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UK TAPS FINN PARTNERS FOR US FTA PUSH

Finn Partners is spearheading Britain's push to establish a Free Trade Agreement with the US in the aftermath of its exit from the European Union.

Under a \$540K three-year contract with London's Department for International Trade, the independent firm faces a challenge of tackling the perception among trade & investment audiences that the UK is less innovative, creative and technologically advanced than some of its competitors.



Jessica Berk Ross

A "GREAT Ready to Trade" campaign will highlight how UK businesses are designing the future by meeting the challenges facing society and in some of the UK's key business sectors.

Finn Partners is tasked with delivering a campaign that will "build on the UK's strong free trade narrative and paint a holistic picture of the UK as a desirable trade and investment partner for North American companies," says the agreement.

Via strategic communications, digital content, media placement and events, Finn Partners will highlight the UK's innovation as well as showcasing opportunities to collaborate with North American businesses to bring to life DIT's vision of being the "good news" department.

Finn Partners' Jessica Berk Ross, managing partner, and Robin Crawford, senior partner, lead the six-member DIT team. They report to Chantal Robinson, head of marketing for DIT Americas.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN HIRES FIORE

The Human Rights Campaign, the LGBTQ advocacy group, has hired Jennifer Fiore as senior VP of communications and marketing.

Most recently, she served as a senior advisor for communications and digital on Julián Castro's presidential campaign.

Fiore previously worked as deputy assistant secretary for public affairs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and was executive director of Campaign to Unload, which promotes disinvestment from the gun industry.



Jennifer Fiore

"Jennifer brings significant political and advocacy experience to this role, as well as a true passion for fighting for what is right," said HRC President Alphonso David.

Olivia Alair Dalton, who was senior VP for communications & marketing at the Human Rights Campaign, exited last year to open Dalton Strategies in DC.

NYC HUDSON RIVER PARK NEEDS PR HELP

The Hudson River Park Trust, which oversees four miles of Manhattan shoreline parkland, renovated piers and cultural/recreational/educational programming, is looking for a PR firm to heighten awareness of its brand among New Yorkers and visitors. There is no incumbent firm.



Created in 1998, the Trust transformed decaying piers and parking lots along Manhattan's west side into a premium destination that attracts 17M visitors a year.

Hudson River Park runs from just north of Chambers St. to 59th Street and includes Chelsea Piers, Circle Line and the Intrepid Museum, along with a Dept. of Sanitation marine transfer station and a ferry and helicopter terminal.

A large donation by the Diller-Von Furstenberg Family Foundation is bankrolling construction of "Little Island," a public park pier slated to open in 2021.

The Trust wants a full-service PR firm with five years of NYC media pitching experience for press relations, positioning, promotion and development of a communications strategy.

It plans to issue a three-year contract with two one-year renewal options. The work begins June 1.

Proposals are due May 15. They go to Kira Levy, director, marketing & events, at PRfirmRFP2020@hrpt.ny.gov.

EDELMAN WORKS NMG BANKRUPTCY

Edelman is handling the Chapter 11 filing of Neiman Marcus Group, the debt-burdened luxury retailer that is blaming the COVID-19 crisis for the need to restructure its finances.

NMG CEO Geoffroy van Raemdonck said the company prior to COVID-19 was making solid progress toward long-term profitable and sustainable growth.

"We have grown our unrivaled luxury customer base, expanded our industry-leading customer relationships, achieved higher omni-channel penetration, and made meaningful strides in our transformation to become the preeminent luxury customer platform," he said.



Van Raemdonck blamed the "unprecedented disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic," for placing "inexorable pressure on our business."

NMG, which is based in Dallas, plans to use the Chapter 11 process to shed \$4B in debt. The company also announced that temporary shutdowns of some Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman and Last Call stores will be extended through May 31 to protect the health and safety of its customers and staff.

Edelman's Allison McLarty is working the bankruptcy.

GLOVER PARK CRIES FOR ARGENTINA

Glover Park Group is providing strategic communications services to Argentina, which is on the brink of defaulting on \$66B in debt held by Wall Street bankers and other foreign entities.



