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O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
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QATAR'S \$2.5M FEE LOCKS IN ASHCROFT

Qatar, which is locked into a messy political squabble with its Persian Gulf State neighbors including Saudi Arabia, tapped former Attorney General John Ashcroft's firm for compliance and US government/media work.

A \$2.5M retainer covers that effort.

That hefty flat fee highlights the "urgent need to commence work immediately and the firm's intention to make this matter a top priority."

The Ashcroft Law Firm will provide the Qataris with strategic advice, legal counsel, crisis response and management, media outreach and advocacy regarding Qatar's current and future efforts to combat terror.

John Ashcroft, who leads the effort, plans to enlist the support of former members of the US intelligence community and Treasury/Homeland Security departments to complete the engagement.

He was George W. Bush's AG and former Senator from Missouri.



CISION ACQUIRES FRENCH MEDIA MONITOR

Cision today announced the acquisition of Paris-based L'Argus de la Presse media monitoring outfit.

The deal provides Cision enhanced access to French media content, while Argus gets the opportunity to market the Cision Communications Cloud platform to its corporate and PR firm customers.

"By adding Argus' robust media monitoring to the Cision Communications Cloud, communicators in France and around the world who use Cision can better understand the reach and relevance of their media coverage," Cision CEO Kevin Akeroyd said in a statement.

The transaction calls for Cision to pay about \$10M when the acquisition closes during the second or third quarter of this year. Another \$2M is payable over the next four years.

Capitol Acquisition Corp. III, a public investment vehicle, acquired Chicago-headquartered Cision in March.

Cision, which describes itself as a media communication technology and analytics company, has 75K customers in 170 countries.



NH DOT NEEDS CONTENT MARKETING SVCS.

New Hampshire's Division of Travel and Tourism **has issued a request for proposal** for agencies specializing in content marketing services and publication development.

The Granite State's DOT is seeking a content marketing partner to develop and execute content strategy and paid media campaigns to boost

brand awareness across a variety of channels, including social, blogs, search engine optimization, the VisitNH site and the Official New Hampshire Visitors Guide.

Scope of Work includes developing and executing a brand-aligned content strategy program, developing copy for the Division of Travel and Tourism's website, managing blog posts and consumer emails, posting daily content for all social channels, performing SEO duties and handling editorial copy, layout design, photography and printing tasks, as well as advertising sales, content mapping and editorial planning.

Pitching agencies will be evaluated on experience/qualifications, proposed scope of work, familiarity with NH and its tourism industry, creativity/innovation, and cost-effectiveness.

Proposed annual budget is \$100,000.

Proposals are due July 11 by 3:00pm. Questions should be submitted by June 21. [Download RFP](#)



EX-MSL CEO HASS GETS PROOF POST

Mark Hass, former MSLGroup CEO and Edelman US president, has joined Proof analytics firm as evangelist and senior advisor.

Proof says its algorithmic engine can bridge the measurement gap between a PR program launch/implementation and its eventual impact on sales and reputation.

For PR firms, Hass believes Proof can shift the focus from selling time and talent to selling "provable audience influence and business impact."

Hass, who began his career at the Miami Herald and Detroit News, is a strategic communications/marketing professor at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the WP Carey School of Business at Arizona State University.

He also teaches at Princeton's Center for Information Technology.



Mark Hass

HOWE TAKES CHIEF COLLABORATION SLOT

Susan Howe, president of Weber Shandwick's global consumer marketing practice, has been upped to the role of chief collaboration officer. She's been charged with driving integration of client work overseas and facilitating collaboration across disciplines.

The 20 year-plus WS veteran was responsible for Chicago, Detroit, Atlanta and St. Louis operations before leading the agency's consumer marketing unit. Howe has led campaigns for Unilever, Anheuser-Busch and Nestle.

The Interpublic unit also moved Alan Kercinik from executive VP/deputy lead of the global consumer marketing unit to the North America executive VP/brand transformation position. Charlotte Witte, formerly a senior partner at WS-owned global communications firm Prime, has been named executive vice president, brand transformation in EMEA customers in 170 countries.



Susan Howe

HART PILOTS UNITED'S PR

United Airlines has put Brett Hart in charge of global communications as part of an executive shuffle to accelerate its "momentum in elevating the experience it provides to customers" and continuing operational performance.

The airline's customer satisfaction level took a major hit following the PR crisis triggered when a passenger was dragged off a United Express flight.

Hart assumes the newly created executive VP, chief administrative officer and general counsel slot, where his responsibilities include PR.

