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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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SYNECHRON SEARCHES FOR PR

Synechron, New York-based information technology provider, is looking for a PR firm to expand and promote its brand across the US and other operating regions.

Founded in 2001 by Faisal Husain, the company says its "onshore-offshore delivery model" delivers diversified services and solutions built to align with clients' changing landscape in the banking, insurance, financial tech and digital sectors.



Clients include JPMorganChase, Barclays, Saatchi & Saatchi, Dataran Media, New York Life, Standard Chartered, Hydrant, Local Matters, WPP and Credit Suisse.

Synechron, which has more than 5,000 staffers and \$200M in revenues, operates eight cities here and outlets in India, United Arab Emirates, UK, Holland, Japan, Australia and Singapore.

Kulwinder Singh, global marketing and communications director, told O'Dwyer's he is coordinating the RFP outreach effort.

NELSON TAPPED TO LEAD INFLUENTIAL ALEC

Lisa Nelson, a veteran public affairs exec with posts at Visa, AOL Time Warner and former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, has been named CEO of the American Legislative Exchange Council, the controversial yet influential conservative advocacy group.

Nelson has been running Ulysses Consulting, a coalition-building and marketing advisory shop for associations and non-profits. She previously led government relations in the Americas for Visa and was SVP for external relations at AOL Time Warner.

Alexandria, Va.-based ALEC is fueled by conservative federal and state legislators and gets private sector funding from companies like Exxon Mobil and Koch Industries to influence policy and introduce legislation.

The group reportedly faced a funding shortfall in late 2013 after its full-throated support of so-called "stand your ground" laws in the wake of the Trayvon Martin shooting in Florida.

Nelson takes up the post on July 30.

In a statement, Gingrich said Nelson, as PA liaison, played a key role in developing the Contract with America, calling her a "great leader with a deep public policy interest and a real understanding of innovation."



Nelson

AMERICAN APPAREL RESCUER TRIES ON WS

Standard General, the New York hedge fund that inked a deal to bail out American Apparel on July 9, has engaged Weber Shandwick for PR.

AA, which ousted founder Dov Charney last month, said SG would provide \$25M in financing in exchange for three board seats as the apparel retailer replaces five of its seven board seats, including Charney's. Both Charney and SG agreed to "standstill" and voting limitations limiting their stakes and voting influence.

The pact, dubbed a "lifeline" by the *New York Times*, includes a commitment to keep making AA clothing in the US.

John Dillard, SVP for Weber Shandwick, is representing Standard General. He is a former associate at Sitrick and Company, which reps American Apparel.

AA in June bounced Charney and installed PR maven Allan Mayer, a board member, as co-chair.

JAPAN FORTIFIES PR ARSENAL VIA RASKY

Japan, which is in the midst of a high-profile and controversial shift of its military posture, is using Rasky Baerlein Strategic Comms. to promote understanding of the importance of its relationship with the US.

The Boston-based firm's Washington office has the nine-month job that is worth \$270K.

Dale Leibach, Rasky co-chairman, spearheads the four-member Japan team. He merged Prism PA into Rasky in January, and has held posts at Powell Tate, Ogilvy and Sen. Tom Harkin's communications staff.

The *New York Times* on July 2 ran a front page story about Japan re-thinking its pacifism and revamping its military to thwart China's expansion in the Asian region. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's "collective self-defense" push allows Japan to come to the aid of an ally beyond its home territory. China has accused Japan of attempting to destabilize the region and return to its militaristic past.

US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said Japan's move will strengthen its alliance with the US.

ELDER PILOTS JETBLUE PR

Nancy Elder, a corporate veteran of Marsh & McLennan, Time Warner and GE, has landed at JetBlue Airways as VP of communications.

Elder takes over a post left by Jenny Dervin in May. She reports to airline president Robin Hayes and oversees all communications, including internal, media and crisis.

She led strategy for the past three-plus years for Matter Unlimited, a sustainability and CSR communications shop, was CMO at Marsh, VP of integrated comms. at Time Warner, director of corporate comms. for GE.

MCS HITS \$6.4M PR JACKPOT WITH ECUADOR

Ecuador, which has been waging an epic legal struggle with Chevron over a \$9B-plus pollution lawsuit, inked a \$6.4M contract with Brooklyn's MCSquared to bolster its image in the US and Europe.

Owned by Ecuador-born Maria del Carmen Garay, MCSquared is to position the country as a "sovereign nation, independent and progressive," according to the one-year contract filed in the Justice Dept. July 2, but effective April 20, 2013.



Suarez

The government of Rafael Correa, which took power in 2006, believes there are political and economic forces in the circles of international power that are fostering "ill will" against the South American nation.

