer Sewing.

SGP Worldwide handled the deal.

PEDERSEN OUT AT GRAYLING

Pete Pedersen, former Edelman global tech chair, has resigned the CEO slot at Grayling, Huntsworth's global flagship.

The move comes as former Hill & Knowlton CEO Paul Taaffe, who was recruited in December for the Huntsworth helm, readies to take command of the holding company in April.

Huntsworth released a statement to say that Grayling's executive management team will oversee day-to-day activities on an interim basis.

Peter Chadlington, the Huntsworth CEO who hired Pedersen, credited him for making an important contribution to the firm and "repositioning as a digitally focused international PR company building multinational client engagement." He wished Pedersen well.



FINN PARTNERS



Pedersen

WILLIAMSBURG WANTS PR FIRMS TO VISIT

The Williamsburg Area Destination Marketing Committee is looking for a PR firm to promote overnight visits and position the Virginia region as having more tourism attractions than just the Colonial Williamsburg restoration.

The "historic triangle" area of Young/James City counties and the city of Williamsburg is home to Busch Gardens, Jamestown Settlement, Water Country USA, Yorktown Battlefield and College of William & Mary.

The Committee wants a travel savvy PR partner for feature placements in target markets (DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York), media relations, press trips and coordination with in-house PR staff.

The budget may run up to \$200K, which is funded by a \$2 per-night room tax on lodging facilities.

Proposals are due April 1. RFP. <http://odwpr.us/1zi7Byl>.

H+K GUIDES EGYPTIAN TOURISM

Hill+Knowlton has registered the Egyptian government's Ministry of Tourism as a client here in an effort managed by the London office of the WPP-owned unit.

Egypt suffered a 95 percent plunge in tourism dollars since the beginning of the Arab Spring and ouster of the government of Islamist Mohamed Morsi, which was freely elected president.

The consolidation of power by military man Abdel Fatah al-Sisi in May has restored a sense of stability in the minds of potential visitors to Egypt.

Tourist arrivals surged 70 percent during the third quarter of 2014. September was especially strong as the number of arrivals jumped 193 percent to 884K compared to the comparable 2013 period.

The *Financial Times* (Nov. 24) reports that an improved tourism sector would add \$3.3B to the economy.

ARKANSAS LT GOV JOINS PURPLE

Arkansas Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin has joined Washington's Purple Strategies as a senior advisor while holding the state position.

The former Republican Congressman and aide to Karl Rove in the Bush White House was elected lieutenant governor in November and took up that part-time role on Jan. 13. The firm noted may former lieutenant governors held simultaneous public and private posts.

Purple Strategies president and CEO Steve McMahon said Griffin's experience in politics and the Army Reserve will help shape public opinion for clients.

Griffin served as interim US Attorney in Arkansas but was never confirmed and was elected to Congress in 2010 serving as deputy majority whip.

HAWAII OPENS REVIEW OF TOURISM PR

The Aloha State has launched a review of its six-figure tourism PR account with an open competition through mid-February.

The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau in Honolulu released an RFP covering North American PR for the state's convention and visitors bureau, as well as CVBs for the islands of Kauai, Oahu and Hawaii.



The HVCB plans to focus its 2015 outreach on "never-been" Hawaii travelers, while continuing to woo past travelers and other likely visitors.

The PR budget breaks down to \$36K/month for the central CVB, with \$11K/mo. from Kauai, and \$13K/mo. a piece from Maui, Oahu, and the Big Island.

Anthology Marketing Group and Stryker Weiner & Yokota PR are incumbents, although the RFP says pitching agencies must describe a plan to transition from the current firm(s).

Proposals are due Feb. 23. RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1tgIdX2>.

R&R SCOOPS UP \$900K SOUTH SUDAN WORK

R&R Partners, which was founded by legendary Republican ad man Sig Rogich, has lined up a \$900K one-year contract with South Sudan to raise the Washington awareness of the country and promote its strategic importance to the US.

Split from Sudan in 2011, South Sudan has just inked a treaty with a rebel group that has waged war since December 2013, a conflict that has resulted in the death of 10,000 people.

That armed struggle also sapped the economy of the oil-rich landlocked African state.

R&R will engage in a range of service including development of a message platform, influencer outreach, editorial services, crisis communications, media training to emphasize the importance of promoting the prospects of world's youngest democracy located in an unstable region of the world, according to the firm's master services agreement.

The Las Vegas-based shop also will support the development of South Sudan's natural resources and infrastructure.

Rogich, advisor Ronald Reagan and George Bush I, sold R&R to Bill Vassiliadis, who is known for creating the "What Happens Here, Stays Here" line for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Board.

