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O'Dwyer's Newsletter



The Inside News of
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RUDER FINN GOBBLES UP \$5M SPI GROUP

Ruder Finn has acquired SPI Group, the Jersey-based shop that ranked No. 17 in O'Dwyer's 2018 healthcare rankings with fees of \$5M.

Launched in 1997, SPI provides internal communications services to clients such as Bayer, Novo Nordisk, Merck, Regeneron, Pfizer and Novartis.



Kathy
Bloomgarden

RF CEO Kathy Bloomgarden considers employees the driving force behind productivity, growth and innovation.

"SPI Group uses digital solutions to create experiences that not only engage and activate employees, but build an authentic transparent and highly motivated community," said Bloomgarden.

Steve Goodman launched SPI in 1997. The firm's 30 members bolster RF healthcare unit to about 250 staffers. RF ranked as O'Dwyer's No. 7 independent PR firm, registering overall fees of \$69.1M during the past year.

TENEO READIES LIVE AID II

Teneo has teamed with Global Citizen to plan a 10-hour global media event slated for Sept. 26, 2020 to raise money to end extreme poverty and put the world on track to tackle climate change.

Billed as the largest live-broadcast cause event in history, "Global Goal Live: The Possible Dream" will mobilize citizens, companies, governments, philanthropists and artists in a bid to raise commitments to secure the additional

\$350B annually needed to reach the United Nations' sustainable development goals in the world's 59 poorest countries.

Teneo and Global Citizen plan a press conference in New York on Sept. 26, 2019 to provide details of Global Goal Live, which will take place 35 years after the Live Aid concerts organized by Irish singer/activist Bob Geldorf.

More than 170K people attended Live Aid concerts at London's Wembley Stadium and Philadelphia's John F. Kennedy Stadium. People in more than 150 countries also watched the performances. Live Aid raised more than \$200M for famine relief in Ethiopia.

New York-based Teneo, which bills itself as a global CEO advisory, was founded by Doug Band, who was President Clinton's chief counsel, and Declan Kelly, ex-Financial Dynamics CEO and economic envoy for Northern Ireland for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.



NORTON SHORES, MI NEEDS MARKETING HELP

Norton Shores, Michigan is seeking proposals from agencies that can devise a comprehensive communications plan and marketing strategy for the city of about 24,000, located on the shores of Lake Michigan about 40 mi. west of Grand Rapids.



Norton Shores needs an agency that can conduct research to determine perceptions of Norton Shores and identify opportunities and challenges in enhancing the city's image, as well as develop a marketing strategy for the city that will drive community engagement and awareness among its residents and businesses.

Scope of the work includes establishing an overall strategy and unified communications plan; conveying a consistent message and action plan to reach audiences; recommending initiatives to convey the city's message using visual elements (print collateral as well as print- and web-based ads, PR and events); and assessing and evaluate communications and public outreach protocols.

Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. (EST) on Friday, Oct. 18, and should be sent to: City of Norton Shores; Attn: Anthony Chandler; Director of Administrative Services / Assistant to the City Administrator; 4814 Henry Street; Norton Shores, MI 49441

Questions should be directed to Director of Administrative Services Anthony Chandler, achandler@norton-shores.org or 231/798-4391.

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

COTTON GROUP PICKS H+K STRATEGIES

Hill+Knowlton Strategies edged out a dozen shops to win the sustainability pitch of Cotton Council International, a non-profit that promotes US cotton fiber and manufactured products around the globe.

Launched in November 2018 at the Sourcing USA Summit in Scottsdale, AZ, the US Trust Protocol is designed as an integrated data collection, measurement and verification procedure to document US production practices and their environmental impact. The Protocol is slated to launch in the 2020 growing year.

Sam Lythgoe, H&K's global chief business development officer, leads the effort, which includes helping CCI identify and prioritize potential partners and developing a campaign to create awareness, adoption and advocacy of the Protocol. The firm's three-year partnership with CCI kicks off Oct. 1. Joanne Davis Consulting handled the pitch for the sustainability account.



JUUL'S CORPORATE IMAGE GOES UP IN SMOKE

E-cigarette company Juul Labs has seen its corporate image take a big hit over the past year, a trend that comes in the wake of a growing incidence of vaping-related lung illnesses and deaths as well as plans by the Trump administration to ban selling the flavored juice for e-cigarettes.



According to a survey from Morning Consult, Juul is now next to last in the list of more than 3,000 brands that Morning Consult Brand Intelligence tracks. Only Marlboro

has a lower net favorability rating.