The contract cites challenges facing Ecuador including leadership in the preservation of the Amazon, "protection of human rights, right of free expression on the Internet" and the "fundamental of expression and freedom of the press."

Leftist Correa has been criticized by Human Rights Watch, Committee to Protect Journalists and Freedom House for cracking down on its press. He granted political asylum to WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange, who has been holed up in Ecuador's London embassy for more than two years.

MCSquared's contract is with Ecuador's US ambassador Nathalie Cely Suarez.

The firm farmed out a \$30K monthly pact to DC's FitzGibbon Media that specifically deals with placing ads to "inform the US public of Chevron's responsibilities so the public interest of Ecuador will be furthered." That contract is dated Dec. 5, 2013.

Garay has not yet responded to an email, asking about the status of the Ecuador contract.

UNH SEEKS TO GROW SUSTAINABILITY PR

The University of New Hampshire is dangling a communications and media services account to support the Sustainability Institute at UNH, one of the nation's oldest higher education programs in the field.

The Durham-based Institute, which took its current name in 2012 and was founded in 1997, released an open RFP on July 9 covering a gamut of strategic communications services like PR, social media, research, digital and web content and materials to promote its programs.

Also included is content development, events and media strategy for the launch of the New England Food Visitor website, a multi-state regional effort to advance a sustainable New England food system, slated for September.

A one-year contract with two option years is expected.

Proposals are due July 24.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/1nxYJwE>.



T/K SERVES PR TO 'SOUP NAZI'

Trevelino/Keller is serving PR to the Soupman Inc., which became a cultural icon following the "Soup Nazi" episode on "Seinfeld" a quarter century ago.

Al Yeganeh opened his tiny hole-in-the-wall shop on 55th St. and Eighth Ave. in New York in 1984, drawing long lines of people attracted to the premium soups and intrigued by his brusque manner.

Soupman Inc. has an exclusive license for the name, image, slogans and recipes of Yeganeh, who remains the core of its marketing campaign as it steps up franchise activity.

Lloyd Sugman, co-founder of Johnny Rockets, 50s' themed restaurant, helms Soupman, Tim Gannon, co-founder of Outback Steakhouse, is board member and culinary/business director.

Soupman has promotional contracts with Jason Alexander, who played George Costanza on Seinfeld, baseball great Reggie Jackson and future NBA Hall of Famer Shaquille O'Neal, who has more than 8.5M Twitter followers.

R+W WORKS AFGHANISTAN ELECTION MESS

Roberti+White inked a \$100K-per-month, one-year agreement effective June 25 to provide PR support here for the Transformation and Continuity political group that supports Afghanistan presidential candidate Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai.

Preliminary results show Ghani leading rival Abdullah Abdullah by a million votes, but the tally is clouded by reports of massive voter fraud.

President Obama called both men, urging them not to declare victory until fraud allegations are fully investigated. He threatened to cut off US aid if supporters of either man to seize power use "violent or extra-constitutional" methods.

The *Wall Street Journal* July 9 ran "Afghan Crisis Risks Splitting Country" as its lede, reporting that Abdullah will soon decide whether to form his own government despite US threats.

R+W's contract covers PR, political consulting, issue formulation and media counsel. Its contract may continue beyond June 2015 expiration date on a month-to-month basis. A top Democratic strategist, Vin Roberti, who heads the party's Congressional campaign efforts, chairs R+W.

Sanitas International reps Abdullah's team.

POPEYES PLUCKS BURKE FOR COMMS

Airline PR vet Todd Burke has landed at Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen, the Atlanta-based franchisor and operator of the Popeyes fast-food chicken chain.

He takes a post vacated last year by Alicia Thompson, now a senior VP at Edelman. He will lead internal and external comms., public and government affairs, for Popeyes, which changed its corporate identity from AFC Enterprises in January.

Burke spent the bulk of his career in the aviation sector, including as VP of corporate comms. in seven years at JetBlue Airways, as well as PR posts at TWA and American Airlines dating back to the mid-1980s.

CPB DIALS PR SEARCH

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting is on the hunt for PR agency support of its "American Graduate" initiative, a push to produce content about and raise awareness of the high school dropout crisis in the US.

The US high school graduation rate is 80% with a national goal of 90% by 2020 looming.

The CPB released an RFP for a Washington, D.C.-area firm to guide communications and marketing for the initiative and tout the value of public media to key stakeholders. Media relations, social media, message development, celebrity endorsements and other PR tactics are on the table.



Corporation
for Public
Broadcasting

DKC PR has worked on the campaign in recent years.

The Nine Network of St. Louis is coordinating local efforts of 33 public media stations involved, while policy and strategy firm Civic Enterprises in DC is also engaged.