He has counseled high-rollers such as Kirk Kerkoian and Donald Trump.

CLINTON WH ALUM LAUNCHES PA SHOP

Ben Finzel, who served in the Clinton Administration's Dept. of Energy, has launched RenewPR, an energy and environmental PR firm.

He served as legislative director for New Mexico Congressman Bill Richardson, whom Clinton tapped as Energy Secretary.

Finzel went on to hold the communications director

job for DOE's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

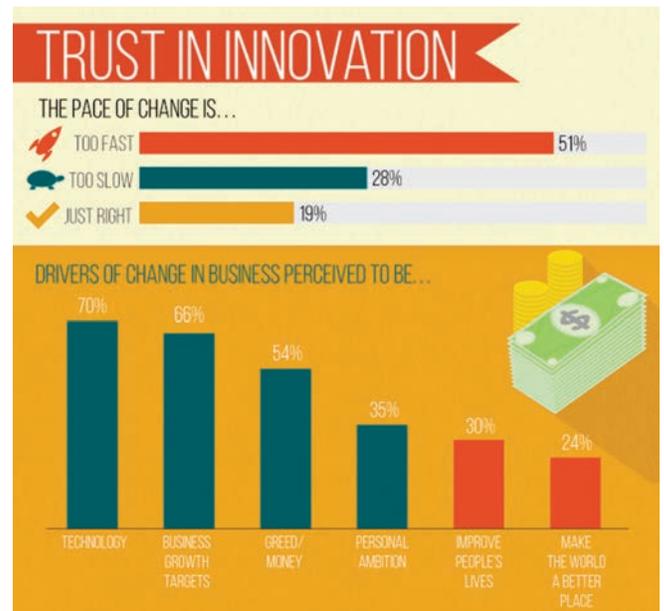
The 25 year-plus veteran of Edelman, Fleishman-Hillard and Widmeyer Communications also was press secretary for Congressman Tim Valentine and executive VP at Glen Echo Group, a PR boutique.

Finzel's goal is to restore "common sense to communications" for companies, alliances, foundations and NGO clients. He says RenewPR will offer "simple, direct advice from creative, knowledgeable and committed counselors unencumbered by bureaucracy and process."

EDELMAN: INSTITUTIONAL TRUST TANKS

The 2015 Edelman Trust Barometer released Jan. 20 found that trust in government, business, non-governmental organizations and media tanked to the levels of the Great Recession of 2009.

Richard Edelman ticked off a number of reasons why trust has plummeted below the 50 percent mark in two-thirds of the 27 global markets surveyed by the Edelman Berland research outfit.



They included the Ebola outbreak, disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370, foreign exchange rigging by big banks, corruption arrest of Chinese government officials and North Korea's hacking of Sony to punish it for "The Interview" flick.

Edelman called the Trust collapse "startling."

The independent firm's poll also found most respondents cast a jaded eye toward technological advances.

More than half (51 percent) say innovation is happening too quickly. Business growth (cited by 66 percent) and greed (54 percent) are what people believe are sparking innovation.

A scant 24 percent say innovation is driven to promote a greater good.

In the view of Edelman's leader, innovation should be a "trust accelerator." He sees the need for a "new compact between company and individual, where companies demonstrate that innovations are safe based on independent research" and benefit society.

GANNETT MOUNTS DEFENSE AS ICAHN LOOMS

Media purveyor Gannett Co. has engaged Sard Verbinen & Co. to shore up its PR defense as activist investor Carl Icahn threatens a proxy fight over the company's plans to separate its publishing interests from its TV and digital operations.

Icahn, in an SEC filing Jan. 21, published a letter to Gannett president and CEO Gracia Martore to say he was "pleased" with the plan to separate but "concerned" about board decisions surrounding the move he believes will weaken shareholder value and leave the two resulting companies prone to takeover. Icahn, who leads a group controlling about 6.6% of McLean, Va.-based Gannett, is nominating two board candidates and offering a handful of proposals, adding that he "would prefer to work collaboratively ... rather than engaging in a costly and distracting proxy fight."

Gannett board chair Marge Magner said the board was "surprised by Mr. Icahn's aggressive actions" and derided his "overreaching campaign to advance his own agenda." The company is touting its record of shareholder engagement and governance.

Jeremy Gaines leads corporate communications for Gannett and is supported by Sard Verbinen chairman and CEO George Sard and managing director Stephanie Pillersdorf. Jeffrey Heinz heads IR for Gannett.

Gannett's Martore said the media company is "shareholder-focused" with a "strong and independent board."

