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O'Dwyer's Newsletter



**The Inside News of
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TECH COMPANY SEEKS BRANDING SERVICES

Abundant Power Group, a Charlotte, NC-based technology company, is seeking branding and public relations services from an agency that can help with a forthcoming rebranding initiative. APG consists of two companies: one finances real estate projects and the other provides tech services for commercial real estate.



Abundant Power seeks an agency that can assist with a rebrand that establishes Abundant Power Group as the parent company of both subsidiaries, but more importantly, rebrands the company's commercial real estate technology subsidiary.

Scope of the work includes creation of a brand statement, key messaging and brand announcement and supporting events. Budget is between \$15,000 and \$30,000.

Finalists must be available to give a 30-minute presentation via webinar to the company's executive team during the week of July 16. Abundant Power plans to make its final selection by July 20, with the contract beginning August 1 and terminating in October.

Proposals should be emailed to communications director Samantha Gilman, sgilman@abundantpower.com. Deadline is Wednesday, July 11, by 6:00 PM EST.

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

NETFLIX FIRES CCO FOR USE OF N-WORD

Netflix has fired chief communications officer Jonathan Friedland for his "descriptive use of the N-word on at least two occasions," according to a internal memo to staff from Reed Hastings, CEO of the streaming company.

Hastings wrote that use of such language "is not in the line with our values as a company."

After the first incident, Friedland apologized, after several staffers told him how inappropriate and hurtful his use of the N-word was, according to the memo.

Hastings heard of the second incident last week, which "confirmed a deep lack of understanding, and convinced me to let Jonathan go now."

The CEO credited the seven-year Netflix PR vet for being a great contributor and building a diverse team.

Friedland, on Twitter, admitted to being "insensitive in speaking with his team about words that offend in comedy."



**Jonathan
Friedland**

FINSBURY COOPERATING IN TRADING PROBE

Finsbury is "cooperating fully" with the UK's Financial Conduct Authority's investigation into insider trading, according to a report in the *Financial Times*.



Roland Rudd

The FCA interviewed a driver for Roland Rudd, founder and chairman of the WPP unit. He has not been charged with any crime.

The firm is "cooperating fully with the FCA's investigation," James Murgatroyd, Finsbury managing partner, wrote in a memo to staffers.

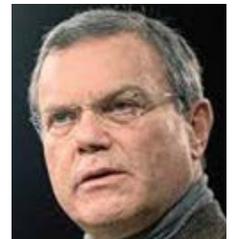
"You know how seriously we take our adherence to the highest standards of ethics and governance," wrote Murgatroyd. "It is everyone's personal responsibility to uphold these standards."

Rudd, an advisor to WPP chairman Roberto Quarta, wrote for the *Financial Times* before launching Finsbury in 1994. The firm merged with Robinson Lerer & Montgomery in 2011.

SORRELL SLAMS "LEAK" FROM TOP OF WPP

Extracted WPP CEO Martin Sorrell slammed a leak from "the very top of the company" about the probe into his alleged personal misconduct during an event at the Cannes Lions festival.

"The most damaging thing that happened during the course of those events was the leak over the Easter weekend at the very top of the company, and which to my knowledge there has been no investigation whatsoever," said Sorrell, according to a report in Reuters.



Martin Sorrell

The leak came ahead of a *Wall Street Journal* story that WPP's probe included whether Sorrell used corporate funds to pay for a prostitute.

Sorrell has denied any wrongdoing.

The 73-year-old founder of WPP dismissed allegations published in the *Financial Times* that he mistreated WPP staff as "scurrilous and salacious."

Sorrell praised Co-CEOs Mark Read and Andrew Scott, who are running the WPP on a temporary basis.

He said they have complementary skills and should be named permanent Co-CEOs.

Sorrell, who plans to use the S4 Capital shell company to build a marketing communications firm, expects to work for the next seven years and then will access whether he wants to continue.

OGILVY STUMPS FOR BLOCKADED QATAR

Ogilvy Government Relations is providing outreach and engagement with key Washington policymakers for Qatar, which has been under an economic and political boycott by neighboring Arab states for more than a year.



The WPP unit is working as subcontractor to law firm Nelson, Mullins, Riley & Scarborough, which has the master contract for strategic communications and government relations services.