The initiative launched in 2011 and gained the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among other entities.

A one-year contract will carry two option years. Proposals are due July 24.

RFP: <http://bit.ly/1qYnbZb>.

GLOVER SURFS MEDIA WAVE FOR DISCOVERY

Glover Park Group is helping Discovery Communications navigate the merger wave that is washing over the media world.

David Zaslav, CEO of the \$5.5B parent of cable network programmer/owner (Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, TLC, Science), told reporters at the Allen & Co., media conference July 9 that he expects more deals on the content side following pending mega-distributor transactions, such as Comcast/Time Warner Cable and AT&T/DirectTV.

He plans to invest \$2B in content this year, an amount that includes the May acquisition of a controlling interest in Eurosport International.

Discovery last year mulled the acquisition of Scripps Network Interactive, which owns Food Network, but opted out.

There's been speculation on Wall Street that Walt Disney Co. will bid for Discovery, which posted a 22 percent rise in Q1 revenues to \$1.4B and flat earnings of \$231M.

GPG has Susan Brophy, managing director/government affairs, on its four-member Discovery team. She was former chief of the staff to former Senator Tim Wirth (D-CO) and senior VP at Time Warner global public policy office in Washington.

Brophy also advised ex-TWC CEO Dick Parsons on

politics and policy.

Greg Rothschild (alumnus of Sen. John Kerry's staff), Matt Mandel, (ex-aide to outgoing Congressman Eric Cantor), and Jon Gans (veteran of Sen. Jon Kyl's office) join Brophy on the business.

JOURNOS: PA OFFICERS STYMIE REPORTING

The Obama administration is a major source of frustration for journalists stymied by politically driven suppression of news and information about federal agencies, a coalition of journalism groups wrote in a letter to the president on July 8.

The consortium, including the Society of Professional Journalists, American Society of News Editors and Reporters Without Borders, among others, said public affairs staffs at government agencies are part of the problem. "Over the past two decades, public agencies have increasingly prohibited staff from communicating with journalists unless they go through public affairs offices or through political appointees," they wrote. "We consider these restrictions a form of censorship -- an attempt to control what the public is allowed to see and hear."

The journalists, who want a White House directive telling federal agencies that they're free to answer questions from reporters and the public, said most federal agencies prohibit employees from interacting with the press unless staffers have PR pros sitting in the conversations, or contact is often blocked completely.

Even when PA staffers engage reporters, the groups note, they do so confidentially in spite of having the "spokesperson" title.

"The president pledged to be the most transparent in history. He can start by ending these practices now," said David Cuillier, president of the SPJ.

Journalists are also frustrated by requests for questions in advance of interviews, delays that stretch beyond deadlines, and on-background briefings with unnamed offices who speak not-for-attribution.

The groups say the trend has intensified with the Bush administration through the current Obama administration. They note agency personnel are free to speak to lobbyists, special-interest representatives and people with money without the restrictions placed on reporters and without any public oversight.

In one of three key examples provided, a Reuters journalist spent more than a month trying to get Environmental Protection Agency PA staff to approve him talking to an agency scientist about climate change. After getting no response from EPA PA staff and a supervisor, the reporter finally made contact through EPA's chief of staff.

Thirty-eight journalism and open government groups signed the letter.



Obama

MEDIA NEWS**EX-LA TIMES EDITOR TO GFBUNTING**

Former *Los Angeles Times* editor-in-chief Russ Stanton has jumped the PR line with a post at G.F.Bunting+Co.

Stanton led the LA Times newsroom from 2008-11, a tumultuous time for the paper as it cut staff and integrated digital and print operations. He joined the paper in 1997 as a reporter and moved up through the business editorial ranks.

Stanton moved to Southern California Public Radio in Pasadena and was VP of content for 89.3 KPCC-FM through last month.

Glenn Bunting, president of the San Francisco-based PR firm that has taken high-profile assignments from Shelly Sterling and Herbalife, is also an LA Times alum. He said he was looking for a "world-class journalist" to help his firm expand in Southern California, adding that Stanton was at the top of the list.

Bunting has outposts in LA, Denver and Portland, in addition to SF.

Executive editor Melanie Sill took over Stanton's role at KPCC.



Stanton

NETFLIX ADDS TECH JOURNO EDWARDS

Bloomberg Businessweek tech writer Cliff Edwards has moved to the PR side to serve as director of corporate communications and technology for Netflix.

Edwards was a tech correspondent for *Businessweek* before moving to *Bloomberg News* in 2009 when it bought *BW*. He has covered the consumer tech and games beat (including Netflix) for *BBW* magazine for the past four years.