Alberto Fernandez

The COVID-19 economic lockdown, rising healthcare costs, rampant inflation and increased poverty among its 45M people make it likely that Argentina will default for the third time in two decades when a \$503M debt payment comes due May 22.

The government of Alberto Fernandez, which took power seven months ago, is forecasting a 6.5 percent economic contraction in 2020.

Glover Park is counseling Argentina's DC embassy on its diplomatic and economic relations with the US as a subcontractor to Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer.

Brett O'Brien, managing director; Joshua Gross, senior VP, and Elliot Stein, director, report to Juan Usandivaras, who oversees investment and international trade at the embassy.

WPP owns Glover Park Group.

BERLINROSEN REBRANDS

BerlinRosen has rebranded via a new website, social media presence and "Your story, above all" mission statement as the New York-based firm celebrates its 15th anniversary year.

The rebrand is a result of a year-long process designed to showcase how BR embraces its clients' goals and works with them to develop and execute plans that get results, explained Valerie Berlin and Jonathan Rosen.

The revamped website contains 13 subsites dedicated to practice areas served by the firm. They are arts & culture, campaigns & elections, crisis management, education, health, issue advocacy, labor, lifestyle & travel, nonprofits & philanthropy, public affairs, real estate & land use, renewable energy & environment, and technology & innovation.

There also is a dedicated subsite for COVID-19 response that shows how BR helps clients navigate the crisis with tactics across earned media, digital strategy, advertising, internal communications and crisis management.

BR represents clients such as Samsung, Singapore Airlines, UNICEF USA, HBO Max, Bloomberg Media, Ford Foundation and Brookfield.

CONDÉ NAST NAMES CARRIG GLOBAL CCO

Condé Nast has named Danielle Carrig global chief communications officer, a newly created position at the company, effective May 26.



Danielle Carrig

Carrig joins Condé Nast from VICE Media Group, where she also served as global chief communications officer. She has also led teams at Netflix responsible for visual communications, events, public relations and talent relations and was senior vice president, communications and public affairs at A+E Networks' Lifetime cable channel.

At Condé Nast, Carrig will lead internal and external communications, media relations, crisis management and employee engagement. In addition, she will act as a strategic counselor and advisor to CEO Roger Lynch.

NEWS OF FIRMS

Interpublic Group is taking its 2020 annual meeting of stockholders online. "Due to public health concerns resulting from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak," IPG announced, "the Annual Meeting will be conducted in a virtual format only." Stockholders will not be able to attend the meeting in person. The meeting will still be held on May 21 at 9:30 a.m. EST. Stockholders of record as of the close of business on March 30, or proxy holders for such stockholders, are still entitled to participate in the annual meeting.

Bob Gold & Associates has established a bankruptcy and litigation communications practice. Services to be offered by the practice include crisis response support, message development and media training, social media monitoring, press/media relations, investor relations and content creation. The practice is led by agency principal Bob Gold and Paul Jacobson, managing partner of Denver-based crisis communications firm SilversJacobson.



Bob Gold

CJ Media Solutions, LLC has launched The Crisis Averted Podcast to educate small business owners on communicating effectively during a crisis. The podcast is available for download on Apple Podcasts and Spotify. PR professionals interested in being interviewed on the podcast can email CJ Media Solutions founder CJ Arlotta at cj@cjmediasolutionsllc.com. CJ Media Solutions provides media relations, content writing, thought leadership, ghostwriting and crisis communications services to hospitality and tech companies.

BCW has introduced BCW DX, which is focused on working with companies to accelerate their digital transformation, or "DX," strategy. The initiative uses BCW's proprietary software developer research and experience in the developer community to help clients recruit talent and upskill existing staff. It also helps companies test features before going to market and throughout the development and deployment lifecycles. BCW DX also offers employee trainings and support for rolling out new collaboration tools and customer engagement platforms.

