



**Kevin McCauley**  
Editor-in-Chief

# O'Dwyer's

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271 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016  
212/679-2471. Fax: 212/683-2750  
[www.odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com); [jobs.odwyerpr.com](mailto:jobs.odwyerpr.com)

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## **IPG REPORTS ROBUST 15.7% Q3 GROWTH**

Interpublic reported Q3 revenues rose 15.7 percent to \$2.3B as it registered solid gains across all operating sectors and geographic regions. Organic growth jumped 15.0 percent.



**Philippe Krakowsky**

CEO Philippe Krakowsky said the “remarkable results” were due to “our exceptionally talented people, and a balanced portfolio of capabilities and expertise.”

IPG DXTRA, the collective of 27 specialty marketing brands including Weber Shandwick, Golin, Revive, Powell Tate, Current Global and Rogers & Cowan PMK, posted an 18.5 percent surge to \$319M in

reported revenues. It was up 18.6 percent organically.

For the nine-month period, DXTRA’s revenues advanced 9.9 percent on a reported basis and 9.0 percent organically.

DXTRA CEO Andy Polansky told *O’Dwyer’s* the PR units posted double-digit gains on both a reported and organic basis. That compares to a year ago mid-single-digit decline.

The technology, auto, healthcare, financial services and consumer products groups experienced strong gains, especially in the North American and UK markets.

Krakowsky upgraded IPG’s full-year organic growth to 11 percent.

## **EDELMAN VICE CHAIRMAN DUBNER EXITS**

[Edelman](#) vice chairman Russell Dubner is exiting [the No. 1 independent firm](#) in December after a 28-year run.

He handled corporate development and chaired Edelman’s Trust Institute, which was launched in June, as a learning laboratory for trust building between companies, institutions, brands and people.



**Russell Dubner**

Dubner also was in charge of DJE Holdings’ sector-specialist agencies, Revere, Salutem, Edifi and Edible. He counseled key clients such as PwC, Genentech and Nationwide.

Edelman will name a new chair for ETI and head of the sector firms in the coming weeks.

In his departure memo, Dubner wrote that he is leaving Edelman “in a strong position, ahead of the curve and leading the market.”

## **DAVID FINN DIES AT 100**

David Finn, a founding father of modern PR who launched [Ruder Finn](#) in 1948 with Bill Ruder, has died. He celebrated his 100th birthday on Aug. 30.

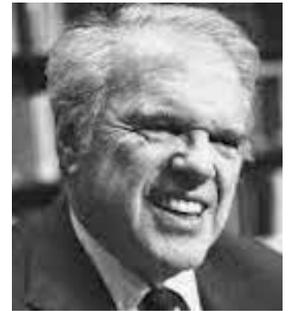
As RF chairman and CEO for more than 70 years, Finn nurtured the growth of corporate communications.

His 1969 book, “The Corporate Oligarch,” developed the groundwork for “stakeholder capitalism” by depicting corporations as “the central institution in American life” while underscoring the importance of public service.

By taking on only clients and projects that he believed in, Finn helped set the stage for the development of the corporate social responsibility practice.

Finn was a leading voice promoting ethics in business and Ruder Finn became the first firm with a standing ethics committee. He led a full life beyond the world of public relations. He was a celebrated photographer who wrote or contributed his photos to more than 100 books.

Ruder Finn has established [www.rememberingdavidfinn.com](http://www.rememberingdavidfinn.com) to honor its co-founder.



**David Finn**

## **GAVI VAX ALLIANCE SEEKS COMMS PARTNER**

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which works to save children’s lives by increasing access to immunization in poor countries, is looking for a strategic communications partner for its [International Finance Facility for Immunisation](#).

Gavi and IFFIm are looking for a firm to support the Gavi innovative finance team to implement its 2022 communications team. The partner also will work closely with the World Bank investor relations team in order to build overall synergies and alignment of messaging.

It will support media and digital media engagement for events and announcements, pitch press releases/op-eds/features, arrange interview opportunities, provide oversight of website content, draft articles for eNewsletters and amplify traditional media activities on digital channels, according to the RFP. The one-year effort will begin Jan. 24 and could be extended for an additional year.

Interested firms must notify Gavi of their intention to bid by Oct. 26. Bids are due Nov. 19.