The company announced in August that it would split into two companies through the spin-off of its publishing business to shareholders. The publishing unit will be led by *USA Today*, along with 81 dailies, community news provider Newsquest in the UK, and more than 200 weeklies, magazines and trade pubs. Its news broadcasting and digital unit will also be publicly traded and incorporate its 46 broadcast stations and its digital operations led by CareerBuilder and Cars.com.

AL JAZEERA US: NON-US NEWS MATTERS

The US unit of the Qatar satellite TV network has established its "road map for 2015," promising new programming but warning that "it cannot ignore the pivotal role played by news events outside the US."

In a Jan. 16 staff memo, Ehab Alshihab, noted important news breaks in Ukraine, Gaza and Paris and called the network's 82 global bureaus "a unique advantage in our ability to bring in-depth coverage to stories wherever they occur in a timely manner."

Alshihabi wrote that Al Jazeera "can bring the type of balanced examinations on serious topics that have been missing in much of recent US news coverage."

He cited AJA's "close-up and personal coverage" of the racial unrest in Ferguson, Mo. as an example.

AJA, which has registered low viewership numbers, is wrapping up a multi-million dollar expansion of its Washington operations, which will officially open in the spring. Growth plans in New York will be completed in 2016.

Alshihabi reminded staffers the Arab network entered the American market "to fill a void and preserve the

tradition of seriousness and excellence in news programming at a time when many of our competitors have adopted a different tradition."

Rivals, in his view, have blurred the lines between news and entertainment, news and opinion and "between news that has an immediate and direct impact on people's lives and news shaped primarily to attract and entertain audiences."

AJA vows to continue reporting in-depth news that matters.

PARIS MAYOR THREATENS TO SUE FOX NEWS

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo plans to sue Fox News for its alleged false reports about neighborhoods ruled by Sharia law that have become no-go zones for non-Muslims.

The intensity of Fox reports picked up in the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo massacre.

Hidalgo told CNN that Fox's misinformation has prejudiced the image and honor of Paris.

Various Fox reports have said even Parisian police are afraid to go into Muslim neighborhoods ruled by Islamic codes. The "Fox & Friends" program has led the Sharia charge, showing areas of the city allegedly under Islamic law.

Meanwhile, Fox's anti-Muslim hysteria has provided much grist to "Le Petit Journal," the French TV program that is equivalent to the "Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

Since the Charlie Hebdo terror attack, Le Petit Journal has aired a barrage of ridicule of Fox.

Rupert Murdoch's TV network has apologized to the people of France for its erroneous reporting about the no-go Sharia-ruled zones.

Michael Clemente, Fox executive VP, said in a Jan. 19 statement that Fox has apologized across various platforms "so that any viewers who may have tuned in to the earlier programming would have a chance to hear our corrected reporting."

FB HAS BIGGER ECON IMPACT THAN PORTUGAL

Facebook claims its responsible for stimulating \$227B in economic activity and creating 4.5M jobs for the year ended October, according to an analysis produced by Deloitte.

That would put the \$12B (revenues) social network operation on par with the gross national product of Portugal.

The report, "Facebook's Global Economic Impact," gauges the company's marketing, platform, and connectivity and then measures how they facilitated growth and jobs worldwide.

Giving Facebook an \$8B cost base, Deloitte looked at the impact of providing tools for marketers, platforms for app developers and demand for data usage and mobile devices.

The study, according to Jolyon Barker, Deloitte's managing director for technology, media & telecommunications, finds Facebook unlocking new opportunities through connecting people and businesses, lowering barriers to marketing and stimulating innovation.

PR & SOCIAL MEDIA VIEWS**A DECADE LATER, KATRINA STILL RELEVANT**

By Ann Edelman

Hurricane Katrina will be remembered for the death and destruction it left behind. But it also changed the way we as an agency think about crisis—or disaster—communications.

In crisis PR, we're asked to think about a worst-case scenario. Katrina taught us that depth of preparation is difficult, because worst cases play out more tragically than anyone can imagine. Here are a few of the most important lessons we learned about crisis planning.

Don't be surprised when people react completely opposite of what you expected. Tragedies that mounted after Katrina were multiplied under the pain of uncertainty. Were family and friends alive or dead? How long could those left behind survive? The psychological toll was immeasurable. Yet, it wasn't uncommon to find the strongest personalities found themselves unable to cope. Meanwhile, the meek, soft-spoken types were often rocks of stability.

Technology leaves everyone vulnerable. Once the power is out for more than a day, laptops and cell phones are useless. When was the last time you printed updated hardcopies of critical information? Do crisis team members have their own hardcopies and key contact information, including backup emails and phone numbers?

In a disaster, ordinary becomes priority. When it became obvious that New Orleans would be closed for months, priorities flipped to the most basic needs—temporary housing, new schools, new transportation and health care. Does your plan cover paying employees if they're evacuated out of town and cut off?

