



Kevin McCauley
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

January 27, 2020 Vol. 53 No. 4

NC COUNTY SEEKS FIRM TO BOOST ADOPTION

Wake County, North Carolina is seeking proposals from agencies that can develop a multifaceted marketing and communication campaign to promote the adoption of children and decrease children's length of stay in the County's foster care system.



Considered one of the fastest-growing counties in the United States, Wake County consists of 12 municipalities, including state capital Raleigh.

The County's specific goal is to promote the adoption of older children, sibling groups and children with special needs as well as recruit foster homes based on defined geographical, race and ethnicity and language needs.

Scope of the work includes developing a targeted print marketing campaign as well as a campaign for billboards and local ads, email marketing and social media work.

Proposals are due on Feb. 18 and should be mailed to:

Melissa England; Wake County Finance Dept - Procurement Services; Wake County Justice Center, 2nd Floor - Ste 2900; 301 S. McDowell Street; Raleigh, NC 27601

Bidding agencies should submit six copies of proposals plus an electronic version on a USB thumb drive.

Questions should be directed to Melissa England, melissa.england@wakegov.com, by 5 p.m. on January 30.

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

WATSON TAKES BCW DIVERSITY POST

Carol Watson has joined BCW as executive VP-inclusion and diversity for North America. She'll spearhead the push for an inclusive, open and collaborative workplace at the WPP unit.



Carol Watson

Watson joins BCW from Diversity Best Practices advisory firm, where as senior director since 2016 she counseled more than 200 member organizations about diversity and sustainable change programs.

In 2006, she founded Tangerine Watson, a cross-cultural talent consultancy.

Watson reports to Chris Foster, North America president, on her efforts to ensure that BCW's talent represents multiple points of views, experiences and cultures.

TENEO TO RUN PR UNIT OF SAUDI MEGA-CITY

Teneo has inked a six-month \$840K contract to manage the communications department of Neom, which is the \$500B mega-city that is supposed to be the centerpiece of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to diversify the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's economic base.

The contract, which became effective Nov. 1, follows Teneo's earlier six-month deal, worth \$2.1M, to develop the overall narrative for Neom.

The New York-based firm's duties include leading and staffing Neom's PR unit to ensure that the development's corporate messages and positioning are effectively communicated.

It also will develop a crisis preparedness capability to include protocols, materials and training programs.

Teneo, which bills itself as a global CEO advisory firm, was founded by Doug Band, who was President Clinton's chief counsel; Declan Kelly, ex-Financial Dynamics CEO and economic envoy for Northern Ireland for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and Paul Keary, who ran FD's North American business.



SVC TOPS MERGERMARKET LISTS

Sard Verbinnen continued its streak at the top of Mergermarket's rankings of PR advisors in the global merger market for 2019, both in terms of the number of deals and total deal value.

In the U.S., SVC was #1 ranked by deal count, but Joele Frank Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher took over the top spot in the total deal value column (up from #4 last year), fueled by a 51.7 percent hike in that category.

In global deal value, SVC was followed by Joele Frank at #2, Brunswick Group at #3, Kekst CNC at #4 and Finsbury at #5. Following SVC in the top five for global deal count were Kekst CNC, Finsbury, Joele Frank and FTI Consulting. Lambert & Co. had a banner year in the category, rising from 2 deals in 2018 to 83 in 2019, and coming in at #9.

In the U.S. SVC was joined in the deal count top five by Kekst CNC, Joele Frank, Finsbury and Lambert & Co. As regards total value, following Joele Frank in the top five were SVC, Kekst CNC, Brunswick Group and Abernathy MacGregor Group.

Kekst CNC was another big gainer in 2019, seeing a 200.3 percent jump in global deal value and rising from 190 deals to 235.



INCOME INEQUALITY ERODES TRUST

Growing income inequality is killing the dreams of people throughout the world who feel the economic system is rigged against them, according to Edelman's 20th Trust Barometer, which found that 56 percent of respondents believe today's capitalism is doing more harm than good.



Despite the downbeat view of capitalism, 58 percent of respondents rank business as the most trusted institution.

Richard Edelman said businesses have filled the void left by populism and government.

CEOs, though, cannot operate with a focus exclusively on shareholder returns.

The Barometer, which was released at the Davos World Economic Forum, found that 92 percent of workers want CEOs to speak out on the issues of the day. Nearly three-in-four (73 percent) of employees want the opportunity to change society and about two-thirds of consumers are "belief-driven buyers."