FLM Harvest has launched the Seed to Succeed 2020 program, which will award \$75,000 of in-kind agency services to a nonprofit in the agriculture, food and rural lifestyle sectors. The agency will work with the winner to identify, define and achieve its marketing objectives. FLM Harvest is accepting applications for the award until June 30 at flmharvest.com/seedtosucceed. The grant recipient will be announced in mid-August with work beginning in September. Questions may be directed to seedtosucceed@flmharvest.com.

Big Whig Media, a Washington, DC multimedia center and studio production facility, partnered with event company **Viva Creative** to produce 'The Call To Unite,' a 24-hour global livestream created to bring the world together during the COVID-19 crisis. More than 200 hosts and guests participated in the May 1 event, including Oprah Winfrey and former Presidents George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Jimmy Carter. Big Whig Media provided the base studio for the production and the communications capabilities that delivered it. VIVA Creative directed the development of the overall event and developed its website, Unite.US, where the Call To Unite content is now available on-demand.

TRUST IN MEDIA UP, TRUST IN TRUMP DOWN

Staggering unemployment, a downturned economy and mounting criticisms over his handling of the coronavirus threat have eroded President Trump's favorability among Americans, potentially hurting his chances of reelection to



which he was practically a shoo-in until only months ago.

A new survey conducted by emotional engagement research consultancy Brand Keys puts this possibility into focus, revealing that the President's approval ratings, while never high to begin with, might be in even more trouble than previously thought.

The Brand Keys survey, which bi-annually measures how much trust Americans have in the President and how it compares to their trust levels toward the media outlets they view regularly, found that overall trust in the President currently stands at only 12 percent. This reveals a three percent drop from the 15 percent trust rating Trump achieved during Brand Keys' previous round of tracking in February and accounts for a drop of more than half from the 29 percent trust rating Trump enjoyed when Brand Keys' survey first began in August 2018.

In contrast, trust in presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden is three times higher—currently standing at 43 percent.

When broken out by political affiliation, 30 percent of respondents identifying as Republican said they currently trust Trump, compared to four percent of independents and two percent of Democrats. Meanwhile, 72 percent of Democrats said they trust VP Biden, compared to 39 percent of independents and 18 percent of Republicans.

While President Trump faces new ratings lows, broadcast and cable media networks, on the other hand, were rated consistently higher for trust than ever, as homebound Americans find themselves consuming unprecedented amounts of news coverage amid a daily deluge of constant COVID-19-related content.

Of the nine media brands evaluated in the Brand Keys survey, eight of them—ABC, BBC, Bloomberg, CBS, CNN, MSNBC, PBS and NBC—saw improved trust ratings among Americans. Of those eight, half—ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC—exhibited significantly higher trust ratings compared to the last wave of tracking two months ago.

CNN revealed the single largest trust gains, at 90 percent, up from the 83 percent it exhibited in February and revealing gains of 21 percent from the initial 69 percent trust the network revealed when Brand Keys' survey began two years ago. Two other networks—MSNBC and BBC—also exceeded 90 percent trust levels, at 94 percent and 90 percent, respectively.

Only one media brand—Fox News—failed to gain in viewership approval, falling two percent from its 89 percent trust level in February. Fox was widely criticized after prime-time anchors—namely, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham—famously flip-flopped on COVID-19, initially downplaying the threat of the virus as a “hoax” before eventually falling in line to reiterate the Trump admin's warnings regarding the dangers of COVID-19.

The latest installment of Brand Keys' Media Trust Tracker surveyed 5,226 respondents during the last week of April. The report is conducted for media and marketing publication MediaPost.

NYT POSTS 1% Q1 GROWTH

The New York Times Co. reported Q1 revenues inched ahead 1.0 percent to \$443.6M while operating profit tumbled 21 percent to \$27.3M due to a 15.2 percent decline in advertising sales to \$106.1M.

CEO Mark Thompson warned investors that Q2 advertising is expected to fall from 50 percent to 55 percent “with limited visibility beyond that.”

The COVID-19 crisis has rocked the NYTC's key luxury, media, entertainment and financial advertising categories.

The company added a record-setting 587K net new digital subscriptions during the quarter despite allowing free access to the majority of its coronavirus coverage. Eighty percent of new digital subscribers were for the core news site, while the balance were for crosswords, cooking and audio products.