He joined United from Sara Lee Corporation in 2010 and stepped in as interim CEO following United chief Oscar Munoz's heart attack in 2015.

Jim Olson, senior VP-corporate communications, now reports to Hart.



Brett Hart

MORPC SEEKS WEB HELP

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission has issued an RFP for website development and design services.

The voluntary association of local central governments in 15 central Ohio counties works to enhance the quality of life and promote the competitive advantages of the area.



MORPC, which regards its website as its "front door," is especially active in the energy, transportation, data and mapping, environment and public policy sectors.

The morpc.org site went live in 1996 and is managed by the group's PA and information technology teams.

The RFP's "scope of services" is split into content management system; website design and hosting.

Columbus-based MORPC wants proposals by June 30. They go to Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission; Attn: Bevan Schneck; 111 Liberty St., Ste. 100; Columbus, Ohio 43215. Schneck is at bschneck@morpc.org.

JONES INTERVIEW BOYCOTT IS RIGHT PR ADVICE

By Fraser Seitel, comms. consultant, author and teacher for 40 years



Let's say you're the public relations director of the Chase Bank (Full disclosure: I used to be!). You're sitting blissfully in your Park Avenue headquarters when your secretary bursts in to alert you that you've been summoned to CEO Jamie Dimon's office to discuss the Chase sponsorship of Megyn Kelly's NBC interview of lunatic conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.

On the elevator ride upstairs, you know full well what CEO Dimon will ask of you. Kelly's interview is drawing intense fire for giving credence to a man who, among other crackpot notions, has suggested that the 2012 Sandy Hook elementary school shooting was a hoax and that some of the parents whose little children were murdered that day were complicit in it.



The question is: Should JPMorgan Chase underscore its commitment to free speech and a free press by letting its ads run on the program? Or should the bank, in the face of mounting public pressure, cut and run?

You bounce off the elevator, nod to the chairman's secretary, enter the office as the sliding glass doors part and declare ...

Well, here's what I'd say. "Pull the advertising. Announce we're not being party to promoting Jones' repulsive views. And move to the sidelines."

Which, by the way, is precisely what JPMorgan's chief marketing officer announced, attracting opprobrium from various quarters of the communications spectrum.

- The company is getting "too close to the editorial content of one program," tut-tutted a marketing professor from his ivory tower at the Harvard Business School.

- Another college public relations professor found it "frightening" that the bank was "interfering in news content."

Fear not, my fellow academic travelers.

Jamie Dimon and his two-trillion-dollar bank aren't interested in trying to dictate the content of "news." They're merely acting on the same primary concern that's been the focus of similar companies — and the bane of Bernie Sanders' existence — for time immemorial: sales, profits, earnings and customer approval.

JPMorgan Chase, like any other free market company, is in a business that wants to make money. And if you offend your customers, then you're liable to make less money. So why do it?

Stated another way, most corporations — even those run by outspoken public figures like Jamie Dimon — abhor controversy. They figure there's no percentage in getting involved in a pitched battle if the potential result is alienation, or worse, loss of customers. And they're right.

There are, of course, exceptions, like Starbucks' founder Howard Schultz, who regularly wades into controversies from gun control to race relations. But most CEOs

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JONES INTERVIEW BOYCOTT IS RIGHT PR ADVICE

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find that when they stick their necks out on a controversial topic — like when Whole Foods CEO John Mackey opposed the health reform public option or when Chik-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy opposed same-sex marriage — they get their heads handed to them.

That, by the way, is why CNN quickly dropped Trump-severed head-waving Kathy Griffin from its New Years Eve telecast, and why Goya canceled its sponsorship of the New York Puerto Rican Day Parade that honored an FALN terrorist, or why Delta Airlines and Bank of America dropped out of sponsoring a Public Theater production of “Julius Caesar,” in which a Donald Trump lookalike title character gets stabbed in the back by Roman senators.

They simply didn’t need the aggravation. Period. End stop.

And neither did J.P. Morgan Chase, which made the absolute right decision when it pulled out of Megyn Kelly’s kamikaze interview with a similarly back-stabbing bomb thrower.

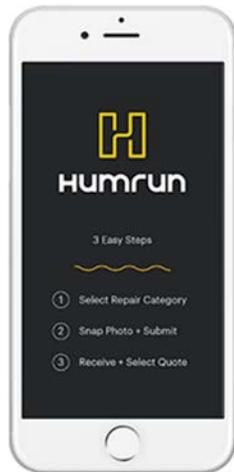
T/K KEEPS RESTAURANTS HUMMING

Trevelino/Keller has added Humrun, a restaurant equipment repair app, as it prepares for its launch.