And as more consumers become aware of the company, negative opinions about it rise. While the percentage of survey respondents who had never heard of the company dropped from 80 percent in July 2018 to 37 percent in the period from Aug. 12 to Sept. 12, 2019, the number who have negative opinions of Juul spiked from six percent to 33 percent.

And the youngest consumers are the ones most likely to have a negative view of the company. While 24 percent of Gen Xers and 22 percent of Millennials said that their opinion of Juul was "very unfavorable," 31 percent of Gen Z respondents shared that view.

Juul's declining popularity stands to deal a hit to the investors who fueled it to a \$16 billion valuation last year. In addition to tobacco company Altria, such hedge funds as Tiger Global Management and Marianas Fund Management, as well as venture capital investors, have been reaping big benefits from Juul's rise, according to a report in the *New York Times*. A drop in the company's fortunes could easily result in a reversal of those gains.

RUSSIAN BANK TAPS TRUMP-TIED SWEENEY

Former upstate New York Republican Congressman John Sweeney, who has close ties to president Trump, has signed a \$750K one-year contract to represent Russia's Vnesheconombank, the state-controlled investment bank.



John Sweeney

His job is to meet and lobby US officials to persuade them not to slap any new sanctions on VEB. Sweeney hired Georgetown Strategies for \$25K per-month to backstop his VEB effort.

President Obama sanctioned VEB in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea.

The Treasury Dept. in 2018 listed VEB chair Igor Shuvalov, an ally of Russian president Vladimir Putin, and the bank's supervisory board as affiliated with Russia's government, but did not impose sanctions.

Sweeney served three terms in Congress and was defeated in 2006 by now Empire State Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. He worked for Trump during the New York State Republican primary and then became deputy counsel of the campaign.

Following Trump's victory, Sweeney was named to the executive committee of the transition team and part of the four-member "Tiger Team" that vetted candidates for jobs in the Administration.

COKIE ROBERTS DIES AT 75

Cokie Roberts, one of what a colleague called "The Founding Mothers of NPR," as well as a longtime anchor and political correspondent for ABC News, has died of complications from breast cancer. Roberts was 75.

The daughter of Congressman Hale Boggs and his wife, Lindy (who took over his seat after the plane he was traveling in disappeared in Alaska), Roberts was steeped in the rules and traditions of American politics from childhood. The only member of her immediate family to have never run for public office, she said that her contribution to the public life of this country was to work as a journalist and political analyst.



Cokie Roberts

Roberts started at NPR in 1977, serving as the network's congressional correspondent, and remained a part-time political commentator there until her death.

In 1988, she went to ABC News, where she was a political correspondent for "World News Tonight," and often subbed for Ted Koppel at "Nightline." She co-anchored "This Week," ABC's Sunday morning news show, with Sam Donaldson from 1992 to 2002.

In a statement, former President Barack Obama called Roberts "a role model to young women at a time when the profession was still dominated by men" and "a constant over forty years of a shifting media landscape and changing world."

MEDIA MANEUVERS

The more than 10,000 accounts that **Twitter** permanently suspended Sept. 20 include that of former Saudi royal court adviser **Saud al-Qahtani**, who is suspected of being involved in the October 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. A blog post on Twitter's website says that al-Qahtani's account was removed because of "violations of our platform manipulation policies." In addition, six accounts linked to Saudi Arabia's state-run media apparatus were suspended, as well as more than 4,000 accounts in the United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

Former *Wall Street Journal* Detroit bureau editor **Paul Ingrassia**, who won a Pulitzer for his coverage of the upheaval at General Motors, died Sept. 16 in Naples, Fla. He was 69 years old. Ingrassia, along with his deputy, Joseph B. White, won the 1993 Pulitzer for beat reporting. He later went to work for Reuters as managing editor and was named deputy editor in chief of Thomson Reuters in 2011.



Paul Ingrassia

Direct-to-consumer companies such as Peloton and Warby Parker are discovering **TV ads**, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. DTC companies, which have generally avoided opening physical retail outlets, also have tended to do most of their advertising through targeted social media. However, the Journal cites a report from Magna Global, an ad-buying group, that says TV ad buying from DTC companies rose 32 percent in the first half of this year, following a 52 percent jump last year.

BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Business travel expenses could someday become a thing of the past, considering meetings can now be conducted by Skype and other web-based conference options. However, travel is still an important way public relations agencies conduct business.

Tax rules for business travel

Generally, for federal tax purposes, a PR agency may deduct all ordinary and necessary expenses paid or incurred in carrying on its business.