Edelman sees the need to evolve its model for measuring trust to two gauges: competence and ethical behavior. "It is no longer only a matter of what you do, it's how you do it," said Edelman.

The Barometer found that business ranks as highest in competence by a 64 percent to 10 percent bulge over government.

In the ethical behavior category, NGOs hold a 31 percent advantage over government and a 25 percent edge over business.

Though government scored low marks in competence and ethical behavior, survey respondents trust it more than business on protecting the environment and closing the income gap.

Media took a beating in the Edelman survey as 57 percent of respondents said the media they use are contaminated with untrustworthy information. More than three-quarters of respondents worry about fake news being used as a weapon.

The Barometer found that the "informed public" (wealthier, more educated and frequent consumers of news), which comprise 17 percent of respondents, are far more trusting than the "mass population."

BRUNSWICK ADDS FINANCIAL PR VET KOONS

Brunswick Group has hired Charlie Koons as a partner focused on mergers & acquisitions, investor engagement, shareholder activism and corporate governance.

Most recently, the 24-year financial PR veteran was managing director at Morrow Sodali in charge of its activism & contested situations advisory group.



Charlie Koons

Earlier, he was managing director of shareholder activism at Mackenzie Partners

Brunswick's global financial situations team advised on 165 transactions worth \$421B in 2019, according to Nik Deogun, CEO of the Americas and U.S. senior partner.

NEWS ANCHOR JIM LEHRER DIES AT 85

Jim Lehrer, who teamed with Robert MacNeil in 1975 to launch "The MacNeil/Lehrer Report" on PBS, died Jan. 23. He was 85.

The Wichita native worked at the *Dallas Morning News* and *Dallas Times Herald* before moving to public station KERA-TV in the city.

In 1973, he shifted to PBS in Washington, where he covered the Watergate hearings with MacNeil.

The MacNeil/Lehrer Report evolved into "The MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour" in 1983 after it became TV's first hour-long news program.

Following the retirement of MacNeil in 1995, Lehrer hosted "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer."

He stepped down from what is now called "PBS NewsHour" in 2011 and was succeeded by Judy Woodruff.

Lehrer, who was a Marine Corps. veteran, moderated a dozen presidential debates.



Jim Lehrer

MEDIA MANEUVERS

Former *New York Daily News* editor-in-chief **Jim Rich** has been tasked with the job of bringing sports-related site **Deadspin** back to life, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. Rich will take the helm of the site, which has had no staffers since early November, on Jan. 27. He will be based in Chicago. Last year's mass exodus followed a demand from the management of G/O Media, which owns Deadspin, that editors limit their coverage to sports-related topics. Rich says that he would consider re-hiring writers and editors who had walked out. He also told the *Journal* that he made no promises to G/O Media chief executive Jim Spanfeller that the revived site would stick solely to sports.

Meredith Corporation has sold fan-focused sports and entertainment site **FanSided** to Minute Media. FanSided and its platform of individual sites will remain standalone properties and operate within the Minute Media family of publishers. FanSided's staff will join Minute Media. The acquisition is the fourth for Minute Media over the past 18 months. In December, the company announced it would acquire Derek Jeter's *The Players' Tribune*, which follows the company's purchase of *The Big Lead* and *Mental Floss*.

Bill Abbott, the president and chief executive of Crown Media Family Networks (owner of the **Hallmark Channel**), is stepping down. His departure follows the controversy over the Hallmark Channel's decision to pull ads for wedding-planning firm Zola featuring a wedding between two brides. The ads were yanked after One Million Moms, an arm of the conservative American Family Association, circulated a petition asking Hallmark to "reconsider airing commercials with same-sex couples." Mike Perry, the CEO of Hallmark Cards, which owns Crown Media, said he has begun a search for Abbott's replacement.



Jim Rich

AVOID THE 'CALL CENTER' CRISIS APPROACH

Organizations responding to a crisis too often end up employing an approach like what many of us have experienced when interacting with a customer call center on a problem or complaint. You get a morass of contradictory information from someone who lacks authority, a refusal to accept responsibility and no feasible solution to your problem.