Under its one-year agreement with NMR&S, Ogilvy is to receive a monthly \$10K retainer through May 31, 2019.

In April, Qatar turned to Ballard Partners for counsel and assistance related to its outreach to government and business officials in DC and Florida, which hosts the winter White House.

Ballard Partners, which has close ties to Donald Trump, is to receive \$2.1M plus "reasonable costs" for its one-year campaign that runs through March 31, 2019.

USTA APPOINTS BHFS TO BOOST BRAND USA

Travel trade non-profit the U.S. Travel Association has inked a pact with law firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck for lobbying on Capitol Hill on issues related to Brand USA, the campaign that promotes overseas tourism to the U.S.

Founded in 2010 under the Travel Promotion Act, the public-private destination marketing organization faced the threat of having its funding eliminated under the Trump administration's fiscal 2018 budget proposal.

The USTA is pushing for a continued reauthorization of the U.S. travel marketing arm as the U.S. faces a decline in international arrivals. Inbound international travel to the U.S. has experienced a precipitous drop since President Trump's inauguration.

LIDLAW TO ALLISON+PARTNERS CRISIS POST

Barbara Laidlaw, a former executive at Burson-Marsteller, Edelman and FleishmanHillard, has joined Allison+Partners, where she's been named managing director of global reputation, risk + advisory.

Laidlaw joins the MDC Partners unit from Burson-Marsteller, where she was managing director and provided strategic communications and change management advice. Prior to that, she was president and owner of communications consultancy BEL Communications.

She was previously an executive vice president and crisis head at Edelman and a partner and senior VP in Fleishman Hillard's corporate financial and corporate affairs practices.

At Allison+Partners, Laidlaw will be responsible for overseeing the growth of the San Francisco-based agency's global issues management, crisis and risk mitigation capabilities.



Barbara Laidlaw

NEWS OF FIRMS

MSL has acquired Paris-based **Domaines Publics**, a public affairs consulting firm specializing in industry groups and services, unions and professional federations. The 20-employee firm will become part of Publicis Consultants, the name for MSL's operation in France. Domaines Publics co-founders Jean-Michel Arnaud and Steven Zunz will remain with the company as vice presidents.



Jean-Michel Arnaud

McNeely Brockman Public Relations, a new boutique communications firm, has officially opened its doors in Nashville.

Formed by Mark McNeely, founder and former partner of MP&F Strategic Communications and his daughter Kelly Brockman, MBPR will focus on media relations, media training, crisis communications, strategic planning and special projects. McNeely will still work on several MP&F clients, as well as assembling a separate team and clients for MBPR. Brockman has most recently served as press secretary of Transit for Nashville and public information officer for Metro Public Works.



Mark McNeely

Uproar PR has opened a new office in Chicago that the firm says will allow them to increase their presence in the Windy City market by about 300 percent. "It was vital to grow our presence in Chicago," said Uproar CEO Catriona Harris. The new office will have space to host events, including media panels, client meet-and-greets and career development sessions in partnership with local PR associations.

KemperLesnik has launched an esports division, which will produce events, connect would-be sponsors with assets, consult with game developers and lead brand activation for sponsors. The agency will also lead messaging and positioning strategy, drive mainstream media coverage, execute social media campaigns, lead media event operations and produce integrated content marketing programs in esports.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

The Brandman Agency has added InterContinental San Diego, a 400-room hotel set to open in September with five on-property dining outlets and 95,000 square feet of meeting space to its client roster. It is located on the grounds of Lane Field, the stadium where the then minor league San Diego Padres played from 1936 through 1957.

Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications has been selected as the U.S. PR agency of record for the newly established Quintana Roo Tourism Board. Quintana Roo, a state on Mexico's gulf coast, encompasses such tourist destinations as Cancun, Riviera Maya, Playa del Carmen, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres and Tulum.

INTEL CEO RESIGNS OVER STAFFER AFFAIR

Intel CEO Brian Krzanich resigned after a corporate and outside investigation confirmed that he had a past consensual relationship with an employee in violation of the company's non-fraternization policy that applies to all managers.



Brian Krzanich

"Given the expectation that all employees will respect Intel's values and adhere to the company's code of conduct, the Board has accepted Mr. Krzanich's resignation," said Intel's statement.