The mobile app connects restaurants with technicians who are qualified to repair air conditioning, plumbing, ice machines, freezers and other equipment.

Technicians who sign up with Humrun list their availability and gain access to the app’s restaurants. They are guaranteed to be paid within a week of the completed job.

Dean Trevelino heads the Atlanta-based PR firm that **generated \$3.7M in fees last year** from clients in the food & beverage, technology, healthcare, financial services, franchising, lifestyle and entertainment categories.



D S SIMON UNVEILS ‘SPOKEIES’ AWARDS

D S Simon Media has created The SPOKEies as the first awards program to honor the best spokespeople reflecting brands, non-profits and companies. “Finally, the best spokespeople will get the recognition they deserve,” said CEO Doug Simon.

There will be more than 40 awards in six categories, including 24 for corporate and brand spokespeople and 18 for non-profits. Categories include C-Suite Leader, Most Authentic, Most Engaging, and Crisis Management.

Spokespeople will be judged based on their trust and authenticity, plus their ability to engage the audience and cogently communicate their organization’s messages.



Doug Simon

Jack O’Dwyer, editor-in-chief and publisher O’Dwyer Co., has signed on as a judge for The SPOKEies. Representatives from Edelman, Weber Shandwick, Barron’s, Google, Twitter and the Council of Better Business Bureaus will join O’Dwyer.

Nominees are being accepted at the SPOKEies website.

the SPOKEies™

They must be in by Sept. 15. To be eligible, a campaign or PR initiative must have taken place (either in part or in full) through the first quarter of 2017. Winners will be announced during Communications Week in New York City, which starts October 23.

Founded in 1986, DS Simon Media focuses on getting spokespeople from leading brands and non-profits on television and partners with influencers to extend their reach through YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and online media.

RUSSO LAUNCHES SPORTS-HEALTH ALLIANCE

Healthcare firm Russo Partners has launched the Sports-Health Alliance, a service that leverages the firm’s access to pro athletes, broadcasters and sports business leaders to focus public attention on diseases and their treatments.

The alliance will promote clinical trial recruitment, develop disease awareness initiatives, and implement branding and corporate visibility strategies.

The alliance has already produced such programs as the “Huddle up for Alzheimer’s” campaign on behalf of Axovant Sciences. That program, which received the PRSA-NY Big

Apple Award for Marketing Consumer Services in Healthcare incorporated former NFL players as role models to encourage people to get tested for Alzheimer’s disease.

One of those players is former NFL player Solomon Wilcots, whose six-year pro football career included stints with the Cincinnati Bengals, Minnesota Vikings and Pittsburgh Steelers. Wilcots has also worked as a broadcaster, spending 16 years with CBS Sports. Wilcots serves as Russo Partners’ team leader for the endeavor.

Participation across a wide range of professional sports is expected, says Russo, including basketball, tennis, soccer and golf.

Wilcots said the cutting-edge health technology that pro athletes benefit from makes them particularly effective spokespeople for delivering messages about advances in healthcare to a mainstream audience. “We have sincere, emotional connections to a cause,” Wilcots said.

Founded in 1988, Russo Partners (formerly Noonan/Russo Communications) offers public and investor relations and corporate communications services to healthcare companies.



(L to R) **David Schull**, president, Russo Partners; **Tony Russo**, founder & CEO; and **Solomon Wilcots**, Sports-Health Alliance team lead & former NFL player-turned-broadcaster

Newly-founded American Women in PR wants PR to be seen as a “profession” and not as an “industry.” It wants equal pay/titles with men. Organizational skills are needed for that to happen.

AWPR, with \$300 yearly dues, is up against PR groups that already have large female memberships—PR Society of America, Int’l Assn. of Business Communicators and New York Women in Communications. Members total 21,000, 10,000 and 2,000+, respectively. About 80% or more of such groups are women. Dues are \$255 at PRSA and \$254 at IABC plus chapter dues.

Why start a new national organization to pursue goals of PR women when there is already one that is well-funded and has 80% women members—namely, PRSA?!

With its \$5.1 million in current assets including \$5.5M in investments, \$1.3M in cash, and a staff of 50+, PRSA could press for equal pay and titles for women, the top goals of AWPR.

NYT, PR Council Could Help

AWPR needs to get its message out and we suggest the New York Times and PR Council as partners.