The reason this strategy underperforms in a call center interaction is the same reason it falls short in a crisis situation: the focus is on rapid, uniform response, not on providing thoughtful, nuanced responses tailored to the needs and motivations of specific audiences. As much as people want immediate answers in the wake of a crisis,



Alex Stanton

they understand that the world is a complicated place and not everything is black or white. What they want most is to be heard and treated with respect, to get a response that's honest and authentic. And sometimes people just want to hear the facts so they can judge for themselves.

In today's media environment, gaining this trust requires an authentic transparency tailored to key audiences.

But, there are some things communicators can think through and put in place to ensure their organization is ready in the event the unexpected happens.

Agreement on your message and tone

It's simply not possible to communicate with authenticity and nuance in crisis situations if your brand message and tonality isn't concrete. It's not just what you say but how you say it that makes a difference. Many crisis communications blunders are directly related to conflicts between factions of a company that rear their heads at the precise time when you need teamwork to operate effectively—and message and tone are often the battleground.

Organizations always think they have this nailed down. But once you apply the pressure that comes in the crisis arena, cracks show very quickly. Unfortunately, the list of companies that fall victim to this at some point or another is long, and the damage tends to be lasting. Worst of all, it's totally preventable. Take time now to stress test those messages with your key constituents.

Dynamic spokespeople can handle nuance

Dynamic spokespeople don't just parrot talking points. They know how to tie any question back to a key message and do so in a thoughtful, empathetic way. Just think how different your call center experiences are when the representative is armed to be thoughtful and articulate in responding to the nuance of your situation. The same is true in crisis communications.

The problem organizations face is that the only way to develop dynamic spokespeople is to log many hours of practice—and if you don't believe me, put a camera in front of your primary spokespeople and quiz them hard on some uncomfortable topics for 10-15 minutes. After watching the results, consider that the average interview with a print journalist is 20-30 minutes.

Most spokespeople say they're too busy doing their day job to take the time to do the needed preparation. But

if you wait until the crisis, it's too late. Without dynamic, prepared spokespeople, you can have the best response in the world and still fail to connect your messages with the proper audience.

Find authentic transparency

It's vital that you communicate authentically with your key audiences even when you don't have complete information. In crisis situations, you usually possess only 60 percent of the information you'd like to have before you need to respond to media and other audiences who are growing impatient (and sometimes reporting inaccurately). The rest takes time to gather, and information often changes as the situation evolves.

This lack of complete information can cause organizations to be reluctant to prioritize transparency. That's a mistake. In fact, incomplete information makes transparency even more critical, not less. Declining to comment or appearing to be hiding something diminishes any chance of an authentic response.

In the initial stages of a crisis, being as up front about the reality of the situation as you can within the confines of prudence is always good policy. It tells decision-makers and influencers that even though you may not have all the answers, you respect them enough to offer up what is known now. And that can buy the time and credibility needed to gather more information, tighten your responses and navigate the situation effectively.

Alex Stanton is CEO of Stanton.

ATLANTA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SEEKS AOR

Habitat for Humanity's Northwest Metro Atlanta chapter is accepting proposals from agencies that can serve as the nonprofit's agency of record, providing comprehensive public relations and social media services.

The NW Metro Atlanta HFH wants a communications agency that can generate media interest, social media content and provide brand reputation support to bring focus and attention to the organization throughout Georgia's Cobb County by raising awareness of the chapter's activities and initiatives, increasing community involvement and positioning the chapter as a vital local community partner through Q1 of 2021.

Scope of the work includes creating a comprehensive public relations and social media strategy; drafting and circulating press releases and media pitches; generating media coverage for NW Metro Atlanta HFH; providing social media services; producing monthly reporting detailing PR and social media efforts; crisis communications response and support; identifying speaking and thought leadership opportunities for HFH leadership; onsite event support; and media training assistance.

Proposals are due by Friday, February 28 and should be sent via email to NW Metro Atlanta HFH chief executive officer and executive director Jessica Gill, JGill@nwmetroatlantahabitat.org.

All questions should be directed to Gill, JGill@nwmetroatlantahabitat.org.

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



CLIMATE CHANGE IS TOP ISSUE FOR BRANDS

Climate change now leads as the single greatest issue facing corporate brands today, according to an annual analysis of social issues affecting companies by strategy firm High Lantern Group.



HLG's second annual "Brand Pressure Index," which tracked 300 social topics in an effort to analyze which issues are most impacting corporate brands today, found that climate change now tops the list as the issue generating the greatest amount of public pressure on social media platforms.