Intel's non-fraternization policy requires employees who see or believe someone acted inappropriately to report the activity. CFO Bob Swan will head the company on an interim basis.

Krzanich joined Intel in 1992 and was elected CEO in 2013.

CNBC, CNN VET FRAYTER JOINS RF|BINDER

Karina Frayter, most recently a field producer at CNBC Business News, has joined RF|Binder as managing director to drive media relations at the New York-based independent shop.

At CNBC, Frayter covered the stock market, IPOs, economy, banking, fintech and payments. She produced the "Where the Jobs Are" series and her digital documentary, "The Bitcoin Uprising," earned an honorable mention by Calex Program Awards.

Prior to joining CNBC in 2010, Frayter was New York assignment editor at CNN during the financial crisis and worked for CNN International.

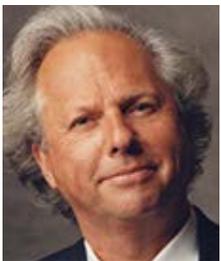
CEO Amy Binder believes Frayter's "seasoned, hands-on experience in the newsroom offers us a new advantage in understanding the way reporters think, act, and make decisions today and will further help our clients stand out as the leading voices in today's conversations on business, the economy, social issues, and culture."



Karina Frayter

GRAYDON CARTER BACK IN MEDIA GAME

Graydon Carter, who stepped down last year as editor of *Vanity Fair* after a 25-year run, plans to launch his own media venture, according to the *New York Post*.



Graydon Carter

The multi-plaform effort, which will initially focus on European high society, A-listers, celebrities and media hounds, is expected to launch by the end of the year.

Carter's people are in discussions with San Francisco private equity firm, TPG Capital, to help bankroll the new venture. TPG owns a stake in Vice Media.

The Post reports that Carter attempted to buy VF from Conde Nast before he resigned from the magazine, with financial support from TPG.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

G&S Business Communications has promoted **Kate Threewitts** from VP to senior VP human resources, and **Josh Laster** from account director to VP. Threewitts, who has been with G&S since 2014, is based in the agency's Raleigh, N.C. office, overseeing the firm's human resources function. Before coming to G&S, she was senior director, human resources, at the American Heart Association. Laster, who is based at G&S's New York headquarters, has been with the agency since 2008. He specializes in external and internal communications strategies, particularly for the advanced manufacturing and building solutions industries.



Kate Threewitts

Apron Food PR has named **Dr. Jennifer Garrett**, **Dr. Cathy Kapica** and **Jill Saletta** to its board of advisors. Garrett is senior associate at agricultural consulting firm The Context Network. Kapica, the CEO of public health think tank The Awegrin Institute, has served as senior scientist, director of nutrition education at Quaker Oats; global director, nutrition at McDonald's; and senior VP, global health & wellness at Ketchum. Saletta, a head of communications at energy company Tenovo, has also been director, corporate communications and PR at Kellogg and senior manager, corporate communications at Kraft Foods.



Dr. Cathy Kapica

Cara Hutchison has been promoted to VP at **Rogers & Cowan**. Hutchison has been with the agency for eight years, most recently serving as account director. "She has been a significant part of the team with me for Elton John and the Rolling Stones," says R&C co-president of entertainment worldwide Fran Curtis. Hutchison's work with the Stones carried over to last year's Desert Trip festival as well as their historic appearance in Havana, Cuba.

Red Lorry Yellow Lorry, London-based B2B tech outfit, has brought on **Meredith Eaton** to join its Boston office as director of North America. Eaton comes to the agency from March Communications, where she most recently served as VP, working on clients across industries including cloud computing, telecommunications, enterprise software and hardware, IoT, security and blockchain. In addition, **Hannah Patel** has been promoted from commercial development director to director, UK. The moves follow the recent opening of the agency's Berlin office, headed up by **Saskia Stolper**.



Ann Edelman

Zehnder Communications has promoted **Ann Edelman** to VP of PR and media. Previously, she served as PR director. In her new position, Edelman oversees both departments. Before coming to Zehnder, she ran her own firm, Edelman Advertising, for 17 years. Edelman began her career as a media buyer for Gus Weill Inc.

PRSA MEMBERS TARGET ETHICS REFORMS

Two long-standing PRSA members are introducing a series of five bylaw amendments that call for reforms in the organization's ethics, governance, organizational transparency and nonpartisanship.