If you have to leave, pack up like you mean it. When you leave the office this Friday, what would you take if you knew you wouldn't be back for a month? What would you take from home?

As New Orleans' closure lingered long after Katrina moved on, one of the most common regrets among professionals was not having business clothes that were left behind. Evacuees left New Orleans on a Sunday expecting to be home by Tuesday — not months later.

Prepare to learn a new definition of creative thinking. It wasn't that options were limited after Katrina — they were often nonexistent. In a worst-case scenario you must be willing to create your own alternatives.

Our own CEO cleverly figured out a way to contact another tenant in our high-rise building who was still operating after the storm. One local company bought an entire trailer park. And be prepared to put aside corporate rivalries for the greater good. Businesses affected by the storm reached out to anyone who could help, even competitors. Every job saved was one more step in the city's recovery.

Fall in love with a local charity. New Orleans survived Katrina thanks in large part to the charity of nonprofits, volunteer groups and individuals that provided for families who lost everything. Philanthropy is one of the most cost effective ways to prepare for disaster because it helps ensure that nonprofits in your community have the ability to respond when called upon.

Ann Edelman is Director of Public Relations for Zehnder Communications, a full-service agency in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Nashville.

AMERICAN SNIPER IS H-WOOD GIFT TO PENTAGON

The film "American Sniper" opened to a smashing \$105.3M over the Martin Luther King memorial weekend, drawing raves from former military veterans and cultural conservatives in small-town America, according to today's *Wall Street Journal*.

Note to the WSJ: the movie based on the bloody, blow-their-heads-off exploits of the US military's most deadliest sniper, also drew applause from the liberal crowd. This writer watched the movie in the Cobble Hill section of Brooklyn, which is hardly a hotbed of "USA, USA" chanters and Pentagon boosters. The audience of young hipsters and aging hippies cheered American Sniper when US hero Chris Kyle, played by Bradley Cooper, took out his counterpart and former member of Iraq's Olympic shooting team with a bullet between the eyes from more than a mile away.

Cobble Hill theatergoers had the opposite emotional reaction when Kyle dies and is laid to rest with full military honors. Sobs could be heard when images of the funeral procession down Texas byways lined with flag-waving well-wishers. Word-of-mouth following the film was nearly 100 percent positive.

My bet is that less than one percent of the Cobble Hill crowd had any tie with America's military. [Yours truly received a high lottery number during the wind-down of the Vietnam War, which sent older friends either to Nam, Canada or underground. Not a college deferment to be had in working class Sunset Park, Brooklyn.]

American Sniper is a PR gift to the Pentagon, which finds itself re-engaging in Kyle's old stomping grounds and expanding into neighboring Syria. Yemen, which is billed as an important American ally in the drone war against Al Qaeda, today looks like it may explode. The US military is on the march once again in the Middle East.

DOD's office of the Special Assistant for Entertainment in Los Angeles offers help in producing motion pictures, TV shows, commercials, CD-ROM games and music videos. Navy, Marines, Army and Air Force staffers serve Hollywood from an office on Wilshire Blvd.

American Sniper, which was filmed in Morocco and LA, received military technical advice from 1 Force Inc. Sergeant Major James Dever USMC (Ret) founded 1 Force to handle movie battle choreography, weapons handling and safety, boot camp scene training and soldier dialog/protocol. He trained with Navy Seals, Army Special Services, New Zealand Special Air Service and served in Phnom Penh, Saigon, and the Mideast.

Directed by Clint Eastwood, American Sniper is a mid-budget film of \$60M that did not receive across-the-board praise from critics. Distributor Time-Warner's take from American Sniper was more than twice the previous King holiday record. Its financial success would have puzzled Dr. King, an advocate of non-violence.

Kevin McCauley is editor of O'Dwyer's.



NEWS OF PR FIRMS**SHIFT OPENS IN AUSTIN**

Boston-based tech firm Shift Communications, Boston, has opened an Austin outpost to support clients with ties to the tech-savvy city.

Shift CEO Todd Defren expressed a desire to “contribute to a community that is truly fueling startup growth.”

Matt Trocchio, recently promoted to VP after 10 years with the independent firm, leads the Austin office.

SHIFT will kick-off a "Masters of the New Marcom" seminar series in Austin on Feb. 3 at The Driskill Hotel with Defren, VP of marketing technology Christopher Penn and EVP of strategy, Scott Monty.

Info: <http://shiftcomm.com/2015-masters-of-the-new-marcom-event-austin>.