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



## HOLDING ON TO VALUED EMPLOYEES

Retaining employees takes a lot more than just paying them well, according to a new study from [Weber Shandwick](#) management consultancy unit United Minds.

While a bigger paycheck doesn't hurt, a positive work environment, job security and trustworthy peers come out ahead of competitive salary and benefits in [The Contribution Effect](#), a survey of 2,800 employees across seven countries.

While COVID has made working from home a high-profile perk, it placed surprisingly low (#58 out of 79 factors) on the list for survey respondents. Much more important to them: achieving work/life balance, which came out at #5.

The study says there are several "non-negotiable" factors that must be considered to move the level of employee satisfaction forward: Setting strong ethical standards that are publicly upheld; ensuring clear and timely communications around organizational changes; and committing to improving diversity, equity and inclusion.

Making those improvements requires an effort from all levels of an organization, the study concludes. "Leaders are still accountable for setting the right people policies and leading by example," the study notes. "But it's also up to managers to appreciate and motivate their teams."

## KANSAS CITY WANTS TO BOOK ECODEV FIRM

The Economic Development Corp. of Kansas City wants proposals from firms to manage its marketing and outreach efforts.



EDCKC encourages firms with economic development or government experience to bid for work that covers messaging, brand development, creative design, website maintenance and social media programming.

It will offer a contract for three years with the possibility of extensions. Funding will be determined on a year-to-year basis. Proposals are due Oct. 29. Send five copies to:

Economic Development Corp. of Kansas City; Attn: Heather A. Brown, Interim President/CEO; 300 Wyandotte Street, Ste. 400; Kansas City, MO 64105.

Brown also wants to receive an email version of the proposal at [hbrown@edckc.com](mailto:hbrown@edckc.com).

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

## KERINS TO HELM NEXT SECURITY GROUP

The Next Practices Group has named Ray Kerins as chief executive officer of its Next Security Group, which will focus on public affairs and all forms of security, ranging from cybersecurity to physical protection to new models in how to protect corporations.



**Ray Kerins**

Kerins comes to NextSec from Bayer, where he was senior vice president of corporate affairs. He was previously vice president of external affairs & worldwide communications at Pfizer and executive director, public affairs at Merck.

"Ray joins at a pivotal time as we prepare to launch a series of new offerings from anti-counterfeiting to a new intelligence and listening platform for the private sector and more," said The Next Practices Group chairman Bob Pearson.

## ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

[FINN Partners](#) scores **Mobile Premier League**, Asia's largest esports and skill gaming platform. FINN Partners' sports division will lead MPL's U.S.

launch and ongoing communications strategy. The FINN Partners team will be led by senior partner of sports John Acunto and vice president of sports Matt Saler. MPL unveiled its MPL App in the U.S. in July with nine games available on the Apple App Store and Android. The company expects to reach 300,000 users in the U.S. by the end of this year, with projected gross merchandise revenue of more than \$100 million.



**Red Havas** is named public relations agency of record for tech protection and support company **Likewise**. The agency worked on the communications strategy for Likewise's recent rebrand. It will continue to support its global communications effort, working to elevate visibility of the new brand through integrated earned media, thought leadership and executive visibility campaigns across its key markets of North America, EMEA, and Australia/New Zealand.

**Huge**, IPG's global experience agency, takes on digital agency of record duties for **Planet Fitness**. Huge will work with the company to accelerate its digital strategy as well as

supporting the evolution of its mobile app, website and in-club digital experience. "The team at Huge is known for ground-breaking, innovative work that drives positive impact for brands, defines industries and shapes the culture and world around us. This makes them the ideal partner to further our mission of democratizing fitness," said Planet Fitness chief digital officer Sherrill Kaplan



[Hemsworth Communications](#) wins public and media relations work for **Visit Macon**. The agency will be responsible for driving awareness for Macon, GA through creative public relations and media relations campaigns, focusing on the destination's local events, along with its dining options, outdoor activities and music history. The account will be serviced out of Hemsworth's Atlanta office, with support from its Charleston and Fort Lauderdale teams.

**OutsidePR** is named agency of record for performance denim and apparel brand **DUER**. The agency will support DUER's public relations and communications strategy in the United States, targeting consumer lifestyle, outdoor, and fashion media. Founded in 2013, DUER sells its products through wholesale partners across 27 countries, within Canada with dedicated storefronts and a growing ecommerce channel, and most recently in the US market with new storefronts in Denver and Los Angeles.