Richard Goldstein

This includes travel expenses that aren't deemed "lavish or extravagant" or that are for personal purposes.

For employees, business travel expenses funded by employers are typically considered working-condition fringe benefits and, therefore, aren't included in the employee's gross income. This exclusion generally applies to property or services provided to an employee so that employee can perform his or her job.

Under the Internal Revenue Code, an advance or reimbursement for travel expenses to an employee under an "accountable plan" is deductible by the employer PR agency and not subject to FICA and income tax withholding. In general, an advance or reimbursement is treated as made under an accountable plan if an employee receives the advance or reimbursement for a deductible business expense paid or incurred while performing services for his or her employer. The employee also must account for the expense to the employer within a reasonable period and in an adequate manner and return any excess reimbursements or allowances within a reasonable period of time.

By contrast, an advance or reimbursement made under a "non-accountable plan" isn't considered a working condition fringe benefit and is treated as compensation. Thus, the amount is fully taxable to the employee, and is subject to FICA and income tax withholding by the employer.

What's a reasonable period of time?

A reasonable period of time depends on the facts and circumstances, but there are two safe harbor methods:

- Advance payments made within 30 days of when an expense is paid or incurred.
- Substantiation provided within 60 days after expenses are paid or incurred; or
- Return of the excess amounts within 120 days after the expenses are paid or incurred.

Under a so-called periodic statement method, the employer must:

- Give each employee periodic statements no less than quarterly that set forth the amounts paid under the reimbursement arrangement in excess of the substantiated amount; and
- Request that the employee either substantiate or return the excess amounts within 120 days of the state-

ment date. An expense substantiated or amounts returned within that period satisfies the reasonable period requirement.

Status is crucial

Although business transportation—going from one place to another without an overnight stay—is deductible, attaining "business travel status" fully opens the door to substantial tax benefits. Under business travel status, the entire cost of lodging and incidental expenses, and 50 percent of meal expenses, are generally deductible by the employer that pays the bill. What's more, those amounts don't equate to any taxable income for employees who, as mentioned, are reimbursed under an accountable plan.

So, how does a business trip qualify for travel status? It must involve overnight travel, an employee traveling away from his or her tax home (see subsequent discussion) and a temporary trip undertaken solely—or primarily—for ordinary and necessary business expenses.

Overnight travel doesn't mean an employee must be away from dusk till dawn. Any trip that's long enough to require sleep or rest to enable employee to continue working is considered "overnight."

The concept of a tax home

One aspect of business travel taxability that many companies struggle with is the concept of a tax home. The IRS allows deductions for meals and lodging on business trips because these expenses are duplicative of costs normally incurred at the employee's home and require them to spend more money while traveling. Consequently, a taxpayer can't claim deductions for meals and lodging unless he or she has a tax home for tax purposes and travels away from it overnight.

Further, under IRS final regulations, there's an exception under the local, no lavish lodging expenses incurred while not away from home overnight on business if all the facts and circumstances so indicate. One factor specified under the regulations is whether the employee incurs the expense because of a bona fide employment condition or requirement.

Tax cuts and the Jobs Act

By now, most employers and employees have filed their 2018 tax return. For employees, most have realized that previously miscellaneous itemized deductions are no longer available. Therefore, if an employee incurs a business expense that's considered reimbursed as compensation or not reimbursed at all, under changes under the TCJA, these expenses incurred will no longer be tax deductible.

There are a lot more to these rules than what I've written. It's therefore important to consult a tax professional who can review your specific facts and help you stay on top of the latest developments. You may want to consult your attorney to help you draft an accountable plan that will meet the requirements of the tax law.

Richard Goldstein is a partner at Buchbinder Tunnick & Company LLP, New York, Certified Public Accountants.

PR PROS PIVOTAL IN PROMOTING D&I

Communications and marketing professionals play a large role in the implementation of diversity and inclusion efforts at companies, according to a new report released by Weber Shandwick in partnership with KRC Research and United Minds.



“Chief Diversity Officers Today: Paving the Way for Diversity & Inclusion” finds that more than four out of 10 senior-level professionals responsible for diversion and inclusion at their companies say their job performance is evaluated on factors that require collaboration with marketing and communications departments.

Plus, respondents who said their companies had successfully aligned their D&I goals with their overall agenda often cited communications as a factor that helped them get there. Almost three-quarters of respondents (72 percent) said corporate communications were pivotal to helping them achieve their goals, and 63 percent said corporate marketing was a significant factor.