Edwards is a former business editor and writer in 12 years with the *Associated Press* in Illinois.

Netflix last month brought in tech journalist-turned-PR-pro Anne Marie Squeo to work from Washington and the company's Los Gatos, Calif., base as a director of comms. on public affairs issues.

Jonathan Friedland, a former *Wall Street Journal* bureau chief, is chief communications officer of Netflix.

MYANMAR COURT SENTENCES JURNOS

A Myanmar court on July 10 sentenced five journalists to 10 years in prison and hard labor after reports that a government factory planned to manufacture chemical weapons.

The *New York Times* reported that the *Unity Weekly* magazine that employed the journos – four reporters and its CEO -- was forced to close in June partly because of legal expenses from the case. The Times said that Burmese journalists are concerned that the government is reverting to its media crackdown days under the junta that previously ruled Myanmar.

"If media freedoms are used to endanger state security rather than give benefits to the country, I want to announce that effective action will be taken under existing laws," President Thein Sein said in a nationally broadcast speech on Monday.

The journalists were charged with violating the 1923 Burma State Secrets Act, passed when Myanmar was a British colony of that name.

President Barack Obama visited the country in 2012 and praised its progress in opening up politically, but the administration in March extended sanctions because of crackdowns on Muslims and other human rights concerns.

The Burmese government denies chemical weapons were processed in the factory named in the *Unity* reports.

Benjamin Ismail, head of the Reporters Without Borders' Asia-Pacific Desk, said: "Progress had been made but this case marks a return to a dark time when journalists and bloggers who did their job were jailed on national security charges or for allegedly trying to overthrow the government."

BLOGGER HIRED BY REDSKINS QUIT

The political blogger and Democratic operative hired by the Washington Redskins to help defend the team's name from cries of racism said he will resign after less than two weeks.

Ben Tribbett, who penned the "Not Larry Sabato" blog on Virginia politics, said July 7 on Twitter that he was resigning from the team. "I don't want to be a distraction to the team as the political attacks have shifted towards being personal toward me," he wrote, adding that he hopes his exit "allows debate to move back to where it should be."

Tribbett shut down his political blog when he started working for the Redskins in late June. He is credited with organizing the "Redskins Pride" caucus in the Virginia General Assembly and gave the team a Democratic voice where much of the criticism has come from that party.

BBC STRIKES AT CLIMATE DENIERS

The BBC Trust has just published its report on the impartiality of its science coverage, which strikes a blow to the US media's practice of presenting a balance in their reports of global warming of the views of 97 percent of scientists who say climate change is real and an increasing threat to the handful -- though noisy -- deniers or front groups bankrolled by corporate interests.

That "false equivalency" has implanted doubt about warming in the minds of many Americans, thwarting efforts to deal with needed reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The study called "Trust Conclusions on the Executive Report on Science Impartiality Review Actions" found the BBC content "was generally of high quality and was exemplary in its precision and clarity."

Author Steve Jones, emeritus professor of genetics at University College London, found concern about the "appropriate application of editorial guidelines on impartiality in science reports" He blamed an overly rigid application of impartiality guidelines resulted in an "undue attention to marginal opinion," especially regarding man-made climate change. That neither precludes careful scrutiny of scientific research nor a ban on critical opinion.

The BBC's goal is avoid the "false balance" between fact and wrong opinion.

NEWS OF PR FIRMS**PE FIRM SHOPS AD/PR HOLDING COMPANY**

7Mill Road Capital, a Connecticut private equity firm, said it is conducting a "strategic review" of its North American assets that include a majority stake in Vision7, the marketing communications holding company of US units Citizen Relations (PR) and Dare (creative).

Mill Road acquired its stake and took the then-named Cossette Communications private in 2009 in a \$115M deal. The Quebec-based holding company was renamed Vision7 and organized into two entities – EDC Communications and Cossette.

Mill Road said in a statement that Vision7 management is "supportive" of the review for "strategic alternatives" and playing a major role in the process.

S&B REPS HOBBY LOBBY'S LEGAL GAMBIT

Shirley & Banister handled media connected with the Supreme Court's landmark Hobby Lobby ruling, exempting closely held corporations from the Affordable Care Act's requirement to provide workers with insurance coverage for birth control due to religious beliefs.

David and Barbara Green, who run the giant arts & crafts retail chain, are devout Christians who say they run the family business in a way consistent to "Biblical principles."

Critics of the 5-4 decision say it violates the traditional barrier between church and state and paves way for companies to deny workers of other ObamaCare mandates, such as blood transfusion/vaccine coverage, based on medical grounds.

S&B represents the Becket Fund for Religious Freedom, lawyers for Hobby Lobby.