Sustainability issues have surged overall since HLG's year analysis last year, according to the report, and now account for six of the top 20 issues facing businesses in 2020 (top challenges also include plant- and lab-based foods, the use of pesticides, electric vehicles, fossil fuels and plastic pollution).

Labor insecurity concerns—such as living wages and union concerns—which topped HLG's list last year, slid somewhat this year.

Other top issues include gender discrimination, sexual harassment, data security, trade barriers, race equality, misinformation and natural disasters.

According to the report, tech brands face the most stakeholder scrutiny when it comes to enacting cause-related measures, followed by restaurants and food products brands. Facebook, Amazon and Google were the top corporate brands facing the most issue-related pressure. Boeing and McDonald's round out the top five, followed by Walmart, Apple, Uber, Monsanto and General Motors.

The report also found that overall, issue-related pressure against brands rose 3.8 percent in the last year, underscoring businesses' need to take a stand on the social, environmental and political issues facing the world.

HLG's analysis relied on the proprietary data that included 6.2 million tweets among activists, influencers and stakeholders involving 1,000 top corporate brands and more than 80 industries over a 12-month period.

AMERICAN AIR'S SCOTT FLIES TO UNITED

Leslie Scott, who was American Airlines' senior manager for global communications, is moving to United Airlines on Feb. 3.



Leslie Scott

Based in Chicago, she'll tackle issues management and other duties as a member of its corporate PR team.

Over nearly six years at AA, Scott served as national spokesperson, handled PR at key hub markets (New York, Miami, Charlotte and Orlando), developed corporate/government affairs messaging and was a member of the "GO Team" crisis communications unit.

She also did a six-year stint at Delta Air Lines, where she exited as senior manager in its corporate communications department.

Scott is joining United ahead of CEO Oscar Munoz's plan to hand the CEO reins to president Scott Kirby in May.

BGR MAKES CASE FOR HONDURAS

BGR Government Affairs is working on a \$60K per-month effort to provide strategic communications services to Honduras, which has been rocked by corruption.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez on Jan. 16 ended an anti-graft panel, Fight Against Corruption and Impunity in Honduras, that was created by the Organization of American States. The OAS bashed that move, but Hernandez wrote on Twitter that his government will "continue to fight against corruption and for transparency."



Juan Orlando Hernandez

He won an election in 2018 that the OAS claimed was rigged. A US jury found his brother, Juan Antonio Hernandez, guilty of conspiring to import cocaine, illegal weapon possession and lying to US officials.

BGR's contract is to provide PR and government relations services "to support and advance the interests of the people and government of Honduras." It began Jan. 7 and runs through Dec. 17. VP Jo Maney and senior advisor Hunter Strupp work the business.

The Trump administration and Honduras signed an agreement in September to block asylum-seekers traveling through Central America from entering the US.

QUEEN ELIZABETH'S ROYAL CRISIS PR WIN

Queen Elizabeth II schooled the Duke and Duchess of Sussex (aka Prince Harry and Meghan Markle) in crisis PR, according to *Forbes* contributor Chet Wade.

Failing to give the 93-year-old monarch a heads-up, the duo dropped their "Megxit" bombshell on Instagram.

While Harry and Meghan expected sympathy for their desire for privacy and personal freedom, the British tabs went berserk over the fact they didn't have the decency to tell QEII and the rest of the royals beforehand.

Wade notes that good communications planning calls for alerting key stakeholders at the right time and in the right way.

For her part, the queen remained cool, calm and collected, saying early in the game that discussions with the royal rebels were "at an early stage."

Her following statements kept the same conciliatory tone, supporting Harry and Meghan's "desire to create a new life as a young family" while "remaining a valued part of my family."



Queen Elizabeth II

But when it came to hammer time, the queen stood tall. Wade wrote she made it clear that the exit would be settled quickly but on her terms.

The former VP-corporate communications at Dominion Energy and principal at AftonRock Communications in Richmond, wrote that QEII doesn't always get crisis PR right—e.g., Princess Diana's death and Prince Andrew's alleged sex-trafficking scandal and association with Jeffrey Epstein. "But in this instance, the queen showed she is still in charge and knows how to respond. Maybe there is something to be said for nearly 68 years of on-the-job training," concluded Wade.

D'AMATO'S FIRM SETTLES SANCTIONS CASE

Former Senator Al D'Amato's Park Strategies paid \$12,250 to settle charges regarding apparent violations of the Global Terrorism Sanctions Regulations, according to the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control.

