



Jack O'Dwyer,
Editor-in-Chief

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

The Inside News of
PR and Marketing
Communications

271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750
www.odwyerpr.com; jobs.odwyerpr.com

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NY ENERGY REFORM PUSH SEEKS PR POWER

New York State's \$5B clean energy push, "Reforming Energy Vision," is searching for an agency to explain and pitch the plan to citizens, stakeholders, private sector, NGOs and others.

The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, backing a program unveiled by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to modernize the state's power grid and utilities, has proposed a 10-year, \$5B commitment to a clean energy fund to "scale-up" energy efficiency in the Empire State.



An RFP released last week calls for pitches from full-service comms. firms to develop and guide the public education effort burnishing REV. The work ranges from content development and brand "refinement," to media relations, events and partnership building.

Proposals are due March 26.
RFP: <http://odwpr.us/18uZxxC>.

AIR INDIA FLIES OUT ANOTHER PR SEARCH

Air India, which is plagued by frequent delays and cancellations, plans a PR push designed to bolster customer confidence in the Subcontinent's national carrier.

A staffer told *The New Indian Express* that the airline "has been under a lot of media exposure" and it is common for a service industry company to "appoint PR agencies to project the right image" to its users.

Air India is looking for a firm to manage and enhance its media perception and handle corporate communications. A year ago, the carrier launched a PR search but didn't hire anyone.

Air India, a member of the Star Alliance, flies to 66 domestic locations and 33 international destinations.

GRAYLING'S GAY TO LEVICK

Tim Gay, a senior VP at Grayling, author and former Capitol Hill press secretary, has moved to Levick in Washington.

Gay, who has penned four books on topics from World War II correspondents to baseball's Tris Speaker, was press secretary to Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Rep. (now Sen.) Tom Carper (D-DE). He writes frequently on history and politics for publications like the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe* and *USA Today*.

Levick president Mark Irion calls Gray a "consummate public affairs professional and a true thought leadership specialist."

Gay also did an eight-year stint at Powell Tate.

RANKINGS SHOW STRENGTH OF PR BIZ

O'Dwyer's annual rankings of PR firms with major U.S. operations show continued strong growth in 2014 as experienced in 2013. Eight of the ten largest firms had positive gains with six posting double-digit increases.

1. Edelman - \$797,328,238 (up 8.6%)
2. APCO Worldwide - \$118,112,600 (down 1.9%)
3. Waggener Edstrom - \$106,676,000 (down 9.3%)
4. W2O Group - \$86,625,000 (up 10.1%)
5. Ruder Finn - \$73,891,000 (up 16.8%)
6. Finn Partners - \$52,796,000 (up 19%)
7. MWW - \$51,775,000 (up 7.8%)
8. ICR - \$50,687,714 (up 19.4%)
9. DKC - \$41,500,000 (up 26.2%)
10. Zeno Group - \$39,921,576 (up 11.2%)

Edelman continues to dwarf the other top independent firms with \$797M in net fees for '14. DKC posted the biggest gain in the top 10 with \$41.5M in net fees, up 26.2%.

The same firms occupy the top ten as last year but Finn Partners edged ahead of MWW into the sixth spot and DKC moved up to ninth.

Some of the big gainers in the top 25, but outside the top ten, include #23, SparkPR, up 44.6% to \$16.4M and #22, LEV-ICK, up 40.4% to \$17.2M.

Overall, 21 of the top 25 firms increased their net fees year over year, with 18 reporting growth more than 10%.

O'Dwyer's Ranks PR Specialties

PR has moved mostly to the agency side where extensive practice areas have been built up over the past 20 years and O'Dwyer's has the only rankings by PR specialty.

Healthcare has 66 ranked firms this year. Nashville-based ReviveHealth cracked the top 10 at #6 with net fees of \$8.7M, up 65.7%. Technology giants Edelman and Waggener Edstrom dominate that ranking which has 68 firms. Tech specialist Hotwire grew 47.7% to come in at #24. Financial PR heavyweight ICR with \$47.1M in net fees almost knocked Edelman out of the top spot in this specialty which has 48 firms. APCO Worldwide continues to lead the environmental PR/PA specialty (32 firms ranked) with \$29.6M in net fees.

Food & beverage has 51 firms with NY-based Hunter PR leading everyone at \$15M in net fees except top-ranked Edelman. Growing specialty professional services has fees from 48 firms.

All the specialty charts plus breakdowns for key geographical areas such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco are posted on odwyerpr.com.