NYTC now has more than 4M digital-only news subscribers, 1M subs for non-news products and 6M in total print/digital subs.

The company posted a 5.4 percent rise in subscription revenues to \$285.4M. Digital revenues surged 18.3 percent to \$130M, while print revenues declined 3.4 percent to \$155.4M.

“The revenue from those subscriptions—and our strong balance sheet—give us real confidence,” said Thompson.

MEDIA MANEUVERS

RT America, part of Moscow-based media company RT (formerly known as Russia Today), is getting ready for the 2020 election by hiring additional staff in the US, according to the *New York Post*. Igor Ogorodnev, the Web editor-in-chief for the company in the US, told the Post that the recruitment drive is “an expansion and an upgrade.” A Post source who responded to an ad for one of the positions was allegedly told by Ogorodnev that he was interested in such stories as the “rumor” that COVID-19 deaths are being exaggerated by US media outlets. He also specified “no anti-Trump coverage... We're not the Washington Post.”

Traditional pay TV is taking a big hit from the coronavirus crisis. A report from independent research firm MoffettNathanson says that subscriptions to pay TV services fell by 1.8 million in the first quarter, which it says is the biggest quarterly drop ever recorded. The percentage of U.S. households with pay TV service sits at 63 percent—the lowest number since 1995. The report adds that satellite services were particularly hard hit, down by 1 million for the third quarter in a row. But things are tough for cable operators too, with 600,000 cutting the cord during the first quarter.

TIME for Kids, a weekly magazine for elementary school students, has launched a Spanish language digital edition, with new digital editions in additional languages planned in the coming weeks. *TIME for Kids in Spanish* is available globally through the *TIME for Kids* free digital library, launched in March, which brings the previously classroom-only publication to homes.

The company says that the digital library is part of its effort to support teachers, families and students around the world who are dealing with school closures due to the coronavirus pandemic.



MOBILE SEEKS PARKS PR

Mobile's Dept. of Parks and Recreation is looking for a firm to promote its public parks as fun and safe places where everybody is somebody.

The Dept. sees its mission as "increasing the social, emotional, and physical well-being of our community by providing diverse activities in secure and welcoming spaces," according to its RFQ.



It wants to hire a firm to assist in marketing communications programs to promote its parks, facilities, programs and events.

The desired partner will conduct market research, pitch strategic research-based recommendations, develop a creative brand awareness campaign, handle social media and measure and analyze results.

Qualifications are due May 15.

They can be sent electronically to MPRDDirector@city-ofmobile.org or mailed to: City of Mobile; Director of Parks and Recreation; 48 North Sage Avenue; Mobile, AL 36607

Click [here](#) for the RFQ.

BGR WORKS US MEDIA FOR KAZAKHSTAN

BGR Government Affairs is providing strategic communications and media outreach for Kazakhstan, the oil-rich central Asia state.

Nursultan Nazarbayev, the country's only leader since it was carved off from the Soviet Union, stepped down in 2019 after thirty years at the helm.

The collapse of oil prices and spread of COVID-19 has hammered Kazakhstan's economy.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke with Kazakhstani President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev in April about joint efforts to address the pandemic and reaffirmed their intent to work closely on bilateral and global affairs.

Pompeo visited Kazakhstan in February.

BGR PR president Jeffrey Birnbaum and VP Jo Maney work on the \$160K contract. They report to Erzhan Kazzyhanov, Kazakhstan's ambassador to the US.

4MEDIA GROUP ACQUIRES NEWS GENERATION

UK-based PR services collective 4media group has acquired Bethesda, MD-based broadcast media relations firm News Generation.

Terms of the acquisition weren't publicly disclosed.

News Generation, which specializes in radio placements, audio news releases, satellite media tours, podcasts and public service announcements, was founded in 1997 by president and CEO Susan Matthews Apgood. Clients include associations, non-profits, government agencies and corporations.

News Generation retains its name and branding for the foreseeable future in light of the acquisition. Apgood and all News Generation staff will be integrated into 4media group and News Generation's Bethesda, MD office will remain open.