The business case for D&I is also visible in the survey results. Almost eight out of 10 respondents (79 percent) from “well-aligned” companies said that diversity and inclusion efforts are an important driver of a company’s reputation, with 66 percent noting that those efforts also drive stronger financial performance.

Overall, the respondents seemed bullish about what the future holds, with 80 percent saying they were optimistic about the future of D&I in corporate America. In addition, 51 percent said they thought most U.S. companies would have a CDO within the next five years.

EX-AIDE TO SEN. GRAHAM SPEAKS FOR QATAR

Qatar’s Washington embassy has hired Neale Creek to improve bilateral relations with the US and develop investment and business opportunities.

NC co-founder Andrew King spearheads the one-year effort, worth \$50K per-month to his Chevy Chase, MD-based firm. He spent two decades working for South Carolina Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exiting as deputy chief of staff in 2015. King joined Glover Park Group in 2017 as managing director and left in August.



Lindsey Graham

Graham, a close ally of president Trump, is a strong booster of Qatar.

The Qatar Investment Authority plans to spend billions in South Carolina in support of Barzan Holdings, which is controlled by the Arab state’s defense department.

Charleston is home to a major Boeing plant.

Saudi Arabia organized an economic & political blockade of Qatar in 2017 for its ties with Iran and alleged support of terror groups. That ban remains in effect.

NC’s contract with Qatar bars it from working for any country in the MENA region, other than Morocco.

As subcontractor to JPC Strategies, NC serves as government relations advisor to Morocco’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation under an 18-month agreement pegged at \$360K.

NEWS OF FIRMS

A survey conducted by **Uproar PR** found that employees are a prime target for communications about possible enterprise tech solutions for their companies. It also says that earned media is a top solution for reaching them. More than half (54 percent) of respondents to the survey said they have recommended adding an enterprise technology at work—specifically naming solutions like Slack, G Suite, Salesforce and Monday.com. About a third (30 percent) say they learned about the solution they suggested through an online or print media article. Only one in seven said they learned about the technology from advertising.

The Institute for Public Relations is updating its look and mission with the release of a new logo and a new brand narrative. The new logo, which was created by Ketchum, was chosen after what the organization calls a “friendly competition.” Ketchum chairman Rob Flaherty, who is also an IPR trustee, led the effort. The new brand narrative resulted from a 2018 move by the IPR Board of Trustees to deliver more focused, relevant research and insights. The IPR Organizational Communication Research Center is also launching a new report on the “Future of Work” on Oct. 2.



Version 2.0 has expanded its global PR agency network to include **Communication+ PR** and **SPRG Beijing Strategic Communications Consultants Limited** in China, and A|Rex Corporation and J-Spin Public Relations in Japan. The expansion is a response to what the agency says is the interest many of its clients have expressed in public relations partners in the Chinese and Japanese markets.

ACCOUNTS IN TRANSIT

5W Public Relations has been named PR agency of record for **Blue J Legal**, which provides an AI-powered legal research platform that predicts legal outcomes in challenging areas of US tax law. 5W will work to build buzz around the platform as it expands its services beyond federal tax, raising Blue J Legal’s profile in growing markets. 5W will also look to extend the company’s media presence in the US, emphasizing case studies and positioning Blue J Legal CEO Benjamin Alarie and his team as leaders in the AI-powered legal space.



M&C Saatchi Public Relations has been selected to lead US communications for home fragrance and lifestyle brand **Homesick**. The agency will provide brand positioning consultancy and messaging development to be rolled out across Homesick’s channels, in addition to editorial media and influencer relations.

MMGY NJF has been named U.S. public relations agency of record for **The Islands of Tahiti**. The agency will work to increase awareness and visitation to lesser-known islands by highlighting the accessibility and affordability of the 118 island-destination as well as the diversity of experiences such as staying in traditional Tahitian Guesthouses and Villas plus yacht charters and cruises.

W2O LANDS AIDS 2020 CONFERENCE

W2O will promote the International AIDS Society's AIDS 2020 conference slated for the PR firm's home city of San Francisco and neighboring Oakland.

The July 6-10 event will mark the return of the IAS conference to the Bay Area after a 30-year hiatus and be the first time two cities co-host the world's largest gathering of medical experts and activists on HIV and AIDS



Themed "Resilience," the program will include more than 20 pre-conferences, satellite sessions, a global village and exhibition area.

In providing regional communications support for AIDS 2020, W2O will apply its analytics savvy to media relations, content strategy and social media.

It also will create an image-based PR campaign to celebrate resilience of people who embody the strength of the HIV community.