The *Washington Post* profiled Becket Fund founder Seamus Hasson, 57, as a pioneer in the debate over religious freedom.

Diana Banister, S&B partner, Kevin McVicker, account supervisor, and Mike Rudin, account executive, handle the Becket Fund.

MARTIN GROUP ACQUIRES TRAVERS COLLINS

Travers Collins, an upstate New York PR and advertising institution, has sold to the Martin Group after a 19-year run.

Both agencies are based in Buffalo. TMG was founded in 2001 by Travers Collins alum Tod Martin, who is president and chief creative officer.

"He's done well and now we couldn't think of a better person or a better agency to hand off our business," TC co-founder Bill Collins said of Martin. Collins will stay on as an advisor through a transition period.

TC's five-member PR staff is the focus of the deal and other employees in the digital and ad ranks will be considered based on TMG needs. Key staff moving over include executive VPs of PR Dick Shaner Jr. and Susan Asquith.

Collins, the PR brains behind TC, and adman Robert Travers founded TC in 1995. Travers retired earlier this year. TC clients include Catholic Charities, Seneca Nation of Indians and Independent Health, among others.

The *Buffalo News* reported TC laid off six staffers in January due to client cutbacks.

NEW ACCOUNTS**New York Area**

Lazar Partners, New York/Intercept Pharmaceuticals, biopharmaceuticals focused on liver and intestinal diseases, as AOR for PR.

J Public Relations, New York/Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay, to re-launch the brand after a multimillion update.

Burson-Marsteller, New York/Special Olympics International, as AOR for PR, a pro-bono engagement through the firm's sports marketing unit, The Fan Experience.

Child's Play Communications, New York/Monster 500, collectible toy line developed by Creaa, for media relations and blogger programs.

KCSA Strategic Communications, New York/Ubiquity, technology and IP applications to deliver content, for IR as it anticipates a NASDAQ listing.

East

360 PR, Boston/WellPet, for PR and communications for its premium pet food brands like Welnnes, Old Mother Hubbard and Eagle Pack.

Environics Communications, Washington, D.C./Northern Virginia Technology Council, as AOR for PR. NVTC, the largest such group in the country, counts 1,000 companies with 300K employees as members. EC works with NVTC staff to promote regional and national awareness of the council, its programs and services, policy efforts, workforce, educational and entrepreneurship initiatives, and charitable activities.

Southeast

Max Borges Agency, Miami/Monsters Arts, mobile marketing and app technology, for PR and media relations aimed at the retail market.

Diamond PR, Miami/Il Salviatino Collection (Italy); Elegant Hotels (Barbados); W Fort Lauderdale; Playa Largo Resort & Spa (Key Largo), and The Hotel Zamora St. Pete Beach, Fla.).

Mountain West

Wall Street Communications, Salt Lake City/BeckTV, systems integrator of fixed and mobile TV facilities, for media relations and content marketing.

DStreet, Denver/Los Cabos II, Peruvian eatery in downtown Denver for 25 years, for PR.

Southwest

BizCom Associates, Dallas/Pinot's Palette, painting studio where patrons paint their own artwork while sipping on wine and eating snacks, for PR.

West

The Brandman Agency, San Francisco/The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco, for PR for the lower Nob Hill hotel.

Spelling Communications, Los Angeles/Level 5 Beverage Company, for PR for the market introduction of VitaminFIZZ and other products.

Pollack PR Marketing Group, Los Angeles/Docupace, tech provider of SEC/FINRA compliant paperless processing systems for the financial services industry, for marketing and PR.

PureMoxie, Oakland/Spicy Vines, Napa wine, for consumer insight and branding as the win debuts in Whole Foods and Ralph stores in the fall.

NEWS OF SERVICES**HAVAS COOKS UP CLIMATE GROUP**

Havas has established a global climate change PR team under Peter Bowyer, former spokesman for former UN chief Kofi Annan.

He handed climate justice issues for Annan during the ramp up of the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in 2009.

Bowyer said change issues are top concerns for current UN boss Ban Ki-moon, who is gearing up for a climate conference in Paris next year, and representatives of the IMF and World Bank.

The new group has hubs in New York, Australia and London, where Bowyer is based, and staffers in more than a dozen countries.

Havas has experience in the climate arena earned from handling Annan's "Tck Tck Tck" Time for Climate Change Justice program, unveiling Dara International's Climate Vulnerability Monitor and launching WWF's Earth Hour global event.

Marian Salzman, CEO of Havas PR North America and noted trend-spotter, expects climate will trend during the next year.