*Special
Rankings Issue*



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TOYOTA UPS HAMP AS FIRST FEMALE EXEC

Toyota is promoting North American communications chief Julie Hamp to managing officer of the Japanese automaker.

Hamp takes the title of managing officer and chief communications officer for the Toyota Motor Company, the first woman named to these positions globally. She oversees global communications efforts, with responsibility for public affairs and overseas external affairs reporting to Shigeru Hayakawa, senior managing officer, TMC.



Hamp

Bloomberg said she will be the first female executive in the company's 77-year history and just the third woman among top management at Japanese carmakers.

Toyota has also tapped its first foreigner as an executive VP, France-born Didier Leroy.

The moves are being viewed as a bid for the insular company to diversify its "largely uniform senior management."

Said Akio Toyoda, president of TMC: "Bringing together an experienced and diverse team of executives with fresh perspectives, unique regional insights and a global mindset will help us better serve customers around the world."

Hamp, who was chief communications officer for Toyota North America, is relocating to Japan for the new role. She joined Toyota in 2012 from PepsiCo and previously was with General Motors and its Saturn unit.

MARRIOTT'S MATTHEWS EYES CONGRESS

Kathleen Matthews, Marriott International executive VP/chief global & communications/PA officer and wife of MSNBC's Chris Matthews, is planning to run for Congress to replace Maryland Democrat Chris Van Hollen, according to *Politico*.

Van Hollen has announced that he will run to succeed Senator Barbara Mikulski, who is retiring.

Matthews joined Marriott in 2006 after a 25-year stint as anchor and correspondent at WJLA-TV, the ABC affiliate in Washington.

Politico said Matthews, who lives in Chevy Chase, has been talking to Democratic activists and interviewing political consultants ahead of the run for office.

Matthews, on his "Hardball" program, said he will aim to be as transparent as possible give the unique circumstances.

"I am proud of her and support her," he said. "If she does indeed decide to run for Congress, then we will make sure we continue to fully disclose my relationship – which I've never denied, with her – as part of our commitment here at MSNBC to be transparent and fair in our coverage."

He added: "It's important in my position here for me to be as transparent as possible."



Matthews

REP IN COKE RAP, HANGS PR SHINGLE

Former Rep. Trey Radel, a former journalist who resigned from Congress in his first term last year after pleading guilty to cocaine possession, has opened a Florida-based media training and PR firm.

The Florida Republican said he has picked up clients in Washington, New York and southwest Florida under Trey Radel Media Group, which focuses on PR counsel in the public sector.

Radel's former aides, Matt Pusateri and Matt Hurley, are working with the firm.

Radel worked in TV and radio news before buying and later selling the *Naples (Fla.) Journal*. After dabbling in PR, he won an open seat for Florida's 19th Congressional district in 2013 but resigned under pressure in early 2014 after he was arrested for trying to buy cocaine from an undercover federal agent.

Radel pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of possession of cocaine and served one year of probation before his record was expunged.

RINGLING RETIRES ELEPHANTS FROM CIRCUS

Feld Entertainment is phasing out elephants at its three Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus units by 2018 due to "shifting consumer preferences."

The 13 elephants currently performing will relocate to the company's conservation center in Florida to join the more than 40 animals already there.

The company said it would focus exclusively on elephant conservation with programs here and in Sri Lanka.

CEO Kenneth Feld said Ringling Bros. has played a critical role in preserving endangered Asian elephants since it opened the Florida center in 1995. He called the decision to remove the elephant acts was not an easy one, but made "in the best interest of the company."

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals activist group, which has waged a 35-year campaign protesting Ringling Bros. use of elephants, declared a victory, calling it a "day to pop the Champagne corks and rejoice that the first important step has been taken."

The organization though questions why Ringling has set a three-year timetable for the phase-out.

The circus will continue using lions, tigers, horses, dogs and camels in its acts.

EX-ARKANSAS SENATOR JOINS VENABLE

Mark Pryor, the Democrat who lost his seat to Tom Cotton in the 2014 election, has joined the government affairs practice of Venable.

He'll focus on communications, privacy, cybersecurity, automotive and consumer protections areas.

Pryor, a two-term Senate veteran, also was attorney general of The Natural State.

During his Senate stint, Pryor sat on the appropriations; commerce, science, and transportation; homeland security and governmental affairs; rules and administration, and ethics committees.

Stuart Ingis, head of the lobbying firm's DC office, called Pryor a "thoughtful consensus builder, a characteristic that will translate well to working with clients at Venable."

NBC HIRES LACK

NBC has officially brought back Andy Lack as NBC News/MSNBC chairman and a member of the executive committee.