**Bubble Agency** is selected as full-service marketing agency for **Advanced Systems Group**, a value-added reseller and provider of managed services, cloud solutions and systems integration to Hollywood film studios, major broadcasters, and tech companies. Bubble Agency will be tasked with devising and executing ASG's marketing strategy across the company, with a particular focus on its cloud solutions and managed services team. ASG is the first client for which the London-based agency will provide purely U.S. marketing services since it launched its Americas entity in August 2021.

## FROM STIGMA TO SOLUTION

If there was ever an urgent health issue that had the punch to share headlines and mindshare with the likes of COVID-19, it's the current waning state of mental health in America. Over the past year, we saw a significant surge in self-reported depression and anxiety—especially among younger people.



**Kelly Dencker**

Poor mental health doesn't just affect a person's quality of life; it can also have a profound impact on the workplace. [According to the National Alliance on Mental Health](#), \$193 billion in earnings is lost each year because of mental illness. Unaddressed, mental health issues and stress can affect workplace performance and productivity, interpersonal engagement and collaboration, and an overall ability to function physically.

However, there was a silver lining from the past year that we can collectively nurture if we are to help turn this crisis into a better state of control: people were willing to talk openly about their mental health struggles.

World-class champions Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka sparked global conversations on mental health in recent months when they courageously spoke out about their personal struggles with anxiety. In fact, [according to Axios](#), Simone's comments drove a greater discussion on mental health than either Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, or Naomi Osaka's withdrawal from the French Open. Her message was simple: "It's ok to not be ok."

### Promoting mental health wellness in the workplace

Unlike heart disease or diabetes, there's no "simple lab test" for mental illness, which makes education and conversation critical catalysts for dialogue, diagnosis and treatment. As October is National Depression and Mental Health Screening Month, there's no better time to explore and adopt year-round workplace strategies that can help combat stigma, promote awareness and provide resources for help.

### Some simple, cost-effective considerations include:

**Show that mental wellness matters.** Many companies offer workplace wellness programs, but few go deep on mental health alone. A number of organizations provide free tools and resources for use in the workplace. Of note, [the American Psychiatric Association](#) created the Center for Workplace Mental Health that aims to eliminate stigma, reduce barriers to care and raise broader mental health awareness through turn-key programs, toolkits, case studies, publications and more.

**Suppress stigma through sensitivity.** Stigma in mental health can be exacerbated by insensitive comments in the workplace. While passing comments like, "She can be so bipolar sometimes" or "He must be mental if he thinks that idea will work" may not be malicious, these words can be offensive to people managing a mental illness, or caring for someone who does. Companies should consider adding sensitivity training on the way we talk about mental health into all employee training programs.

**Maintain year-round mindshare.** There are a number of annual observances that businesses can support each year, including [World Bipolar Day](#) (March 30th), [Mental Health Awareness Month](#) (May), [World Schizophrenia Day](#) (May 24th) and [World Mental Health Day](#) (October 10th), to name a few. These and other observances can provide timely opportunities to bring in outside speakers, host an office-wide

mental health fair, provide mental health days off or offer meditation events.

**Amplify access to the experts.** Many times, people with mental health issues are reluctant to seek help or don't know where to turn. In addition to highlighting a company's own Employee Assistance Program, there are many excellent organizations that can provide direction, such as the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) or [Mental Health America](#). In crisis situations, employees can call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text the [Crisis Text Line](#) (text HELLO to 741741).

**Consider content for caregivers.** According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#), as many as 8.4 million Americans are providing care to an adult with an emotional or mental health issue. The pressures of caring for and seeing a friend or loved one work through a serious mental illness can greatly affect a person's own mental health. Therefore, it's important to consider content and resources for caregivers (e.g., support groups and other resources) when developing programs and materials for your employees.

We're living in extraordinary and uncertain times. While we may feel powerless in preventing the surging needs for mental health care in America, we have a unique opportunity to make a difference in someone's life by activating the credibility, influence and reach of our collective workplace communities to drive education.

It's easy to do, often free of cost and can deliver priceless value to someone in need.