The penalty stems from the New York-based firm's 2017 lobbying on behalf of Somalia's Al-Barakaat Group of Companies, which was placed on the specially designated global terrorist roster in 2001.

Park Strategies inked a contract with Al-Barakaat and subsequently received payment for a push to remove it from the Treasury's terror list.

The work covered services for Al-Barakaat that "were outside the scope of generally authorized activities" under the GTSR, including a general license for legal services, said the OFAC.

Park Strategies voluntarily disclosed the apparent violations and the Treasury determined the apparent violations constituted a non-egregious case.

LIBERTY WANTS TOURISM PR PARTNER

The Liberty Tourism Committee is looking for a marketing communications partner to bolster the number of visitors to the historic Missouri town located 15 minutes from downtown Kansas City.



The Committee's RFP says Liberty offers "easy access to city amenities while also offering the ambience and comforts of a historic smaller town."

Founded in 1822, Liberty is the second oldest incorporated town west of the Mississippi River. It features 500 acres of public park including an 18-hole golf course, along with the Jesse James Bank Museum, site of the nation's first successful daylight peacetime bank heist.

The Committee's desired firm will handle PR, marketing strategy, social media, digital advertising, and website support.

Responses are due Jan. 31 and go to:

City of Liberty; c/o Claire Rogers; 101 E. Kansas Street; Liberty, MO 64068

Click [here](#) for the RFP.

BOGGS TO HEAD POLICY COMMS AT CHARTER

Avery Boggs has joined the government affairs team at Charter Communications, where she's been named group vice president, policy communications.

She succeeds Tamara Smith, who's assumed the newly-created role of Spectrum Networks' group vice president, partnerships and strategy.

Boggs joins the cable giant from Arlington, VA-based PLUS Communications, where she was executive vice president of marketing and strategy development. She was previously a senior vice president marketing at The Koch Network and a senior vp at Alexandria-based marketing and advertising shop Revolution Agency.

As head of public policy communications, Boggs will be responsible for developing and implementing communications strategies to achieve the telecommunications giant's policy goals at the federal, state and local levels. She'll be based in Washington, D.C.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Rocket Science Marketing & PR has been named PR and blogger/influencer agency of record for the fresh products division of **Dole Food Company** and PR agency of record for **Saleen Automotive**. Rocket Science will provide Dole with PR and blogger/influencer strategy, planning and execution, and help to leverage the company's multiyear nutritional alliance with The Walt Disney Company. The Orange County, CA firm will lead Saleen's ongoing communications efforts as the company expands globally, including a return to professional motorsports and the 2020 launch of the *Saleen 1* – an original turbocharged mid-engined sports car designed and built by Saleen in California.



Modern Currency Public Relations has added **The Ambrose Hotel** in Santa Monica, CA to its roster of culinary, luxury travel and lifestyle clients. MCPR's services to the Ambrose include promoting awareness of the hotel through press releases and media alerts, pitching story ideas and placement to media outlets, coordinating media stays at the property and organizing events, as well as developing partnerships and alliances.

Beach House PR has added all-natural deodorant brand **Humble** to their agency roster. Beach House will handle the brand's public relations and influencer marketing efforts. Taos, NM-based Humble says that its deodorant has the fewest ingredients of any on the market, and is free of aluminum and parabens. Founded by former Google senior director of new business development Jeff Shardell, Humble sells its products online, at natural retailers and in specialty beauty stores.

Affect has added **Unbound Tech**, a provider of multi-party computation based cryptography platforms, to its roster. As the agency of record, Affect is responsible for implementing and executing targeted communications campaigns to increase brand awareness of Unbound Tech and its offerings in North America. Founded in 2014 and headquartered in Israel, Unbound Tech helps companies protect corporate secrets such as cryptographic keys, credentials and other private data by ensuring they never exist anywhere in complete form.

Fayetteville, Ark. and New York City-based **Mitchell** has been retained by **Designer Brands Inc.**, a designer, producer and retailer of footwear and accessories. Mitchell will support DBI's corporate communications strategy and public relations. DBI's retail operations encompass nearly 1,000 locations under the DSW Designer Shoe Warehouse, The Shoe Company and Shoe Warehouse banners.



Slingshot has been named agency of record for **Aspire Allergy & Sinus**, formerly Texan Allergy & Sinus Center. The agency's initial responsibilities will include media strategy, planning and buying for digital, streaming and broadcast. Based in Austin, Aspire Allergy & Sinus operates nearly 50 clinics in 14 markets across Texas, Colorado and Florida.