He will report to NBCUniversal CEO Steve Burke when he begins next month.

Lack replaces Pat Fili-Krushel, who joined NBCUniversal four years ago. She'll move to a new corporate post.

Lack began his career at CBS in 1976 and joined NBC News as president in 1993. In 2001, he was upped to president/COO of NBC in charge of news, entertainment, TV stations, MSNBC and CNBC.

Lack did a six year-stint as chairman/CEO of Bloomberg Media Group and became CEO of the Broadcasting Board of Governors in Jan.

In a memo, Burke wrote that Lack's "experience and familiarity with our company and specifically the news division will be critical to our growth and future success."

Deborah Turness, NBC News president, and Phil Griffin, MSNBC president, will report to Lack. Mark Hoffman, CNBC president, will work with Lack, "to ensure that where appropriate CNBC will leverage the strength of the News Group portfolio," according to the Burke's memo.

The NBCU chief called Fili-Krushel, "one of my trusted advisors."

He praised her for positioning the broadcaster for growth by "integrating television and digital, creating innovative partnerships, and modernizing the tools and technology we use to gather and deliver news."

Comcast owns NBCU.



Lack

EMBER TAKES OVER TIMES AD COLUMN

New York Times DealBook reporter Sydney Ember is taking over the paper's advertising and marketing beat.

Longtime ad columnist Stuart Elliott took a buyout from the Times in December after penning the column for 23 years.

Ember, who graduated from Brown University in 2012, did a year-long stint as a financial markets analyst for BlackRock before joining the Times in early 2014.

She has reported for the Times' financial news vertical DealBook and penned its "Morning Agenda" feature. Ember's first ad story ran March 8.

In addition to Ember, the Times has installed Style section writer John Koblin on the television desk, previously handled by Bill Carter, who also took a buyout.

Bill Brink was promoted to media editor and Connor Ennis shifts from BizDay weekend editor to deputy under Brink.

The paper has not named a successor to the late David Carr and his "Media Equation" column.

Times business editors Dean Murphy and Peter Lattman said media reporting "has long been central to The Times' business and cultural coverage, a signature topic for us that has attracted the best and the brightest."

NELSON DIALS UP PR FOR SYFY, CHILLER

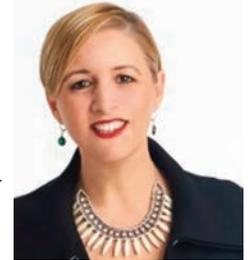
Katherine Nelson, senior VP of communications for NBCUniversal's Esquire Network, has dialed up the media conglomerate's Syfy and Chiller networks in that same title.

Chiller was launched by NBCU in 2007 and features 24-7 horror, thriller and suspense programming. Syfy is the former Sci-Fi Channel focused on science fiction, also owned by NBCU.

Nelson covers corporate comms., program publicity and talent relations, reporting to Syfy and Chiller president Dave Howe in New York.

She was previously VP of marketing and communications for Elon Musk's SpaceX and VP/comms. for Discovery Communications.

Nelson will oversee PR for new original programs on Syfy this year -- a scripted drama "The Expanse," and miniseries "Childhood's End."



Nelson

ICAHN RETREATS FROM GANNETT

Corporate raider Carl Icahn has withdrawn his nominations to the board of Gannett Co. and a proposal that would have made it easier to launch a takeover of the media company.

The billionaire investor, who controls a 6.6 percent stake in \$6B Gannett, made the moves after the company approved various corporate governance issues that apparently pleased Icahn.

Gannett's board decided that the newspaper business to be spun off later this year will have directors elected annually, a requirement that a supermajority vote needed to extend rights plan and majority voting standard for uncontested director elections.

Mary Magner, Gannett's non-executive chairman, said in a statement, "Establishing an appropriate governance profile for the new publishing company has been a top priority for the Board as we prepare for the separation later this year.

"The details we are announcing today reflect productive conversations we've had with Mr. Icahn and other shareholders, and are consistent with Gannett's shareholder focus and track record of responsible corporate governance."

Icahn also agreed to a standstill agreement with the publisher of *USA Today* and 81 other daily newspapers.

OBAMA WANTS TO REVAMP RADIO MARTI

The Obama Administration wants to turn Radio and TV Marti, the US-controlled broadcaster of news/information to Cuba, into a "private, non-profit" organization.

A White House official told Reuters the proposal has nothing to do with restoring diplomatic ties to the communist-ruled island; rather it's an effort to modernize the operation. Radio and TV Marti, which is now part of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, would become a new entity with parts of Voice of America's Spanish language service.