The proposed amendments, authored by former PRSA Nashville chapter president Susan Hart and past PRSA national board member Mary Beth West, include measures that would require PRSA to hold its leadership accountable when organizational policies, decisions, communications or other actions fail to comply with its own code of ethics.



Susan Hart

The first of the amendments would change the name of PRSA's Board of Ethics and Professional Standards (BEPS) to the Advisory Council of Ethics and Professional Standards (ACEPS). The amendment would also establish the body's independence from the PRSA national board. It

would also create an accountability model within PRSA's national structure and empower the PRSA Leadership Assembly to elect the advisory council's 11 members.

Providing PRSA with an ethics officer on its national board is the aim of the second of the proposals. The third proposal would eliminate the role of the national board in officer nominations, while the fourth would add a voting ethics representative to the PRSA nominating committee. The last of the bylaws would enable – on an as-needed basis – the creation of a fully independent review and adjudication panel, which would include third-party, credentialed ethics & compliance experts

According to Hart/West, the proposed bylaw amendments are a response to “a long pattern of PRSA ethics incidents in 2017.”

The incidents are said to include the online deletion and withholding of information concerning national board meetings and the non-disclosure by PRSA of a \$30,000 sponsorship while promoting that sponsor's brand.

The two also say that their attempts to make bylaw changes have been stymied by the current BEPS. After submitting their draft proposals to BEPS, they received an email from BEPS chair Nance Larsen saying that those proposals had been reviewed by the board and had been moved on the PRSA Governance Committee with no further input from the authors.

At least 25 signatures from PRSA members in good standing are needed for each proposal to proceed to PRSA's Governance Committee for review in time for the national board's July 24 meeting, at which time the board will take a pro or con stance on each proposal, prior to its being added to the agenda for the PRSA 2018 National Assembly on Oct. 6 in Austin. Hart and West are soliciting electronic petition signatures via the PRSA's “GoPetition” platform.

For more information on signing the petitions, contact Susan Hart at susanhartpr@gmail.com or Mary Beth West at mb@marybethwest.com.



Mary Beth West

BRANDS MUST FIX SOCIAL MEDIA—POLL

More than seven-in-ten (71 percent) of more than 9,000 consumers in nine countries polled by Edelman expect brands to pressure social media platforms to protect personal data, according to a poll released by Edelman.

Seventy percent of respondents want brands to help curb the spread of fake news and 68 percent want brands to protect them from offensive content.



Richard Edelman

CEO Richard Edelman calls brands the new hope for consumers battered by populism, rapid change and societal discontent.

The firm's poll is a Special Edelman Trust Barometer prepared for the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

The Special Report shows trust in social media has been specifically damaged by identity theft (71 percent), fake news (69 percent) cyberbullying and hate speech (69 percent).

Edelman believes consumers don't want to give up on social media because the platforms have become a big part of their lives.

He wrote: “But they want a New Deal with the platforms. Be transparent with me about what you are doing, including clear identification of sponsorship. Give me control over my purchase data and my demographics, with explicit privacy options at each step. Offer me information that I can believe and protect me from noxious content. Give me a public place to talk back to you, and I will then hold you accountable for substantive change.”

P&G FUNDS COURIC'S ONLINE VIDEO SERIES

Katie Couric is developing an online video series for theSkimm, a digital-media company whose main claim to fame is a daily email newsletter with 6 million subscribers, the majority of them young women.

“Getting There,” which, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, will profile such prominent women as “Barefoot Contessa” host Ina Garten and Instagram head of fashion partnerships Eva Chen, will be sponsored by Procter & Gamble.

Procter & Gamble chief brand officer Marc Pritchard told the *Journal* that sponsoring Couric's series is part of the company's move toward taking more control of the online content with which its advertising appears. That move was partly spurred by several incidents in which YouTube was running P&G ads alongside content that was deemed objectionable.



Katie Couric

“Getting There” will be produced by Katie Couric Media, a production company whose controlling investors are Couric and her husband, John Molner. Couric says she will have complete editorial independence.

TheSkimm plans to distribute “Getting There” through its pages on such social media outlets as Facebook and Instagram. The company says that it has two million followers from those two platforms.