*Kelly Dencker is Executive Vice President and Director of Health and Academics at [Coyne PR](#).*

## EVENTS

**The Institute for Public Relations and PRSA Educators Academy** are presenting "[Allies on the DE&I Journey](#)," the latest in their series of Race in the PR Classroom free webinars, on Oct. 28. The webinars are focused on helping educators develop ways to incorporate race into the PR curriculum, addressing topics such as understanding the pervasive issue of race in higher education and enabling systemic change by creating a more diverse PR faculty and pipeline of practitioners.

**The National Press Club** is helping to raise awareness and generate public support for detained journalist Austin Tice with the first "[Run For Austin Virtual 5K](#)" on Nov. 13. The Run For Austin is the latest in the NPC's ongoing efforts to push for action in Austin's case. After completing the virtual 5K, runners can submit race results through their registered participant account. A Marine combat veteran, Tice delivered dispatches to the *Washington Post* and *McClatchy* before he was detained at a checkpoint near Damascus on August 14, 2012. After more than nine years, he has endured the longest detention of any U.S. journalist to date.

**The 2021 Financial Follies** has been rescheduled for May 20, 2022. The event is the main fundraiser for the New York Financial Writers Association, and helps fund its scholarships to aspiring financial journalists. The November 2021 show was canceled due to the risks of holding an indoor event in the wake of the Delta variant of COVID-19. In addition to the new date, the Follies are moving to a new venue—the Edison Ballroom in midtown NYC. Since the NYFWA has suffered a fundraising slowdown during the pandemic, the per-table price for the Follies has risen to \$6,000 for a table of 10, with a limited number of individual seats available for \$600.

## **OMNICOM ENJOYS 7.1% Q3 GROWTH SPURT**

Omnicom Group's Q3 revenues grew 7.1 percent to \$3.4B due to the moderation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its communications offerings. Net income surged 13.5 percent to \$355.6M.



**John Wren**

CEO John Wren highlighted OMC's robust 11.5 percent advance in organic revenues sparked by "a notable jump in CRM Precision Marketing from our digital transformation work."

The Porter Novelli, Ketchum, Marina Maher Communications and FleishmanHillard PR group registered 10.4 percent Q3 growth to \$359.4M and 10.5 percent on an organic basis.

A 6.8 percent growth spurt powered the PR group to more than \$1B revenues for the nine-month period.

Overall, OMC's US region, which generates 49.6 percent of revenues, slipped 3.3 percent to \$1.7B despite a 7.7 percent advance in organic growth.

Wren warned that global economic conditions may continue to be volatile as long as COVID-19 remains a public health threat.

## **MSL WINS PITCH FOR INSPIRE BRANDS**

Inspire Brands, owner/franchisor of brands such as Dunkin', Sonic Drive-In, Buffalo Wild Wings, Baskin-Robbins and Arby's, serves its PR business to MSL following a competitive pitch.

MSL will lead the planning and execution of fully integrated communications spanning all brands and corporate communications. The agency will leverage its capabilities across strategy, digital, earned media, research, data and creative.

"We were drawn to MSL's legacy of creating trends—not just following them—and making heritage brands continually and refreshingly relevant in culture," said Inspire Brands chief communications officer Chris Fuller.

He also credited MSL's diverse and integrated team, and its "industry-leading influencer marketing platform Fluency that will connect our brands to our guests in authentic ways."

Publicis Groupe owns MSL.

## **STATE STREET'S TISDALLE TAKES TO TIAA**

State Street Advisors chief marketing officer Stephen Tisdalle is heading to TIAA, where he will take on the newly created role of chief brand and demand generation officer, effective Nov. 22.



**Stephen Tisdalle**

At State Street, Tisdalle and his team created the Fearless Girl campaign that spotlighted the benefits of women in corporate leadership roles and was embodied by the bronze sculpture near the New York Stock Exchange.

Tisdalle was previously head of marketing for OppenheimerFunds and a managing director at Ogilvy. He also served as head of Saffron Brand Consultants, where he worked with Goldman Sachs, Bain & Co, KPMG and Swiss Re.

At TIAA he will be responsible for brand and advertising strategy and execution, creative services, paid and social media and all marketing for TIAA's institutional, wealth advisor and consumer channels, reporting to CMO Marty Willis.