O'DWYER'S RANKING OF PR FIRMS

Firm	2014 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2013
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$797,328,238	5,308	+8.6
2. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	118,112,600	635	-1.9
3. Waggener Edstrom Communications, Bellevue, WA	106,676,000	705	-9.3
4. W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	82,625,000	402	+10.1
5. Ruder Finn, New York, NY	73,891,000	522	+16.8
6. Finn Partners, New York, NY	52,796,000	339	+19.0
7. MWW, New York, NY	51,775,000	248	+7.8
8. ICR, Norwalk, CT	50,687,714	144	+19.4
9. DKC, New York, NY	41,500,000	199	+26.2
10. Zeno Group, New York, NY	39,921,576	276	+11.2
11. Allison+Partners, San Francisco, CA	37,000,000	207	+28.3
12. PadillaCRT, Minneapolis, MN	31,624,111	185	-2.2
13. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	27,274,597	188	+14.0
14. Gibbs & Soell, New York, NY	25,438,112	140	+13.1
15. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	23,010,000	154	+14.8
16. Taylor, New York, NY	21,700,000	108	+2.8
17. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	20,300,000	85	+17.0
18. Hunter PR, New York, NY	20,250,000	101	+10.2
19. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	18,961,046	112	+18.4
20. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	18,753,747	87	even
21. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH	18,616,471	110	+10.5
22. LEVICK, Washington, DC	17,231,618	61	+40.4
23. SparkPR, San Francisco, CA	16,424,750	63	+44.6
24. Peppercomm, New York, NY	16,294,726	87	+14.4
25. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	16,129,010	115	+19.7
26. Cooney/Waters Group, New York, NY	15,438,041	52	+10.1
27. SS PR, Northfield, IL	13,977,000	74	+3.6
28. Makovsky, New York, NY	13,200,000	60	-7.4
29. Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications, Boston, MA	13,189,973	50	+32.5
30. RF Binder Partners, New York, NY	12,700,000	77	+3.3
31. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	12,200,000	46	+10.9
32. Max Borges Agency, Miami, FL	10,693,735	55	+17.3
33. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	10,438,755	49	+34.5
34. Current, Chicago, IL	10,309,101	45	+4.2
35. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	10,270,000	30	+12.2
36. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	9,992,391	31	-9.0
37. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI), New York, NY	9,079,895	44	+9.9
38. Inkhouse Media + Marketing, Waltham, MA	9,017,618	68	+41.3
39. ReviveHealth, Nashville, TN	8,780,000	46	+65.7
40. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	8,208,694	42	+36.3
41. Podesta Group, Washington, DC	8,181,127	18	+10.9
42. Spectrum, Washington, DC	8,085,455	35	+32.5
43. FoodMinds, Chicago, IL	8,072,494	29	+25.5
44. Pan Communications, Boston, MA	7,800,000	56	+29.8
45. HORN, San Francisco, CA	7,700,000	42	-3.8
46. Airfoil, Southfield, MI	7,170,140	47	-2.9
47. Dodge Communications, Alpharetta, GA	6,957,425	53	+10.9
48. Lambert, Edwards + Associates, Grand Rapids, MI	6,840,000	44	+10.5
49. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	6,800,000	44	-6.8
50. Bliss Integrated Communication, New York, NY	6,783,000	39	+8.9
51. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	6,764,064	56	+20.7
52. Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	6,700,000	50	+52.3
53. 360 Public Relations, Boston, MA	6,547,095	40	+6.1
54. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	6,434,096	36	+10.3
55. rbb Public Relations, Miami, FL	6,401,985	38	+10.2
56. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	6,312,563	47	+1.6
57. Lou Hammond & Associates, New York, NY	6,141,600	40	-6.3
58. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Brentwood, TN	6,092,616	24	+20.5
59. GYMR, Washington, DC	6,004,742	23	-1.0
60. DVL Seigenthaler, Nashville, TN	5,944,476	53	+12.8