FH UNVEILS GLOBAL CONTENT OPERATION

FleishmanHillard has set up FH ContentWorks, a global content marketing offering connecting the firm’s content shops, newsrooms, partners and tools in more than 100 markets.

The firm’s Freshwire content marketing unit will be integrated into FH ContentWorks, as Freshwire founder/CEO Shawn Amos takes the chief content innovation officer title for the Americas. FH said Amos will work with FH clients and teams on content strategy and creative differentiation. FH president/CEO Dave Senay said FHCW was designed to provide everything a client needs to gain a competitive advantage by developing and amplifying content “anytime, anywhere in the world.”

FH has studios in key markets like Beijing, Dublin, Sao Paulo, Boston, San Francisco and New York, among others.

LIVINGSTON SETS UP NY SHOP

Julie Livingston has opened Livingston PR in New York to provide strategic marketing and communications services through a network of consultants to clients like associations, non-profits, the education market, small businesses and “solopreneurs.”

She also assists in business development and strategic partnerships. Her client experience includes Liz Claiborne, Scholastic, DeBeers, World Gold Council, and the Toy Industry Association, among others.

Livingston is active in the NY Women in Communications Foundation and NY Society of Association Execs.

ZOCALO CREATES CONTENT MODULE

Chicago-based Zócalo Group, part of Ketchum, has created Content Carrot, an embeddable module aimed to simplify content marketing distribution.

CC aggregates branded and third-party content with an eye on reducing the time and cost of producing a microwebsite for assignments like product launches, events and crises.

The module can be embedded in social channels, display ads or other online locations to display content like images, videos, text and other media. When content changes are made, the CC embeds are updated automatically. Info: contentcarrot.com.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

King + Company, New York/Luxury Retreats, villa rental organization with more than 2,700 properties across 90+ destinations globally; and Alaris Health, short-term, post-hospital rehabilitation and long-term specialty care with member health centers throughout the state of New Jersey, both as AOR for PR.

J Public Relations, New York/The Ritz-Carlton, Eastern Region, a travel portfolio of 12 properties include T R-C New York Battery Park, Central Park and Westchester, as well as R-C’s in New Orleans, Amelia Island, Sarasota, Fort Lauderdale, Kay Biscayne, Naples, Naples Golf Resort, Philadelphia and Pentagon City.

Southeast

Anson-Stoner, Orlando/Seacoast Bank, as AOR for strategic planning, brand development, creative and interactive services, media placement and PR.

Midwest

Airfoil PR, Southfield, Mich./Creditera, personal and business credit data and insights for small-business owners; Mavenlink, cloud-based project management software for businesses that work with distributed teams; Michigan Legislative Consultants, Lansing-based lobbying and political consulting firm, and Telenav, personalized navigation apps, for PR. The firm said new billings approach \$1M.

Southwest

Leverage PR, Austin/South by Southwest Interactive, as AOR for the SXSW Accelerator start-up pitch competition. The contest marks its seventh year in 2015 and will include 48 companies that present their innovations to a live audience and a panel of judges.

Preferred PR, Las Vegas/“Ja-Makin’-Me-Laugh,” comedy matinee starring Matilda and Patrick Murray, for PR and promotions. The show debuted at the D Hotel and Casino in August 2014 after residencies in Paradise Island, Bahamas, and Atlantic City, N.J.

Amendola Communications, Scottsdale, Ariz./Sentrion, as AOR for PR for its Remote Patient Intelligence technology aimed to detect patient deterioration before it becomes acute. Work includes strategic counsel, media and analyst relations, content development, and management and support for speaker and award opportunities.

Mountain West

Verde Brand Communications, Louisville, Colo./Pearl Izumi, ride, run and triathlon apparel, as PR and brand comms. AOR, including traditional PR, digital content, and product rollouts.

Wall Street Communications, Salt Lake City/Chyron-Hego, graphics solutions for broadcasters and local TV stations around the world, for media relations and content marketing to tout Melville, N.Y.-based CH’s graphics creation, layout, and real-time data visualization products and services in the global trade press.

West

Murphy O’Brien PR, Los Angeles/Turtle Bay Resort (Oahu), North Shore resort of cottages and villas which underwent a \$4.5M renovation, and St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort & Residences (Miami), resort of 227 guestrooms and 292 residences, for PR.

NEWS OF SERVICES**FEMA ASSESS FLOOD INSURANCE PR**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is assessing agency PR and marketing capabilities to handle the \$75M account to promote the National Flood Insurance Program, FloodSmart.

FEMA is asking agencies to submit a declaration of interest that shows prior experience, resources and other capabilities for the large-scale contract. Firms can be based anywhere in the US but should have a Washington, D.C., presence.