PUBLICIS ACQUIRES SUSTAINABILITY SHOP

Publicis Groupe has acquired London-based sustainability communications shop Salterbaxter with plans to align the firm under MSLGroup.

Salterbaxter's 70 staffers have handled corporate social responsibility reports, strategy and PR efforts for clients like Adidas, Maersk, L'Oreal, LEGO, and Glaxo-SmithKline, among others.

MSLGroup EMEA president Anders Kempe said clients are looking for advisors to help them develop strategies as issues like transparency and social purpose increasingly shape how businesses operate.

Nigel Salter and Penny Baxter remain CEO and managing director as the firm becomes Salterbaxter MSLGroup.

Salter, who takes the EMEA lead for MSL's corporate and brand citizenship practice, said global interest in sustainability has given his firm the chance to scale its offerings.

PINNACLE TO PITCH TOBACCO WASTE

Pinnacle Communications Resource Co. has won a competitive RFP process to develop a health communications campaign highlighting the impact of tobacco litter on the environment.

The Maryland Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene, through its Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control, released an RFP in March for the new assignment, aimed to highlight the negative impact of second-hand smoke, cigarette butts and other tobacco products through smoking and the leaching of toxins into the ecosystem from litter.

Budget is capped at \$98K for eight and a half months.

The campaign will try to reach the general public to highlight the detrimental effects of tobacco waste, use prevention and cessation are a secondary element.

PEOPLE**Joined**

Kim Fox, who headed North American Rx communications for healthcare giant Sanofi Pharmaceuticals Corp., to Everyday Health, New York, as senior VP of comms. & PR. She was global PR director at Novartis and did stints at FleishmanHillard (VP), Chandler Chicco (associate) and Burns McClellan (senior account executive). At the publicly traded digital health company, Fox will plan, direct and drive strategy for communications, promote the brand and bolster awareness. She reports to VP/COO Paul Slavin. Everyday Health says an average of 43M consumers accessed its content and data analytics during the past year, along with a third of US physicians. The company, which went public in April, posted a \$9.2M net loss during its first-quarter on a 23 percent rise in revenues to \$37.5M.

**Fox**

Lauren Karasek, a consumer tech pro at M Booth, to MWW's office in New York as VP in its social media strategy unit. She handled clients such as StumbleUpon, FourSquare and OpenTable and was in charge of its practice group on an interim basis. Earlier, she worked at FleishmanHillard, repping Samsung's visual display business and created communications collateral for worldwide markets. Earlier at the Omnicom unit, she was content lead unit for ATT's consumer innovation effort and a contributor to its blogger relations team.

Rhonda Shantz has left Symantec to lead marketing for Silicon Valley adtech company Rocket Fuel in Redwood City, RF, which went public with a splashy IPO in September, was founded by Yahoo veterans and uses big data and artificial intelligence to place ads online. Shantz exits a nearly seven-year stint at Symantec, where she was VP of global marketing for the company and its Norton cybersecurity brand. She was previously a partner and global technology industry lead for Porter Novelli during a decade with the firm in the Bay Area, and earlier global PR manager for Hewlett Packard. RF reported first quarter revenue of \$74.4M with a net loss of \$11.2M. It raised about \$116M in its fall IPO.

**Shantz**

Steven Liew, former government relations head for eBay, to APCO Worldwide as an executive director in Singapore. Liew, who worked with the independent firm as a client, will handle PR counsel and business strategy for APCO accounts. He was associate general counsel for the online marketplace over eight years, managing a 17-staffer team throughout the region.

Promoted

Jon Banner to executive VP, comms., PepsiCo, Purchase, N.Y. He joined in 2012 from ABC News and takes over for Jim Wilkinson, who left for Alibaba Group.

Leia Ostermann to senior A/E and **Yadira Beas** to A/E, Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, Calif.

VATICAN FORMS COMMITTEE TO REVAMP PR

The Vatican has formed a high-profile committee charged with overseeing and reforming its global communications to be led by former BBC Trust chair Chris Patten.

The Holy See said the new committee will propose reforms for the Vatican's media operations and will publish a report and reform plan within the next 12 months.

Patten, currently chancellor at Oxford University, led the BBC's governing body from April 2011 until May of this year and oversaw Pope Benedict's visit to the UK in 2010. He was also the latest governor of Hong Kong before its handover to China.

Catholic publisher Gregory Erlandson, former president of the Catholic Press Association who co-authored a book on Pope Benedict and the sexual abuse crisis, is the U.S. representative on the 10-member committee.

Ireland's Monsignor Paul Tighe, who is secretary of a pontifical council on social communications and established the Vatican Office for Public Affairs, takes a secretary title on the new committee.