WITH MAJOR U.S. OPERATIONS

Firm	2014 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2013
61. Quinn & Co., New York, NY	5,460,472	41	+21.0
62. Sachs Media Group, Tallahassee, FL	5,130,720	27	+20.8
63. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	5,015,110	22	+25.3
64. Linhart Public Relations, Denver, CO	4,815,119	27	-12.2
65. J Public Relations, San Diego, CA	4,808,622	37	+45.4
66. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	4,790,810	30	+7.3
67. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,710,899	25	+1.1
68. JPA Health Communications, Washington, DC	4,630,541	17	+27.6
69. Dukas Public Relations, New York, NY	4,543,306	20	+21.4
70. Seven Twenty Strategies, Washington, DC	4,503,628	33	-7.0
71. Paul Werth Associates, Columbus, OH	4,231,152	16	+23.1
72. Moore Communications Group, Tallahassee, FL	4,109,564	26	-1.2
73. LANE, Portland, OR	3,846,887	22	-6.4
74. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,824,984	24	+3.3
75. Intermarket Communications, New York, NY	3,815,447	15	-7.6
76. Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations, New York, NY	3,542,000	22	+6.3
77. Hawkins Int'l, Inc., New York, NY	3,432,000	28	+18.3
78. Konnect Public Relations, Los Angeles, CA	3,229,239	29	+37.9
79. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	3,178,744	19	+15.5
80. Hotwire, New York, NY	3,121,032	20	+47.7
81. Kyne, New York, NY	3,096,952	15	+37.7
82. Fiona Hutton & Associates, Los Angeles, CA	3,070,243	9	+30.5
83. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, NJ	2,848,364	17	+57.2
84. Vantage, San Francisco, CA	2,807,787	27	+18.5
85. Beehive PR, St. Paul, MN	2,714,513	11	+39.4
86. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	2,641,524	18	-1.8
87. Ripp Media/Public Relations, New York, NY	2,506,223	8	+7.8
88. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,397,828	16	+14.3
89. IW Group, West Hollywood, CA	2,309,000	12	+10.2
90. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2,300,000	13	even
91. Cashman + Katz Integrated Comms., Glastonbury, CT	2,135,000	25	+14.5
92. North 6th Agency (N6A), New York, NY	2,070,036	13	+39.5
93. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	2,033,497	14	+3.2
94. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	1,959,699	22	+36.5
95. Gatesman + Dave, Pittsburgh, PA	1,800,000	72	+28.6
96. Crosswind Media & Public Relations, Austin, TX	1,750,000	15	+59.1
97. M/C/C, Inc., Dallas, TX	1,700,000	30	even
98. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	1,690,000	12	+2.4
99. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	1,684,371	11	+6.0
100. Ward Creative Communications, Inc., Bellaire, TX	1,672,863	9	+27.1
101. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,591,404	9	+3.1
102. Wilbert Group, The, Atlanta, GA	1,560,021	10	even
103. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,500,000	10	+7.1
104. Rosica, Paramus, NJ	1,430,930	11	-5.5
105. LaVoieHealthScience, Boston, MA	1,257,575	8	+24.4
106. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	1,226,093	11	+31.2
107. Wise Public Relations, New York, NY	1,100,000	5	+87.7
108. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	1,095,868	7	+4.4
109. Red Sky PR, Boise, ID	1,056,620	9	+5.1
110. Power Group, The, Dallas, TX	1,043,422	9	+68.8
111. BizCom Associates, Addison, TX	861,222	4	-3.5
112. Butler Associates, New York, NY	825,817	6	+2.7
113. Word Write Communications, Pittsburgh, PA	695,163	6	-13.3
114. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	666,646	4	+3.6
115. KCD Public Relations, Inc., San Diego, CA	613,263	7	+7.5
116. Weiss PR, Baltimore, MD	554,402	3	+37.4
117. Style House PR, New York, NY	408,062	4	-26.7
118. Malen Yantis Public Relations, Vail, CO	335,820	2	+29.9
119. CJ Public Relations, Farmington, CT	287,606	4	-18.3
120. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	261,508	1	-13.1

NEW ACCOUNTS

New York Area

SpecOps Communications, New York/The Grilled Cheese Truck Inc., operator and licensor of grilled cheese foods trucks in Los Angeles and Phoenix, as AOR for PR as it rolls out a national franchise and branding program.

Laura Davidson PR, New York/The Gleneagles Hotel (Perthshire, Scotland), five-star hotel and golf resort; The Press Hotel (Portland, Me.), 110-room boutique hotel in the former home of the *Portland Press-Herald* newspaper, as well as its MC Union restaurant opening April 2015; Newport (R.I.) Marriott, following a \$35M renovation to be completed this spring; The Inn at Windmill Lane (The Hamptons, NY), Amagansett luxury suites and cottages undergoing upgrades this year, and TownPlace Suites by Marriott, 230-location extended-stay hotel chain in US and Canada.

MZ Group, New York/LED Medical Diagnostics, software and diagnostic imaging for dentists and oral health specialists, for IR.