COMMENTARY

PR MAY BE HURT BY TRUMP'S WAR ON FACTS

PR people should be very alarmed at the torrent of lies and deceit that are at the heart of Donald Trump's war on facts.

The president dismissed images of caged immigrant children who were forcibly ripped from their parents as “phony stories of sadness and grief” put out by Democrats.

Earlier, Trump admitted that he, First Lady Melania and First Daughter Ivanka were affected by the images, and that he signed his executive order ending the baby abduction policy because he couldn't stand the “sight” of the pictures. Of course, it's all about him.

Trump has changed his tune on those cruel pictures.

On June 21, the president weighed in on the God-awful wardrobe decision made by Melania for her Texas field trip to visit some of the kids jailed by her husband.

The Donald contradicted Melania's spokeswoman, who said there was “no hidden message” connected with the First Lady's now infamous Zara jacket with “I Really Don't Care, Do U” scrawled on it's back.

Not true, claimed the president. He tweeted that the jacket referred to the “fake news media” and “Melania has learned how dishonest they are, and she truly no longer cares!”

The *Washington Post* fact-checker reports the president has made 3,200 lies or misleading claims since taking office 518 days ago. Trump pulled off a tour de force during his June 20 rally in Duluth, where he lied or made a misleading claim every two minutes, according to the fact checker.

New York Times op-ed writer Timothy Egan today wrote “the constant repetition of the lie is the way to make truth meaningless. You say a falsehood over and over and it takes on the shape of reality.”

He's concerned that our “fact-based democracy” won't be able to function “when the Trump toxins have gotten deep into the national bloodstream.”

The same applies to PR.

Unlike advertising, which relies on making an emotional connection with a targeted audience, PR relies on facts.

Minus facts, PR becomes spin and dies.

PR also dies if Americans won't accept facts as reality, which is a top priority of president Trump.

In a world in which companies, non-profits and public figures just make things up, there's no need for PR.

The PR community must challenge the president's war on facts, before it's too late. —Kevin McCauley

FONDA APOLOGIZES FOR 'VULGAR' TWEET

When it comes to social media, suggesting children should be locked in cages with pedophiles will get yourself in hot water. Apparently, no one told Peter Fonda. The actor was put on blast recently after a late-night Twitter rant where he suggested that Barron Trump, who is 12 years old, should be “ripped from his mother's arms and put in a cage with pedophiles.”

Now, you would think that, on the surface, people would know not to post things like this if they wanted to avoid enraging millions of people and doing serious damage to their brand. And yet, week after week, someone seems to forget this. However, even by the fairly wide standards of behavior on Twitter, this tweet stood out.

In addition to an expletive hurled at Donald Trump, Fonda rolled into a rant that culminated — or, really, crashed and burned — with the comments about Barron Trump. The tweet drew harsh responses, not only from Barron's parents, but also from massive numbers across the political spectrum.

Fonda, a two-time Oscar nominee, quickly realized he'd gone too far and deleted his tweet. But it was too late, and Fonda found himself in a position familiar to far too many celebrities, having to apologize for a Twitter rant that could hurt his career:



Ronn Torossian

“I tweeted something highly inappropriate and vulgar about the president and his family in response to the devastating images I was seeing on television ... Like many Americans, I am very impassioned and distraught over the situation with children separated from their families at the border, but I went way too far. It was wrong and I should not have done it. I immediately regretted it and sincerely apologize to the family.”

Folks might be willing to forgive and forget, but that wasn't the only time Fonda sounded off about border security on Twitter. He also suggested protesters should surround the homes of federal agents, and “find out where their children go to school and surround the schools in protest ...” This too garnered blowback, but nothing on the level of the tweet regarding Barron Trump.

One thing Fonda's tweetstorm has in common with many other social media rants that have landed celebrities or brands in trouble, is that it was made late at night. The timing implies many things, which we will not infer, but it certainly confirms that Mr. Fonda was not at his best. So, with that in mind, here's a pretty simple PR tip: If you're not totally awake and totally sober and of sound mind, put the phone down. It doesn't matter how clever you think you're being in the moment or how angry you are about something ... remember, the Internet is forever.

Ronn Torossian is CEO of 5WPR, a leading independent PR Agency. He is also author of best selling PR book “For Immediate Release.”