In a press release, the Vatican said the group is expected to strengthen digital channels to reach young people globally and build on the Vatican's successful launch of a Twitter account for Pope Francis and the Pope App.

Former Fox News Channel Rome correspondent Greg Burke is senior adviser for communications.

PATHOLOGISTS RESEARCH PR HELP

The hundred-year-old academy for promoting pathology research and education is on the hunt for marketing communications proposals.

The United States & Canadian Academy of Pathology released an RFP on July 1 for a strategic branding and marketing communications firm.

While the academy is based in Evans, Ga., it is administered from Palm Springs, Calif., and the selected agency is expected to be within a 100-mile radius of the city. USCAP runs symposia and workshops, promotes and publishes research, in addition to its annual meeting, slated for Boston in March 2015 and the largest gathering of pathologists in the world with about 5,000 professionals attending.

Proposals are due July 31. RFP: <http://bit.ly/1zBKAUn>.

ACE INSURES COMMS. WITH SWISS RE'S KLENA

Cora Klena, senior VP and head of Americas corporate communications for SwissRe, has moved to \$23B insurer ACE Group to lead marketing and communications for North America.

Klena, as SVP, reports to vice chairman John Lupica and chief communications officer Patrick McGovern at ACE, the Swiss-headquartered, publicly traded insurance giant. Its NA operations are based in Philadelphia.

Klena led SwissRe's insurance, reinsurance and financial products marketing and communications in the US, Canada and Latin America. Earlier stints included USAA's life insurance operation (senior comms. partner) and E*Trade (senior comms. manager).

ACE posted \$3.8B in net income in 2013 on gross revenue of nearly \$23B.

HAMMOND ADDS DUO, NAMES CEO

New York-based travel and luxury PR specialist Lou Hammond & Associates has added two VPs amid a handful of client wins and the elevation of a trio of longtime execs to upper management.

Founder Lou Hammond recently elevated Stephen Hammond to CEO and Sarah Fletcher to EVP. Longtime agency hands Terence Gallagher (22 years) and Gina Stouffer (16) were tapped to head the firm's New York and Charleston offices, respectively.

Amy Helen Hoadley, who ran her own shop for the past 16-years focused on luxury goods PR, is a former Chanel and Van Cleef & Arpels communications staffer and joins Hammond in New



Mathos, Hoadley

York. Melanie Mathos, the digital-savvy director of PR for Blackbaud, a software provider for non-profits, joins the firm in its Charleston, S.C., outpost.

Hammond has picked up luxury travel club 3RD Home, Bermuda resort Elbow Beach, eatery group Charleston Hospitality Group, JW Marriott Guanacaste Resort & Spa (Costa Rica) and Pink Sands Resorts on Harbour Island, Bahamas.

Hammond Pros Launch Shop

Cathleen Decker and Stacy Royal, veterans of Lou Hammond & Assocs., have launched Decker Royal Agency in New York to serve travel, hospitality, and culinary clients.

Decker did 14-year stints at Hammond (senior VP) and Jensen Boga (executive VP). Royal joined Hammond in 2007 and left as VP. Decker is president of DRA, while Royal is managing director.

Client experience includes work for American Express Travel, Nassau Paradise Island, Virginia Tourism, Mandarin Oriental, Norwegian Cruise Line, Sofitel Luxury Hotels, Oetker Collection, and VisitNorfol.

The shop launches with Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts, Your Jamaican Villa, Grand Pineapple Beach Resorts and Red Lane Spa as charter clients.

Info: deckerroyal.com.

JF FEEDS PR TO PETSMART AS INVESTORS BARK

Retailer PetSmart is relying on Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher for PR support as it faces pressure from its two largest shareholders to consider a sale.

"PetSmart welcomes open communications with its shareholders and values constructive input toward the goal of enhancing shareholder value," the company said July 3 in response to a June 23 disclosure by hedge fund Jana Partners that it acquired a 9.9% stake.

April Lenhard is director of IR for the Phoenix-based company. Joele Frank president Matthew Sherman leads the PetSmart account.

Nasdaq-traded PetSmart runs 1,340 stores and posted fiscal 2014 revenues of \$6.9B, including lower profits and sales in the fourth quarter.

GolinHarris handles PetSmart's consumer PR.

PR OPINION

Five Myanmar journalists, aged 22-28, have been hit with ten years in prison at hard labor for covering charges the government is producing chemical weapons. PRSA, whose “PR for PR” includes commenting on current topics, is silent.

The draconian sentences, coming after two reporters got seven years and another got ten in Egypt, brought howls from just about all sectors of the communications industry save one—the PR Society.

The Society, since Rosanna Fiske’s term in 2011, has publicized itself by commenting on all sorts of ethics-related PR and journalistic issues, often using the strongest terms.