East

Pale Morning Media, Waitsfield, Vt./Stormy Kromer, IC maker of outdoor headwear, apparel and accessories, for PR. The 112-year-old Michigan company is known for its American-made, brimmed caps with earflaps, but also has men's and women's lines of jackets, vests, shirts and other apparel.

JPA Health Communications, Washington, D.C./Global Bridges Healthcare Alliance for Tobacco Dependence Treatment, a partnership between Mayo Clinic and the American Cancer Society, to manage its digital presence and network communications, following a competitive pitch process.

Consociate Media, Gloucester, Va./Sera-Brynn, Virginia-based cybersecurity firm, for PR and marketing. Goal is to educate more of the consumer and business community on the importance of cybersecurity, prevention techniques and evaluation of insurance options to protect companies and individuals' private information.

Southeast

Pinta, Miami/UFC, mixed martial arts promoter, as Hispanic AOR for marketing, PR, social media, fight promotions and events support.

South

Clyne Media, Nashville/Roland Corporation US, electronic musical instruments, as AOR for PR and editorial.

Howard Communications, Elsberry, Mo./STI International, handcrafted firearms, as AOR for PR.

Midwest

Foodminds, Chicago/American Frozen Food Institute, trade group for the frozen food and beverage industry, and Welch Foods, company owned by the National Grape Cooperative Assn., as AOR for health professional and nutrition influencer communications.

West

Havas Formula, San Diego/Monoprice, e-commerce site for consumer electronics and tech products, for a strategic PR program, including a product review initiative, blogger engagements and thought leadership.

PEOPLE

Joined

Matt Kirdahy, VP, Ogilvy PR, to Water and Wall Group, New York, as a senior VP. Kirdahy was previously with Bliss PR and is a former journalist for *Forbes*, the *Asbury Park Press* and *Princeton Packet*.

Melissa Smith, senior VP, MSLGroup, to Ogilvy PR, as EVP and group director of its New York brand marketing practice. She reports to NY managing director Jennifer Scott.

Lauren Arnold, VP for MSLGroup, to PAN Communications, Boston, as a VP. **Darlene Doyle**, VP at Version 2.0 Communications, joins as a VP focused on technology.

Eric Hausman, senior group manager of PR, Target Corp., to Spong, Minneapolis, as a principal. He will be based in the agency's Minneapolis headquarters. He was previously manager in Deloitte Consulting's strategy and operations practice in New York and started out as a tech trade journalist. **Sheldon Clay**, a 25-year veteran of sister agency Carmichael Lynch, joins as its first group creative director and partner.

Jason MacDonald, director of comms. and chief spokesman for Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, to Hill+Knowlton Canada, as a VP in its Ottawa corporate practice. He was director of communications and deputy chief of staff for two federal ministers of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. Also, **Susan Schutta**, senior director at Walmart Canada, joins as a VP for corporate work out of Toronto.

Savannah Bruner and **Jam Nicole Cristobal** to Preferred PR, Las Vegas, as PR specialists. **Tana Shivers** was promoted to director and **Lauren Silverstein** to PR manager.

Promoted

D'Arcy Rudnay, chief communications officer for Comcast Corp., Philadelphia, to executive VP. The media giant noted she is the first woman to become a corporate EVP in its history.

Michael Kehs, head of Hill+Knowlton Strategies' U.S. energy practice and Houston office, adds the title of global energy practice leader. He re-joined the firm last year from Chesapeake Energy Corp.

Christopher Handler to senior VP and director of Ketchum's social marketing practice. The nine-year Ketchum alum takes over for Christine Shreeve overseeing large federal and nonprofit association accounts. Shreeve moved to the FDA last month.

Nicole Bestard and **Katie Clark-AISadder** to VPs, Shift Communications, Boston. Bestard joined in 2013 while Clark-AISadder is a five-year Shift vet.

Will Collie, director of healthcare at Edelman Australia for the past three years, to GM of health for Edelman Chicago. Collie joined the firm in 2012 from Sanofi.



Kirdahy



Rudnay

LUMBER LIQUIDATORS PUSHES BACK

Lumber Liquidators, which saw its share price plummet after a critical "60 Minutes" report about alleged health and safety failures in its flooring materials, has responded by questioning the news program's methodology and blaming its financial woes on short-sellers.

"We stand by every single plank of wood and laminate we sell all around the country," the Toano, Va.-based company said a response

March 2, a day after the CBS News program said its China-made flooring was found to contain high levels of formaldehyde.