## **NEWS OF FIRMS**

**Evins Communications** unveils Evins PR+, a business-focused public relations model which is part of its rebranding and repositioning. Evins PR+ encompasses a range of integrated services within the agency's specialized practice areas: brand essence & content strategy; food, wine & spirits; health & wellness, luxe living, and travel & hospitality. The rebrand also includes a new website and visual assets, as well as a redesign of the agency's social media platforms and newsletter. Evins is also launching a library of new content, including podcasts, video interviews and thought leadership insights from senior management.

**Evins | PR+**

**Bospar** introduces a podcast hosted by CNBC veteran Eric Chemi, who has joined the agency as senior vice president of broadcast strategies. "Politely Pushy with Eric Chemi" will feature interviews with communications professionals from across the media and tech sectors. Topics set to be addressed include tech companies' specific communication challenges, PR's role in driving B2C or B2B decision-making, leveraging asynchronous media placement, and the journey of becoming a communications maven. Audio versions of "[Politely Pushy with Eric Chemi](#)" will be distributed on such podcast platforms as Spotify and Google Podcasts. Video versions will live on [Bospar.com](#) and on [YouTube](#).

New York-based **HeraldPR** is now operating as part of Miami-headquartered **Converge Public Strategies**. Under the combined brand, HeraldPR founder and CEO Warren Cohn will serve alongside Herald president Juda Engelmayer as co-directors of Converge Public Strategies' expanded communications division. Engelmayer will lead crisis and corporate communications. In addition to bolstering the firm's capabilities in issue advocacy, the combined communications division is intended to provide a more robust suite of public relations services to clients in sectors such as technology, healthcare, insurance, transportation, hospitality, luxury, professional services, and beauty.

**UniWorld Group**, multicultural affiliate of WPP, starts up an NIL (name, image, likeness) program to benefit Black collegiate student-athletes. The new sports business consulting unit will partner with major brands to maximize the equity and empowerment impact of their investment in student-athletes. UWG says the unit will ensure that brands' NIL endeavors include equal and fair ad investment allocation and the creation of relevant content. They will also work to develop programs providing mentorship and other industry support to Black student-athletes.



**Peppercomm** launches the [Laughing Matters Council](#) to focus on ways that the principles of humor can be used to drive long-term business success. "Laughter and humor in the workplace have never been more important," said Peppercomm founder and CEO Steve Cody. "Our mission is to raise awareness of humor as an incredible change agent." As part of the council's work, Peppercomm is offering three humor-led service offerings: Stand Up and Connect, a how-to on the tenets of comedy to bring joy and imagination back into work; Stand Up and Lead, focused on managerial leadership and growth; and Stand up and Change, a three-pronged approach to connect and catalyze stakeholders across the change journey utilizing humor, experiential learning, and branding and communications expertise.

## **NY WINE PROMOTER POURS PR RFP**

The New York Wine & Grape Foundation, a private, non-profit organization that promotes the image of grapes and wines from the Empire State, is seeking proposals from marketing agencies.

NYWGF is currently developing a third-party certification for sustainably grown grapes and wine, and is seeking an agency that can devise a marketing plan for that program. NYWGF wants a marketing plan that addresses the needs of grape growers and farm wineries as well as the preferences of Millennial consumers who drive the premium for certified sustainable wines. Additional work required includes conducting market research, creating a certification program positioning statement and strategy and promotional campaign playbook and designing a certification logo style guide.

NYWGF anticipates the project to be completed by June 30, 2022. Budget for the work is \$50,000.

Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 8 and should be sent via email to sustainability program manager Whitney Beaman, [whitneybeaman@nywgf.org](mailto:whitneybeaman@nywgf.org).

Questions should be directed to [whitneybeaman@nywgf.org](mailto:whitneybeaman@nywgf.org) before 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 1.

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

## **PN'S SMITH TO SPIN FOR RECORDING ACADEMY**

Sean Smith has left the EVP of corporate counsel spot at Porter Novelli to join the Recording Academy, which runs the GRAMMY Awards, as EVP of communications.



**Sean Smith**

Before joining Porter Novelli, Smith served as assistant secretary for public affairs at the United States Department of Homeland Security during the Obama administration, managing all aspects of the department's brand and reputation. Before that, he worked as spokesman for Obama for America during the 2008 campaign.