4media group said the acquisition will bolster the communications group's suite of tailored media relations services.

London-based 4media group, which was founded in 2016, specializes in market research, digital, broadcast services and PR. It maintains a half-dozen offices in the U.S., in New York, Chicago, Atlanta, Washington DC, Orlando and Bentonville, Arkansas.



INVESTORS WANT COVID-19 RECOVERY NEWS

US investors are seeking more forward-looking news related to the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically on how companies are planning to recover from the crisis, according to a survey conducted by Dukas Linden Public Relations.

A majority (56 percent) of respondents want to read or hear about post-COVID-19 recovery scenarios, while 13 percent don't.

Forty-six percent of respondents stepped up their consumption of financial news during the pandemic. A little more than a quarter (26 percent) of respondents are reading less.

There's a desire for more "positive news" about COVID-19. Sixty percent want stories about how businesses are coping with lockdowns or how communities are "flattening the curve."

The LDPR survey, conducted with YouGov, found that 34 percent of online readers are more apt to click on a story with a positive headline than a negative one.

Richard Dukas noted that as more states relax at-home restrictions, investors are eager for actionable insights on the direction of the economy, financial markets and specific industry sectors.

He's advising clients to begin communicating their post-COVID-19 strategic plans so that investors, customers, employees, supply chain partners and other stakeholders know what to expect.



Richard Dukas

ON THE MOVE

Maurice Lévy, Publicis Groupe chairman, joins advisory board of Humanity 2.0. Associated with the Holy See, the nonprofit organization facilitates collaborative ventures between the public, private and faith-based sectors on human development projects. The advisory board oversees the strategic and ethical direction of Humanity 2.0's impact initiatives. Matthew Sanders, CEO of Humanity 2.0, said that Levy's "experience across so many sectors will be instrumental in ensuring we focus our resources in the most strategically impactful way."

Burrelles promotes Cathy Del Colle to president. The company's first female president, Del Colle has been with Burrelles since 1987, most recently serving as chief customer officer. She has also been president of the Washington Women in Public Relations. In her new role, she will lead the firm's operations and corporate strategy. Burrelles chairman of the board Robert C. Waggoner said Del Colle's promotion was "a natural next step in the rebranding and relaunch plan we kicked off in 2019."



Cathy Del Colle

Kelley Kronenberg, a business law firm with 11 locations throughout Florida and the United States, has hired **Michelle Martinez Reyes** as chief relations officer, with oversight of all of the firm's public relations activities. Martinez Reyes was previously at Greenspoon Marder, where she was chief marketing officer. Kelley Kronenberg COO and principal partner Howard L. Wander said that Martinez Reyes "brings us key experience and relationships that align seamlessly with our business goals, and current and future plans for the firm."

THOSE AT RISK SATISFIED WITH COVID-19 INFO

Nearly half (48 percent) of respondents already dealing with underlying health conditions are satisfied with the amount of information available to them about COVID-19, according to a study from GCI Health and the Harris Poll. Respondents have several suggestions about how the healthcare industry could provide more effective communications.



Wendy Lund

First on the list was helping them prepare for emergencies (cited by 47 percent of respondents with chronic conditions as opposed to 42 percent of all respondents). They also were looking for tips on improving mental wellbeing (46 percent vs. 42 percent) and information on alternative medicine (32 percent vs. 30 percent).

About a third of those with an underlying condition (33 percent) said they felt they were getting too much information about COVID-19, with 13 percent saying they weren't getting enough.

The study also uncovered a significant amount of coronavirus overload for all respondents. Two thirds (66 percent) said they were overwhelmed by the news coverage of the topic. In addition, more than half (52 percent) said that the glut of COVID-19 news made it difficult to find health information on any other topic.

A surprising discovery: the reputation of the pharmaceutical industry is on the upswing. "Yet-to-be-released data indicates that people living with chronic conditions view the pharmaceutical industry more favorably than those who are not managing a condition," said The Harris Poll managing director Rob Jekielek.

"There is a clear desire, especially among those managing chronic conditions for non-COVID-related content, and this is an important time for the industry to adapt and rethink communications strategies, according to GCI Health CEO Wendy Lund.