COMMENTARY

Congratulations to Richard Edelman for being the first PR firm executive inducted into the Advertising Hall of Fame of the American Advertising Federation.



Richard Edelman

The newly minted Hall of Famer will be honored at AAF's 71st induction ceremonies and gala dinner slated for April 28 at Cipriani Wall Street in New York.

Brickbats for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for the unprofessionalism that he displayed toward respected

NPR reporter Mary Louise Kelly following a contentious interview in which she asked him about his failure to support the former US ambassador to Ukraine.

Pompeo, who reportedly has his eye of running for president in 2024, took his cheap swipe at Kelly to please his master in the White House.

The US needs a steady hand at the helm of the State Dept., not a Trump kiss-up.

Pompeo is traveling to Ukraine this week and is scheduled to meet with president Zelensky.

He's the guy Trump tried to blackmail by withholding US military aid in return for a bogus corruption probe into Joe and Hunter Biden.

Will Pompeo rant at Zelensky like he did to Kelly? Stay tuned.

News flash: Trust in media rose in 16 of 26 global markets surveyed last year by Edelman's 20th Trust Barometer.

India led the pack as trust in that country's press jumped nine percent to 73 percent. Mexico and Spain ranked next, advancing six percent to 59 percent and 42 percent, respectively.

The Chinese are most trusting as 80 percent of them give a thumbs-up to the state-run media. That high level of trust is probably due to the reluctance of respondents to criticize the Beijing government.

Saudi Arabia saw the biggest drop in media trust, a falling 17 percent to 46 percent. The torture, murder and dismemberment of Saudi dissident and *Washington Post* contributor Jamal Khashoggi may have triggered the crash.

Despite the steady drumbeat anti-media rants by President Trump, US trust remained at 48 percent

The Edelman survey found traditional media are more trusted than social media by a 61 percent to 40 percent margin.

The firm also reported that 72 percent of respondents in 28 countries surveyed believe companies should stop advertising with any media platform that fails to prevent the spread of fake news and false information.

Only 64 percent of US respondents hold advertisers

accountable for fake news on sites on which they advertise.

That does not bode well ahead of the presidential election as Vladimir Putin's troll farms are expected to spring into action once again.

And speaking of propaganda, former *Wall Street Journal* publisher Gordon Crovitz blasted US companies that rely solely on "programmatically advertising," which is the placement of ads by algorithms without consideration of the content or journalistic standards of the sites.

In his Jan. 22 *New York Times* op-ed piece, Crovitz wrote that algorithmic advertisers such as Geico, Best Buy and ETrade help fund Putin's Sputnik News propaganda site.

Putin's other top disinformation vehicle, RT.com, attracted more than 475 programmatic advertisers during a recent six-month period. That lot includes Amazon, Walmart, Kroger and PayPay.

By supporting those sites, US advertisers help Russia promote divisiveness in the US and Kremlin lies such as the one denying that ally Syria used nerve gas on its own people.

Crovitz is co-founder of NewsGuard, which helps companies determine what sites are "safe" for their brands. He said advertisers that restrict programmatic ads to trustworthy sites return ad dollars to publishers that badly need the support.

Those advertisers also give Putin a poke in the eye.

If Hollywood remakes the 1967 film, "The Graduate," it would certainly have to update the career advice given to Dustin Hoffman about the "future is plastics."

That would be dead-end advice to today's college graduate, according to a global survey, "Toward a More Sustainable World," conducted by SAP Qualtrics.

Released at the World Economic Forum, the poll shows the future of plastics is far from rosy. In fact, the future of plastics is far from certain. It found that 45 percent of Americans and Canadians dislike plastics either a little or somewhat. That's more than twice the 21 percent of respondents who like plastics.

What's the beef? Negative impact on oceans and marine life is the No. 1 reason, cited by 30 percent. Eighteen percent cite plastics litter and trash followed by contribution to general waste (13 percent), effects on climate change (12 percent), effects on human health (nine percent) and costs of disposing (six percent).

The Plastics Industry Assn. trade group says the US plastics industry is "facing unprecedented global competition and cost pressures that have substantially altered the operating environment for many plastics companies."

That's undoubtedly true but the growing public opposition to plastics presents a much bigger long-term threat to the industry.

—Kevin McCauley