In his new post, Smith will work to develop the Academy's communication strategy and contribute to the strategic planning process for the organization. He will also lead corporate communications, event and entertainment public relations, brand reputation, and crisis mitigation and management.

## **BLUE CRAB PUSHES FOSSIL FUEL PHASE-OUT**

Blue Crab Strategies is handling the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group to support the launch of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance.

The BOGA initiative aims to create an international platform to raise the visibility and create momentum for policies to end the expansion of the fossil fuel industry and to phase out existing production to address the climate crisis.

Blue Crab is in the process of ironing out a formal contract with CECG, but the work is expected to include advising on communications strategy, stakeholder coordination and monitoring progress.

The CECG is a project of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

CEO Jason Waskey is president of the Civic Nation non-profit and helped lead the Clean Cars Campaign, a coalition that fended off president Trump's move to weaken fuel-efficiency standards.

## **WEBER SHANDWICK LANDS MCAFEE**

[Weber Shandwick](#) picks up global consumer communications for online protection provider McAfee. Based out of its Toronto office, Weber Shandwick will leverage its media relations experience, corporate reputation capabilities and emphasis on data-driven intelligence to help further the reach of McAfee's new brand promise across markets in Europe, APAC, LATAM, the U.S. and Canada.



"Weber Shandwick's integrated global network matches our own, and with their deep experience in consumer brand marketing and communications, they are a natural partner to take on storytelling in this new direction, on this scale," said McAfee consumer marketing senior vice president Judith Bitterli.

## **B+B ACQUIRES BERARDI CONSULTING**

Baretz+Brunelle, a top legal PR firm, has acquired Berardi Consulting advisory firm. Jeff Berardi, one-time chief marketing officer at K&L Gates global law firm and chief marketing & communications officer at Ankura management consultancy, will become a partner at B+B.

Spencer Baretz and Cari Brunelle consider Berardi one of the most respected legal marketing pros in the business.

"He has built a reputation as a go-to advisor for top law firms CMOs, but also many others in law firm leadership as firms continue to mature in their support of marketing and business development as a critical business function," they said in a statement.

With Berardi, B+B adds capabilities to help clients develop tactics and programs to strengthen business relationships, create acquisition and new service line strategies, and identify operational efficiencies to prioritize high-value activities with a practice group or administrative function.



**Jeff Berardi**

## **'INTERNET ECONOMY' CREATED 17M JOBS IN '20**

The "internet economy" created more than 17 million jobs in the U.S. last year, up seven million from four years ago, according to a report from the Interactive Advertising Bureau. That follows a 22 percent jump in the contribution that the internet economy has made to the gross domestic product since 2016, reaching \$2.45 trillion last year, out of an overall GDP of \$21.18 trillion.

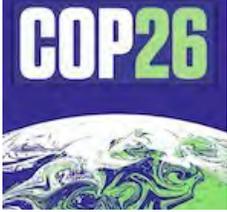
Small firms and self-employed people accounted for 38 percent of internet jobs in 2020, with 34 percent coming from the largest internet companies.

The IAB study also says that news- and information-related internet jobs are on an upward swing, rising to 142,000 last year from 46,000 in 2008.

Another growth area for internet commerce: human resources jobs. In 2016, the IAB found 5,600 jobs that were focused on producing internet software for use by corporate human resources departments. By last year, that number experienced a 13-fold increase to 83,000 jobs.

The increases are also spread out over the entire country. IAB found that every congressional district in the U.S. is home to internet-based workers. Also, in 272 of those districts, there are at least 10,000 internet-dependent jobs.

# COMMENTARY



**Microsoft, Scottish Power, National Grid, GSK, Hitachi, Unilever, SSE** (Scottish energy company), Sky, NatWest Group, Reckitt and Sainsbury's are the "principal partners" of the COP26 climate summit slated for Glasgow next month.

They may not get their money's worth.

COP26 has lost some of its buzz due to expected high-profile no-shows, such as Chinese president Xi Jinping, who heads the No. 1 producer of greenhouse gas, and Russian boss Vladimir Putin.

Joe Biden will lead a robust US delegation to COP26, but the American president had expected a triumphant entry into Glasgow due to the approval of his aggressive plan to combat climate change.