A group of firms, including Ogilvy PR, JWT, Leapfrog Solutions, Blue Water Media, Spurrier Media and Bender Consulting currently handle the five-year account after a successful pitch in 2011.

The 43-year-old flood insurance program covers property owners, towns and regions with flood plain management plans.

Details are at fbo.gov.

OGILVY CASHES IN ON MONEYGRAM

Ogilvy Government Relations has signed on as DC representative for MoneyGram International, a leading financial services company targeting the un- and under-banked market.

The WPP unit handles matters concerning federal financial regulation, tax reform and money transmission services.

Dee Buchanan, whom Ogilvy calls the "go-to-guy" to the House Financial Services Committee, where he served as a top aide to chairman Jeb Hensarling (R-Tx), is a member of the OGR team.

Former Democratic staffers Moses Mercado (Missouri Congressman Dick Gephardt), Tony Bullock (New York Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan), Dean Aguillen (California Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi) and Gordon Taylor (Louisiana Representative Chris Long) join Buchanan on the business.

MoneyGram is in the financial doldrums as revenues dipped 6.5 percent to \$358M during its latest financial quarter and net loss weighed in at \$3M compared to a \$22.5M year ago profit.

The Dallas-based company has had a tough January as US tax court rejected its plea to gain bank status in order to write off about \$550M in losses triggered by the global financial collapse. The court ruled MoneyGram fails to meet even the "bare requisites" for a bank.

Wal-Mart on Jan. 20 announced the Direct2Cash service to allow customers to obtain tax refunds in cash in an effort to attract the bankless market.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. estimates nearly 30 percent of US households either have no or a minimal relationship with a bank.

MoneyGram shares tumbled on the news nearly three percent to \$8.45, near their \$7.55 low for the 52-week period.

BRIEF: GTCR, the private equity firm that acquired Cision and Vocus last year, has aligned with Adams Outdoor Advertising to acquire outdoor ad company Fairway Media Group from ACON Investments and MidOcean Partners.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Scott Nolan Smith, head of digital diplomacy for the UK embassy in Washington, to Britain's Portland PR to handle media/digital engagement, diplomatic communications and international affairs. Smith co-founded the Digital Diplomacy Coalition to arrange brain-storming sessions between tech, diplomatic and foreign affairs experts.

Kelly Penton Chacon to ASGK Public Strategies as a director as the firm opens a Miami outpost, its fourth US office. Chacon, a former VP for Schwartz Media Strategies, was communications director for the statewide redistricting campaign FairDistricts Florida, director of comms. for the city of Miami and press secretary for former Miami Mayor Manny Diaz. Chicago-based ASGK, founded by political operative David Axelrod and PR vet Eric Sedler, has operations in New York and Washington, D.C., as well.

Kelly Cushman, SVP for Goddard Gunster, to JDA Frontline, Washington, D.C., as executive VP. She handled the campaign to torpedo New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's large soda ban. **Laurie Rossbach**, formerly of FTI Consulting, Burson-Marsteller and Edelman, joins as VP.

Charity Guzofski to VP, RED PR, New York. The nine-year RED vet did a brief stint at Eli Tahari before returning as a consultant. **Courtney Frappier** has joined the firm as an A/E from Tractenberg to handle the Morgan Taylor Professional Lacquer, Gelish and Groh accounts.

Claire Storrs, A/E and director of events, Verde Brand Comms., and **Michelle Juralewicz**, A/M, marlo marketing/comms. to People Making Good PR, Burlington, Vt., as an A/S and senior A/E, respectively, in the firm's Boston office.

Promoted

Tracey Benjamini to senior A/E, R&J PR, Bridgewater, N.J. She joined in 2011.

Obituary

Tom Kowaleski, the automotive PR executive who held top posts at Chrysler, General Motors, and BMW is dead at 63. Kowaleski died Jan. 20 after suffering a heart attack while hiking with his wife in Arizona.

Automotive News reports that Kowaleski was "one of the masterminds behind the wildly successful Chrysler press conferences of the 1990s." Those moves included stunts such as driving a Jeep through the glass window at Detroit's Cobo Center in 1992. AN credits Kowaleski for driving Chrysler off the business page and onto the front page and TV evening news. He worked at American Motors, Renault and Campbell Co. before shifting to Chrysler in 1988 as manager of product and technology communications. Kowaleski succeeded Steve Harris as communications chief for DaimlerChrysler and then moved to GM becoming VP-global communications in 2004. He retired as VP-corporate communications at Renault in 2012, but re-emerged at Ford's Lincoln unit as a consultant.