LL said it believes "60 Minutes" used an improper test method and affirmed that its floor materials are safe to use as intended. The company also said it worked with the news program and that its chairman discussed its differences over the testing methodology, but "60 Minutes" chose not to include it.

In the "60 Minutes" report, the news magazine bought 31 boxes of LL flooring across the country and found that only one box was compliant with formaldehyde emission standards. When it presented the findings to LL founder and chairman Tom Sullivan, he said the law does not require them to test finished products like "60 Minutes" did.

LL said it has reached out to its Chinese suppliers and they assured the company that products provided to LL are compliant with California Air Resource Board standards. The company, which has worked with Minneapolis PR firm One Simple Plan, on Feb. 23 -- as the "60 Minutes" piece was in production -- announced its investment in a state-of-the-art wood products quality testing lab in Virginia.

LL shares bounced back in trading March 3 after a 25% decline March 2. Janney Montgomery Scott analyst David Strasser told Bloomberg that the crisis is overblown.

Net sales for 2014 rose 4.7% to \$1.05B.

CANCER DIAGNOSTIC CO. SEEKS FIRM

OmniSeq, the molecular diagnostic testing company of upstate New York's Roswell Park Cancer Institute, is looking for a brand marketing diagnosis.

The Buffalo-based company released an RFP for a marketing and branding agency to review its current structure and handle the task, along with media and digital strategy, going forward.

OmniSeq Target is the flagship product of the company, developed with \$20M from the RPCI and another \$5M from New York State. The diagnostic test helps doctors customize cancer treatment to individual patients' molecular makeups. Proposals are due March 31.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1wTQ8vw>.



TONKA TOYS ROLL WITH JMPR

Funrise, the Van Nuys, Calif., toy maker and distributor, has rolled its Tonka brand to JMPR Public Relations. The Woodland Hills, Calif.-based firm will guide media relations and develop consumer engagement programs, support launches and events for Tonka, which is licensed to Funrise by Hasbro.

The 68-year-old toy truck brand has marketing alliances with Ford and Toyota.

JMPR president Joseph Molina called Tonka "one of those iconic, all-American brands" with strong connections to childhood.

BRUNSWICK CRAFTS ETSY IPO PR

Handmade goods marketplace Etsy has brought in Brunswick Group as it slates an initial public offering.

The 10-year-old, Brooklyn-based company has expanded from its handmade goods-only roots, but counts more than 54M members and 1.4M active sellers across the globe. Jewelry, clothing, stationary, craft supplies and vintage goods are among popular items on the marketplace.

Ellen Gonda, previously of Hilton Hotels, The Carlyle Group and Brunswick, is VP of communications for Etsy. The OutCast Agency has supported Etsy on the PR front. Brunswick partner Sarah Lubman and director Monika Driscoll are working the Etsy IPO.

Revenue for 2014 was \$195.6M, a 56.4% increase over the prior year. Net loss was \$15.2M.

The company has not yet set a price range or number of shares to be offered, but it plans to list on the Nasdaq as ETSY.

MESQUITE SEEKS TRAVEL PR RECIPE

Mesquite, the Dallas suburb that boasts "Real. Texas. Flavor." and a professional rodeo, is looking for a tourism PR recipe.

The \$400k-a-year Mesquite Convention and Visitors Bureau rolled an RFP last week for marketing and PR to burnish the city's tourist credentials. It wants an agency with destination marketing experience to handle counsel, research and strategy. Proposals are due March 19.

RFP: <http://odwpr.us/1x8IqZ0>.

O'NEILL HEADS IR/PR AT HEALTH NET

Health Net, the publicly traded, Los Angeles-based HMO and healthcare services provider, has brought in Peter O'Neill in the new post of VP for IR and corporate communications.

The 58-year-old O'Neill healthcare PR vet spent the past year and a half consulting after a stint as VP of PR for R&R Partners. He was senior VP of public and community relations for UnitedHealth Group Nevada and director of corporate communications for WellPoint.

Health Net, which moved from a non-profit to for-profit in the 1990s, administers benefits and provides healthcare service for about six million people, including through government programs like Medicare, Tricare and Veterans Affairs.

Revenue for 2014 was \$145.6M.

O'Neill reports to James Woys, chief financial and operating officer and interim treasurer.

Many groups fight lawsuit abuse including Faces of Lawsuit Abuse and the Anti-Lawyer Party. Biggest by far is the Chamber of Commerce with a special \$49M budget.

Lisa Rickard is president of the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform whose mission is to “restore balance, ensure justice, and maintain integrity with the civil legal system by championing common sense legal reforms at the state, federal and global levels.”