Things haven't worked out for Biden due to West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin's opposition to paying \$150B to power companies to cut reliance on fossil fuels, which deals a serious blow to the climate package.

Biden will be limping into Glasgow.

[Some COP26 sponsors](#) are upset about the organization of the event by the British government. They complain about the breakdown in communications and sponsorship costs that have increased 30 percent since COP25 in Madrid in 2019.

COP26 is also expected to be hit with one of the largest protests in the UK. The British government has promised one of its largest policing operations to keep things under control.

COP26 may turn out to be a replay of the 1999 "Battle of Seattle" WTO protest. That would not be a pretty sight for the corporate sponsors.

The upshot: sponsors may lose out on one of the greatest greenwashing opportunities of all time.

**The Man of Steel disses the USofA.** It's a matter of time before MAGA Nation gins up a boycott of DC Comics for its decision to trash Superman's somewhat jingoistic motto of fighting for "truth, justice and the American way."

Superman is now an advocate for "truth, justice and a better tomorrow." He's a social justice warrior.

DC Comics unveiled the new slogan at DC FanDome on Oct. 16. The new mantra "better reflects the global storytelling lines that we are telling," said DC chief creative officer and publisher Jim Lee. Clark Kent is now officially a globalist, which is kryptonite to the Trumpist America First crowd.

Some MAGA cult members are still struggling with the Oct. 12 news that Jon Kent, son of Clark and Lois Lane, will come out as bisexual in the new "Superman: Son of Kal-El" series.

He will fall for a male reporter "after he mentally and physically burns out from trying to save everyone that he can," teased DC Comics.

The Superman franchise has come a long way since "The Lost Son of Krypton" landed on Earth in 1938.

**Talk about bad timing...** [As the New York Times debates](#) whether America is locked into a Cold War with China or a generational struggle between "autocracy and democracy,"

as president Joe Biden put it, Volvo Cars has scaled back its plan to raise about \$4B via a public offering this week.

China carmaker Zhejiang Geely controls 98 percent of the Swedish company and will own 97 percent of the voting rights after the IPO. Ford Motor unloaded Volvo to Geely for \$1.8B in 2010.

Geely quashed a planned IPO in 2018 because of the trade war between the US and China.

Tensions have greatly escalated during the past three years due to China's detainment of Uighur-Muslims in Xinjiang, crackdown on freedom of expression in Hong Kong, and decision to send scores of warplanes into Taiwan's airspace.

China also caught the US intelligence community flat-footed on Oct. 16 when the *Financial Times* reported the country tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile in August.

CIA director William Burns announced plans earlier this month to establish a China mission center.

He may want to look under the hoods of those Volvo Cars.

**The U.S. is so polarized we can't even agree on the weather.** Two-thirds of Americans told Pew Research that they perceive a rise in extreme weather conditions.

More than half of Democrats (51 percent) said their region of America suffered extreme weather in the past year, while only 39 percent of Republicans felt the same way.

Eighty-five percent of Democrats and Dem-leaning independents say extreme weather across the country is happening more than in the past.

Only 44 percent of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents say the same. More than half (52 percent) of Republicans say there's been no change in extreme weather events over the past years.

C'mon, anybody in their right mind knows there's been a dramatic upswing in the instances of flooding, wildfires and extreme heat during the past decade.

**Donald Trump wanted to recruit Irish mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor** as a spokesperson in the US government's anti-COVID-19 campaign, according to a new book by RTE Washington correspondent Brian O'Donovan.

In "Four Years in the Cauldron," O'Donovan says he saw a document looking at the possibility of tapping McGregor, who is a former Ultimate Fighting featherweight champ, for the PR campaign.

The Irishman also is a big fan of Trump.

He tweeted that Trump was "quite possibly" the greatest president of all time and, at the very least, "sits atop the shoulders of many amazing giants that came before him."

McGregor is back in the news this month for his out-of-the-ring fisticuffs activity. He allegedly broke the nose of Italian DJ Francesco Facchinetti during an unprovoked 2:30 am attack.

Facchinetti was helping McGregor and his fiancée celebrate the Vatican baptism of their son, which occurred the previous day.

In September, McGregor got into a tussle with rapper Machine Gun Kelly at the MTV Awards ceremony.

—Kevin McCauley