The COVID-19 Health Impact Survey polled more than 2,000 U.S. adults (including 1,300 suffering from chronic conditions) from April 14 to 16.

FTI POSITIONS FOR POST-COVID-19 ERA

FTI Consulting has added Susan Donofrio, Angelo Thalassinos and Brian Waldman to its strategic communications unit to bolster its expertise in the airline and restructuring categories.

Donofrio, who has more than 20 years of experience in the airline business, joins from Macquarie Holdings, where she was a senior equity research analyst. Earlier, she was IR chief at Hawaiian Airlines and lead IR consultant at CIT Aerospace.

Thalassinos, a restructuring expert, was previously at Reorg Research, Inc., where he led distressed debt and restructuring coverage in the Americas focusing on Chapter 11 bankruptcies and related state and federal litigation.

Waldman was senior VP at Teneo and a member of its strategy & communications unit, concentrating on M&As, crisis response and investor engagement. He joins FTI's special situations and financial communications teams.

The trio takes the managing director title and is based in New York.

CONSERVATIVES LAUNCH CLIMATE GROUP

Saying progressives can't own the climate debate, conservatives Drew Bond and John Hart have launched C3 Solutions (Conservative Coalition for Climate Solutions).

The goal is to protect America's natural and economic environment by advancing conservative ideas and principles.

Bond served as chief of staff at the Heritage Foundation and Hart was communications director for Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn. Former Pennsylvania Senator and presidential hopeful Rick Santorum serves on C3's advisory board.

C3 Solutions will provide credible information and analysis, hold events, build coalitions, and promote examples of entrepreneurship, innovation and stewardship. The C3 launch comes as research shows more young Republicans want government to do more to fight climate change and about seven-in-ten of Republicans under age 45 believe human activity is causing global warming.

QATAR SLICES FEE AT BALLARD PARTNERS

The Embassy of Qatar trimmed Ballard Partners monthly fee from \$115K to \$50K effective May 1.

The Trump-connected firm is working to better US-Qatari relations and on political, legislative and regional developments in Qatar.

Qatar initially signed Ballard Partners to a one-year contract on June 28, 2018, at \$50K per-month. That fee was upped to \$115K last year.

The current amended pact runs through December 31.

Qatar was the biggest foreign spender at Ballard Partners during the six-month period ended Oct. 31, 2019. It contributed \$660K of the total \$2.1M fees.

Brian Ballard is finance chair of the Florida unit of Trump Victory organization.



ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

Strategic Objectives has been named public relations agency of record for **Kia Canada Inc.** The agency will provide strategy expertise while partnering with Kia's public relations team on media relations, influencer partnerships, special events, auto shows and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Kia Canada national public relations manager Susan Bernardo said that the Toronto-based agency has "the deep automotive experience, combined with the out-of-the-box creativity, needed to help build the Kia brand in Canada."

North 6th Agency has been selected as public relations agency of record for **Breather**, a flexible, private workspace provider with a global network of private office and meeting spaces. N6A will support Breather on a variety of corporate communications and external media initiatives, including competitive awareness and revenue outcomes. The agency's efforts will combine earned media, amplification and KPI alignment.

Diffusion is now agency of record for **Verb Energy**, which makes what the company says is the fastest-growing caffeinated energy bar on the market. The agency is responsible for all corporate and consumer media relations as it works with the brand to raise awareness of Verb's text-to-order DTC model, and to support an initiative that will supply over half a million of the brand's energy bars to healthcare workers involved in the fight against COVID-19.

COMMENTARY

What is Donald Trump's plan to deal with the expected near doubling of the daily coronavirus death toll to 3,000 in early June? There is none.

Unless reopening the economy and shifting the focus of the coronavirus task force to “safety and opening up our country again” is deemed a public health strategy.



Trump, who wasted valuable time before recognizing the threat from COVID-19, will position the daily carnage as acceptable collateral damage in order to rebuild the economy.

The Grim Reaper strategy is at the core of Trump's re-election campaign.