Fiske is mentioned 843 times on the Society website, far above the 503 generated for 2012 chair Gerard Corbett; 225 for 2013 chair Mickey Nall and 554 for 2014 chair Joe Cohen.

Many of the mentions are committee and board memberships. Cohen’s total is enlarged because several others named Cohen are in his roundup.

Cohen has steered clear of topics in the news so far but the slack has been taken up by chair elect Kathy Barbour who on Feb. 15 praised CVS for not selling tobacco products. Corbett in June 2012 called unpaid internships unethical if paid-for-work is being done.

Fiske, now VP-CC, Wells Fargo, Florida, lambasted Burson-Marsteller in a 726-word statement May 12, 2011 to Ragan’s PR Daily, saying its spreading of negatives about Google for Facebook “called into question PR professionals’ ethics” and “we all lost.” She not only published the statement via Ragan’s and on the Society website, but gave live interviews to the *New York Times* (twice), *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The Financial Times* and U.K.’s *Telegraph*. *Advertising Age* and *Der Spiegel* of Germany picked up her quotes.

Fiske was again outraged when *New York Post* columnist John Crudele wrote July 19, 2011 that PR’s job is to “make bad news sound not so bad.” She charged, in a letter-to-the-editor, that his definition of PR “couldn’t be further from reality” and that PR people are the ones who give Americans “a realistic view of the state of affairs in America.”

Fiske said News Corp. took a “monumental hit” for its initial response to phone-hacking charges. She wrote July 18, 2011 that Rupert Murdoch “has demonstrated a profound lack of understanding of how his actions and words influence the public’s perception of his company.”

PR Staffer Knocked “Blackballing”

Although usually quick to scold, Fiske let associate PR director Keith Trivitt condemn alleged “blackballing” of media by The Redner Group, which said it would shun reporters who knocked the new “Duke Nukem Forever” game.

The Society has blackballed the O’Dwyer Co. in writing and practice for decades. We were bodily evicted from the lobby of the Marriott hotel in S.F. in 2012 and ordered to stand across the street. We have been banned from the exhibit hall for four years and 2014 will be the

fifth unless someone such as Starbucks puts their foot down. Jim Olson of Starbucks is co-chair of the conference in D.C. Oct. 11-14.

Where are such strong opinions when journalists are sent to prison for long terms on bogus charges?

VP-PR Stephanie Cegielski told us the jailings are a matter for the Society of Professional Journalists. However, many Society members came out of media. They deal constantly with traditional as well as social media and identify and sympathize with problems reporters have, especially long prison terms on trumped-up charges.

The Society is out of step with its members. No Society staffer, including Cegielski and PR manager Roseanne Motolla, has any background in traditional media as far as we can determine. Only eight of the nearly 60 staffers are listed on the website.

Press Belong in PR Society

There is no logical reason for blocking reporters and writers from joining. Staff and leaders don’t want the PR trade press as members because we will write about its finances, the Assembly and other matters.

We will cover such abuses as having the Assembly on a Saturday when it should be at the end of the day on Monday, thus saving nearly 300 people two extra nights of hotel and meal costs. The Assembly, this year and last, is now only a half day—devoted to more than a dozen leader/staff speeches. The only thing it did in 2013 was give the CEO title to Bill Murray, who resigned less than six months later.

Many journalists and writers already belong or belonged to the Society including Gil Schwartz of CBS who writes for *Fortune* and other media (member in 2003) and Fraser Seitel, who has made hundreds of appearances on radio and TV as PR’s leading spokesperson. He has been an O’Dwyer columnist for ten years and is author since 1980 of one of the three leading PR texts—*The Practice of PR*. Seitel was editor of the Society’s *Strategist* quarterly. He was a member from 1985-91 when he was VP/PR, Chase Manhattan Bank, and from 1992-2001 as principal of Emerald Partners.

Other authors/journalists who are or were prominent members include the authors of other leading PR texts—Dennis Wilcox, *PR Strategies & Tactics*; Dan Lattimore, *PR, The Profession and the Practice*, and Douglas Ann Newsom, *This is PR: The Reality of PR*.

Numerous prominent members are author/journalists including Robert Dilenschneider, author of *Power and Influence*, *The AMA Handbook of PR* and many other books and articles.

The Society’s Educators Academy, 350 PR pros, all of whom are under the edict to “publish or perish,” fulfill the definition of journalist.

Public Relations Journal, a digital quarterly of the Society, has numerous journalistic pieces. Its editor-in-chief is now Prof. Robert Wakefield of Brigham Young Univ. and many of its contributors are Society members and would object if their work were described as PR.

— Jack O’Dwyer