Kowaleski

PR WATCHDOG HITS 'WHITEWASHING'

Countries, which once relied on their intelligence services to monitor foreign governments, increasingly are turning to PR firms and lobbyists to do their spying and information-gathering, according to a 64-page report called "Spin Doctors to the Autocrats: How European PR Firms Whitewash Repressive Regimes."

Released by Brussels-based Corporate Europe Observatory, the study of "image-laundering" also covers the diplomatic/intelligence outsourcing that goes on in Washington.

Prominent American firms such as Qorvis (Equatorial Guinea, Saudi Arabia, China), Patton Boggs (Georgia), APCO Worldwide (Azerbaijan), Levick (Nigeria), Racepoint Group (Rwanda), BGR (Kazakhstan, Bangladesh), Mercury PA (Uganda), Glover Park Group (Egyptian strongman General Sisi) and Ketchum (Russia) are fingered in the CEO report.

The Observatory believes "representing authoritarian regimes, and governments that are responsible for war crimes or serious human rights abuses as clients sits at complete odds with the various codes of conduct and corporate social responsibility discourse that many PR firms and lobbyists have signed up to."

Such representation, in the Observatory's view, is "ethical tunnel vision."

The report, which the Observatory believes covers only the "tip of a larger iceberg," is at http://corporateeurope.org/sites/default/files/20150120_spindoctors_mr.pdf.

FED-STATE GREEN REVAMP SEEKS PR HELP

A Washington-based council of state and regional environmental agencies is on the hunt for strategic communications counsel for a federally backed initiative to reform how governments deliver environmental protection and data.

E-Enterprise for the Environment, launched in September 2013, has state governments, the US Environmental Protection Agency and tribal councils working to modernize the business processes that going into eco management.

The DC-based Environmental Council of the States, or ECOS, released an RFP this month for PR support to produce clear messaging around the "complex and evolving" E-Enterprise endeavor. The work also includes creation of a website and communications plan.

The EPA set aside \$17M for E-Enterprise projects in 2014.

Proposals are due Feb. 5. RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1yJ1n8D>.

GLOVER PARK AIDS 'AMERICAN SNIPER' PUSH

Warner Bros worked with Glover Park Group to cultivate military interest in the release of "American Sniper," the blockbuster film based on the memoir of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle.

Warner Bros communications and PA chief Dee Dee Myers is a former managing director of the WPP-owned PR operation Glover Park, which has helped screen American Sniper to military audiences, bolstering the film's appeal across the political and social spectrum.

The Hollywood Reporter, in a feature on the studio's

marketing strategy Jan. 20, called the film's box office performance a "seminal event for Hollywood" for its appeal with conservative and liberal audiences, Oscar nominations, and pervasive media presence.

Read the Hollywood Reporter piece at <http://bit.ly/1E9Rhkx>.

VIRGINIA TECH PR CHIEF TO RETIRE

Larry Hincker, the associate VP for university relations who helped "brand" Virginia Tech and led the institution's PR through a 2007 campus shooting, will retire this year after 25 years in Blacksburg.

Hincker served four university presidents through three decades speaking for VT and serving as senior communications officer.

Current president Timothy Sands credited Hincker with securing the school's reputation as a leading research university in the US and abroad.

"Most gratifying to me are the changing and improved perceptions of Virginia Tech's reputation," said Hincker. "As communicators, we don't create the brand; we simply put a spotlight on it. I am pleased to know that university relations had some role in helping cement our place among higher education leaders."

Hincker is credited with leading a 1990 brand management program that embraced the name Virginia Tech over the university's official moniker, the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Former VT president Charles Steger recalled Hincker's efforts as the face of the university through the 2007 campus massacre that left 32 dead.

"In our darkest hour, Larry's leadership, resolve, and compassion helped to hold our devastated community together," he said. "He represented all of the Hokie Nation as he sought to do the impossible – explain the unexplainable to millions of people watching all over the world."

Hincker, a VT grad, joined VT in 1988 as director of educational communications and took over university relations a year later. He said he'll stay in place until a replacement takes over.

AUSTRALIA TOURISM BOOKS GLOBAL PR HUNT

Tourism Australia is looking to hire PR partners in key international markets such as the US, Brazil, Malaysia, China, Korea, India, UK and Japan.

The agency wants to assemble a roster of best-in-class firms in each individual market.

TA, according to the tender, wants firms to support media relations, content development, social, brand, reputation and crisis management.

The proposed contract terms run for three years beginning July 12. There's an option to extend for two additional terms of 12 months each.

The RFP was issued by the Sydney-based agency on Jan. 16 and closes Feb. 20.

Documentation is available at <http://odwpr.us/1yVBtPr>.