Pressing for equality for women is one of the main editorial thrusts of the paper. A June 15 feature titled “Women Interrupted” had examples of men interrupting women in business situations. It notes that women are only 6.4% of Fortune 500 CEO officers and only one-fifth of board members. They comprise 19.4% of Congress. **Writer Susan Chira should be contacted.**

PR Council president Renee Wilson in March unveiled “The SHEQUALITY Project” that will “help women executives to rise in the ranks of PR firms” and create “a consistent pipeline of strong women leaders.” Project leader is Maureen Lippe, CEO of Lippe Taylor, who said the goal is to “bring top women leaders together to network.”

Another ally would be the Museum of PR which staged the inaugural “**PR Women Who Changed History**” program at which Wilson and others spoke.

Muriel Fox, a founder of the National Organization of Women, called on women to “stand out in a very crowded field.” The program was devoted to boosting the pay and status of women in PR. Other panelists were Anne Bernays, daughter of Doris Fleischman and Edward Bernays; Karla Gower, Ph.D, advertising and PR department, University of Alabama; Meg Lamme, Ph.D., professor of PR, University of Alabama, and Karen Miller Russell, Ph.D., professor of PR and media historian, University of Georgia.

Men Dominate PRSA Staff

The PRSA staff, despite the large majority of women members, has been headed for 16 of the past 21 years by men—Ray Gaulke (1994-2000); Bill Murray (2007-14), and Joseph Truncale, 2015 to present. Catherine Bolton, hired as “chief PR officer” in 2000, replaced Gaulke in 2001 after he suddenly resigned despite the five-year contract given to him by the 1999 board. That has never been explained. She resigned in 2006.

Betsy Kovacs headed the staff from 1981-93, but that was an era of ethical collapse at the Society. Kovacs

marched to the drum of 1980 president Patrick Jackson. Both allowed the illegal sale of hundreds of thousands of copies of authors' articles without their permission from 1978 to 1994 when exposure of the practice by the O'Dwyer Co. ended it.

CEO Joseph Truncale earned \$413,973 in 2015, CFO Philip Bonaventura, \$281,832, and VP John Robinson, \$221,724. Those were the top three paychecks. Payroll totaled \$5.7M, up 8.3% from 2014.

This gives an idea of what it costs to staff a national org. Rent on the Society's new h.q. at 120 Wall st., a 15-year deal inked without membership consultation or a vote in the Assembly, is \$700K+. AWPR does not yet have an office or paid staff.

Women Lost Control of PRSA Board

Astoundingly, the **2017 PRSA board has nine men and eight women** when the 2016 board had 12 women and five men. The 2017 board that was elected had nine women and eight men. But one woman, Joyce Lofstrom of HIMSS, Chicago, resigned for no announced reason. She was replaced by Kevin Waetke of the National Pork Board.

This caper could be a wake-up call to the PR women who are now demanding a larger voice in the conduct of PR. Openness and transparency should be hallmarks of a PR organization. The CEO title at PRSA, given to a staffer in 2013, should be restored to an elected member. Staffs of the major professional associations, law, medicine and accounting, are always headed by one of their own professionals.

Leaders of AWPR, including Talia Davis, Dierdre Breakenridge, Rebekah Iliff, Shonali Burke, Shannon Furey and Gini Dietrich, should contact the eight remaining women in the PRSA board and discuss common goals. Gender loyalty should trump organizational loyalty.

- Chair Jane Dvorak, JKD & Co., Lakewood, Colo.
- Debra Peterson, treasurer, CenturyLink, Kansas
- Amy Coward, Palmetto Health, S.C.
- Ronele Dotson, RAD Strategies, own firm in Reno
- Jo Ann LeSage Nelson, Pierce Comms., Albany
- Michelle Olson, Fingerpaint, Scottsdale, Ariz.
- Bonnie Upright, Olympus Foundation, Orange Park, Fla.
- Samantha Villegas, SaVi PR, own firm in D.C. area.

PRSA Leaders Cling to Failed APR Program

AWPR Leaders are going to find at PRSA a group that is not only dominated by men, but is dominated by a “peculiar institution”— accreditation. This is a holdover program from the 1960s when it was thought that the Society could force all members to be APR. Sixteen of the 17 current directors are “APR” although APR members only make up 18% of the membership.

Millions of dollars were thrown at the program by APRs. It lost \$2,926,080 from 1986 to 2002 when the budget was cut, and the shift was made to a computer-administered test.

IABC, faced with low participation in its own Accredited Business Communicator program, abandoned it in 2013 after a 40-year run.

– Jack O'Dwyer