It published in October 2014 Unprincipled Prosecution, subtitled, “Abuse of Power & Profiteering in the New Litigation Swarm,” a 32-page study of legal abuses. Topics include “Roots of the Swarm: Multiple, Overlapping Enforcement,” and “Self Interest Trumps Public Interest.” Says the Institute: “Lawsuit abuse is rampant. Unfettered litigation inhibits the creation of new products and companies, kills jobs, and drags down our entire economy. “While the U.S. has the greatest legal system in the world, in some cases the courts have been hijacked by players who abuse the system...we conduct cutting edge research and tirelessly advocate for solutions with Congress, state legislatures, federal regulators, international policymakers, and the courts to effect meaningful change.”

U.S. Legal Costs Are Highest

The U.S. Chamber itself, world’s largest business group representing 3 million+ businesses, had revenues of \$164M in 2013.

The U.S. has the highest liability costs as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product of any nation, says a 2013 study for the CofC’s Institute for Legal Reform. Such costs are 2.6 times the average level of the Eurozone economies. Costs were found to be four times higher than those of the least costly European countries in the study – Belgium, the Netherlands and Portugal.

The number of lawsuits is viewed as a problem by 87% of American voters according to the April 2013 survey by Penn Schoen Berland and Public Opinion Strategies. Abuse of the legal system has risen in the past decade, said 69%.

One in three voters and 43% of small business owners say they have been threatened with or involved in a civil lawsuit. The CoC notes that small businesses account for 64% of jobs created in the U.S. economy.

There are currently 1.22 million U.S. lawyers filing 15 million civil lawsuits yearly—391 lawyers per 100,000 population. Japan has 23 per 100,000 and Canada, 26.

The weight that the CoC attaches to the task of bringing common sense to the legal system is attested to by the \$1,795,889 salary plus \$43,116 in benefits that was paid to Rickard in 2013.

A law graduate of American University, D.C., she has been president since 2003 and has led ILR’s battle against the “litigation explosion.” She was previously VP, federal and state government affairs, Dow Chemical, and a partner in Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld.

Bryan Quigley, SVP of strategic communications

was paid a total of \$379,757.

Legal Institute Invites Cases

The ILR, which practices “aggressive outreach to reporters,” invites comments and cases from business-people and citizens via a phone number and a comment box on its site. We are sending it several instances that we feel illustrate the abuse of the legal system.

Most current and costly is the legal onslaught against Southampton, Westhampton Beach, Quogue and Jewish People Opposed to the Eruv which has already cost them more than \$1 million in legal fees with threats of millions more in costs and penalties.

A 2002 Appeals Court finding quotes a precedent case from 1971 that is based on what a “reasonable, informed observer” would make of Jewish Orthodox markings on utility poles—he or she would not know what they mean.

Outdated, Fatuous Precedents Cited

Such a person has long ceased to exist. The new “reasonable” person, since at least 1995, is “more informed than the casual passerby” and knows the deep religious meanings behind the markers, according to UCLA Law Prof. Alexandra Susman who quotes an opinion by Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor.

Those who want a quick understanding of the horrors of modern litigation should open the link to the Appeals Court decision where they will find 16,981 words devoted to endless arguments favoring eruvim supported by links to 238 precedent cases and millions of other words. The “common sense” advocated by the ILR leads to the conclusion that religious symbols have no business being permanently attached to telephone poles.

The N.J. Federal District Court that the Appeals Court overruled had it right: “It is quite clear that there is no evidence to support the conclusion that the [Tenafly] Borough Council acted out of animosity to Judaism in general or to Orthodox Jews in particular...the reason animating the Council’s decision was its concern that public property not be permanently allocated to a religious purpose.”

ILR’s blasts at the legal system seem strong but they are weak tea compared to the knocks being served by other critics.

The Anti-Lawyer Party says states have “unconstitutional aristocratic courts since their constitutions and/or unconstitutional ‘lawyer systems’ require judges to be lawyers, creating a ruling class which is forbidden by Article IV, Section 4, U.S. Constitution.” The A-LP, in an essay last modified on May 6, 2013, highlights an abuse we see taking place in the Hamptons eruv battle—an endless series of court hearings and motions instead of a “speedy” trial by jury. Says A-LP: “Lawyers and lawyer-judges created unconstitutional ‘lawyer system’ pre-trial ‘motions’ and ‘hearings’ to have extortionist litigation, which is barratry [litigation for harassment or profit] and is also in violation of the U.S. Constitution as this places defendants in double jeopardy many times over.

– Jack O’Dwyer