Hincker

PR OPINION

Robert Phillips, former Edelman U.K. executive, has published *Trust Me, PR Is Dead*, a 300-page book that attacks the idea that information can be “managed” and that institutions can “implant messages” in target audiences.

Phillips says that PR, like media, political parties, diplomacy and internal communications, is undergoing disruption at the hands of the web and is “seemingly unaware of its own death throes.” He says there is a new age of “individual empowerment” in which power is shifting from state to citizen, employer to employee, and corporation to citizen-consumer.

Phillips published *Citizen Renaissance* in 2008, which had a similar call for “citizen revolution to help address huge issues of well-being and climate change.” He says that global warming cannot be controlled unless “we leave a large proportion of the remaining fossil fuels in the ground.”

“Our communications world is now social—and of and between the people—and democratic, because it gives voice to all,” he writes. “Joined together, this provides a unique opportunity for communications to be transformative...we cannot continue spouting flimsy research statistics, empty slogans, and crass diversionary tactics.”

Some Say PR Lives

Advance publicity on the book last fall touched off rebuttals from PR executives and groups including Kathy Cripps, president of the PR Council, which changed its name from the Council of PR Firms.

“Whether a firm is helping clients to create dialogue in social communities, engendering trust with their audiences, or moving people to action, it’s PR and it’s never been more relevant,” she said.

The Centre for Corporate Public Affairs, Melbourne, published a five-page essay in 2013 called “PR Is Dead” by director Wayne Burns. He said only one percent of the organizations it surveyed had a “PR” function.

PR survives only on the “tactical fringes of marketing communications,” he wrote. What was once seen as “good PR, positive and frequent news media coverage and reporting, well-attended corporate events and product launches, marketing campaigns—are not an end in themselves.” Currently valued are “socio-political outcomes defined and generated by organizational strategy, and by PA strategy that contributes to and underpins broader organizational objectives,” he says.

Phillips urges more measurement of PR “outcomes” and less emphasis on “output.” He has long been a foe of ad value equivalency (AVE), which multiplies ad space by anywhere from three to ten times the dollar value of the space. Better tools are available, he says. “With better data, gathered in real time, we can begin to track sentiment in media—just as supermarkets can move stock between aisles and at different heights in immediate response to customer demands.”

Other sectors than PR, he writes, “simply offer greater insight and more measurable success...seventy-five years after Edward Bernays germinated the modern

PR industry, there is bizarrely still no consistent application of proper measurement criteria...without proper measurement, there can be no accountability. And without accountability, PR will only further become marginalized.”

CSR Hijacked by Sales

Corporate Social Responsibility was a “trend spotted early by PR folk” but in the “frenzy to monetize, the industry failed to think,” says Phillips. “Rather than lead a progressive agenda based on co-created, citizen-centric actions, it defaulted to selling stuff. What emerged was mostly ‘greenwash’ and thereafter an ill-formed CSR industry that today is more about bureaucratic, tick-box compliance and reporting than it is about social movement and societal change.”

Behaviorial trust has to “sit at the heart of everything and be embedded in every business action,” according to Phillips. “It cannot be either side-channelled or sub-contracted. Trust is built through the honest behaviors of all real people from within, not by rules and words commanded from above. Neither advertising nor over-spun PR will work in building a brand or company.”

A “re-branded CSR practitioner” has told him that a “reform movement” has started within the CSR sector.

Internal PR Also Dead

Lucy Adams, who left BBC in April 2014 as director of human resources, internal communications and the BBC Academy, writes that “Internal communications as a narrowly defined function and approach is dead, and a fundamental re-think of communications—and more importantly relationships—with our employees is needed.”

The all-staff email, which went to 20,000 BBC inboxes, is “possibly the most loathed of all internal communication,” she writes.

“My emails, in an era of cutbacks, were rarely pleasant to write or read. They typically announced the removal of some perk, some new rule to follow or, worse still, another below-inflation pay deal or even redundancies.” Company emails, she notes, don’t remain in the company. “A contentious BBC email appears on every news outlet within minutes,” she said.

Polman of Unilever Praised

Phillips does not have many words of praise for captains of industry but one exception is Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever since 2009.

Phillips says “Polman is the pin-up for a new generation of CEOs—thoughtful, responsible and challenging convention. His stated mission, to double the company’s sales while halving its environmental footprint, boldly goes where few CEOs have gone before.”

The company touts its “Unilever Sustainable Living Plan.” Polman, who received an Outstanding Achievement Award of the Atlantic Council in 2012, said, “Now is the time for business to step-up and lead.” Phillips noted that this was also the key message of the 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer which Richard Edelman had shared with Polman while at the World Economic Forum a few months earlier.

— Jack O’Dwyer