Former Jersey governor Chris Christie, who led Trump's presidential transition team, told CNN: “Of

course, everybody wants to save every life they can—but the question is, towards what end, ultimately. Are there ways we can thread the needle here to allow that there are going to be deaths, and there are going to be deaths no matter what.” In short, you are on your own.

NYU professor Jay Rosen, who writes the [PressThink](#) blog, wrote that Trump's plan is to default on public problem solving and then prevent the public from understanding the consequences of that default.

Sowing confusion is the key. Rosen wrote:

“The plan is to [have no plan](#), to let [daily deaths between one and three thousand](#) become a normal thing, and then to create massive confusion about who is responsible—by telling the governors they're in charge without doing what only the federal government can do, by fighting with the press when it shows up to be briefed, by fixing blame for the virus on China or some other foreign element.”

What is the beauty of Trump's “no plan” strategy? The media won't be able to uncover any nefarious plot because the facts will be known, and simultaneously they will be inconceivable, noted Rosen.

Governors Andrew Cuomo, Gavin Newsom and Mike DeWine emerged as the political stars of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their steady and fact-based virus briefings stand in sharp contrast to the carnival presentations made by president Trump.

The performance of the gubernatorial trio may explain why [Edelman's updated Spring Trust Barometer](#) shows the US registered the greatest gap among the 11 nations polled between trust in state/local leaders and national ones.

The US has a 20-point bulge between trust in local leaders (66 percent) and federal leadership (46 percent). That tops the 15-point gap in Japan and 11 point difference in France.

Democrats have a higher level of trust in local government than Republicans (73 percent vs. 65 percent), though both groups showed an 11-point improvement from the January Barometer.

Democrats appear to be turned off by the Trump Show as their trust in the federal government dipped five percentage

points to 40 percent since January.

Republicans rallied around the president as trust in the federal government jumped 10 points to 59 percent.

[Edelman](#) found that trust in government leaders jumped 13 points to 61 percent, topping the 58 percent score of CEOs.

Respondents faulted CEOs for putting profits over people (50 percent), not helping smaller businesses survive by extending credit or giving them more time to pay bills (46 percent) and failing to protect workers and customers (41 percent).

The Barometer charted an eight percent trust rise in traditional media to 69 percent.

It found that doctors (80 percent), scientists (79 percent), health officials (71 percent) and local government leaders (61 percent) are the most trusted sources of information about the pandemic.

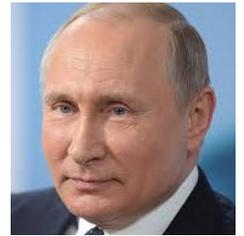
Russia leader Vladimir Putin is using COVID-19 to crack down on media trying to investigate the truth about the virus, according to a report by PEN America, the advocacy group for writers.

The Russian government initially downplayed the threat posed by the virus and failed to implement programs or public information campaigns to prevent the spread.

PEN reports that Russian media are now being charged with “dissemination of false information” and “sowing panic among the public and provoking public disturbance.”

Russia, which spread misinformation in the US during the 2016 presidential election, has new laws aimed at people who spread false information about the epidemic.

That measure gives the Russian leader a wide net to scoop up media figures or dissenters.



Thanks but no thanks. Three-in-ten Americans say they won't take a COVID-19 vaccine once it is developed, according to a poll [by Bospar, tech PR firm](#).

Young people (18 to 24) are least likely (57.6 percent) to get a vaccine, while those over 65 are the most likely to vaccinate at 78.3 percent.

Democrats are more likely to vaccinate than Republicans (79.1 vs. 67.9 percent). Heterosexuals are more likely to consider vaccination than the LGBTQIA community (71.5 vs. 55.9 percent).

The poll asked people how they would treat others who declined to vaccinate.

Almost half (49.4 percent) said they would respect their choice. That was followed by physically avoid non-vaccinators (37.8 percent), pressure non-vaccinators to change their minds (25 percent) and warn others about the status of those who did not get vaccinated (18.7 percent).

More than one-in-ten (11.1%) of the respondents say they wouldn't care one way or another about a person's vaccination decision.

—Kevin McCauley