NATIONAL'S MURRAY SHIFTS TO SHIFT

Rick Murray, who has led National PR's Toronto operations for the past five years, is moving to Shift Communications, where he will be managing partner.

Shift is part of Avenir Global, which owns National.

Before coming to National, Murray was president, Midwest region at Edelman. He previously served as president of Edelman Digital, and was executive vice president, diversified services at the firm. From 1996 to 2001, Murray was executive VP at Golin's CrossMedia unit.

In his new post, he will continue to support many of the network's Canadian clients from Shift's Boston office, including TELUS, Keurig Dr. Pepper and Deloitte.

"Rick has helped transform our business in Toronto, and been a real champion of greater integration and collaboration across our network," said Jean-Pierre Vasseur, President & CEO of Avenir Global."

JAPAN HIRES HALE TO WATCH US ELECTIONS

Japan has hired Hale Strategies to monitor and gather political intelligence about the US 2020 elections.

The eight-month contract calls for Marcia Hale to aggregate and analyze publicly available information and documents. She will then brief Japan's embassy's staff about the content of the material and provide insights into political trends and developments.



Marcia Hale

Hale formed her Washington shop after ten years as president/chair of Building America's Future, a bipartisan infrastructure coalition founded by former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell and New York mayor Mike Bloomberg.

Earlier, she handled public affairs for Monsanto, served as managing director at McKenna Long & Aldridge and worked as director of intergovernmental affairs in Bill Clinton's White House.

Hale Strategies operates out of the DC office of Fratelli Group. Hale reports to Yoshitaka Kitamura, Japan's counselor for congressional affairs.

TRAVELERS WANT IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

An increasing number of Americans want to spend their vacation time immersing themselves in a different culture, according to a new survey from MMGY Global.

A majority (53 percent) of the 2,301 U.S. adults who took part in the agency's latest travelhorizons survey said that learning about new cultures and gaining perspective on new ways of life was important to them. Even more (58 percent) thought it was vital to learn about the culture of the destination that they visit.

There is also a desire for that learning to be up close and personal, with 53 percent of respondents saying they want to explore the new culture for themselves, and 48 percent noting that they'd like to spend time with local people from their travel destination.

Nearly four in ten (36 percent) said that visiting a foreign country and meeting its residents changed their attitudes, with 39 percent finding that the culture of their travel destination shared social values with their own culture.

But there are limits to how immersed in a new culture travelers want to get. When choosing a vacation destination, three-quarters (75 percent) of respondents emphasized the importance of feeling welcomed, and 65 percent prefer to go to a place that feels familiar and makes them comfortable.

REEBOK'S MAZEI TO ACTIVISION BLIZZARD

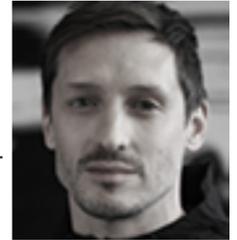
Activision Blizzard has named Dan Mazei head of global communications for its Esports unit, which includes the Overwatch League (20 city-based teams in Asia/Europe/North America) and Call of Duty offerings.

He'll handle PR, influencer/celebrity outreach, editorial content and marketing for the producer of global competitive entertainment.

Mazei joins from Reebok, where as senior director he handled PR, digital content, social and paid media and helped build its newsroom.

His 15-year PR career includes stints at Edelman (consumer senior VP), Ford Motor (storytelling and product communications) and Golin (VP-media director).

Activision Blizzard is based in Los Angeles.



Dan Mazei

BENSON MOVES TO AMAZON FROM CBS

CBS has hired Mike Benson, who has been head of marketing at Amazon Studios since 2014, as president & chief marketing officer. He will take the reins from George Schweitzer, who has been with the network since 1972, at the end of 2019-2020 season.

Schweitzer is becoming chairman, CBS Marketing, transitioning to a role as special advisor to the company in spring 2020.

Benson was previously chief creative officer at Time Warner from 2011 to 2014, and has served as executive vice president, marketing at Disney ABC Television Group.

He will oversee all brand marketing activities for CBS, including advertising, promotion, creative, experiential marketing and events across the company's entertainment, news and sports operations.

COMMENTARY

America's global warming denier-in-chief is making great headway in dumbing down America on the science front as the US ranks as the world's top climate change skeptic, according to a YouGov poll released Sept. 15.



Fifteen percent of us believe the canard that either the climate isn't warming or that human activity has little to do with rising temperatures.

The American skepticism tally is three times higher than the average level of the 28 countries polled by YouGov.

Saudi Arabia is No. 2 on the list of warming skeptics at 12 percent. Norway, Egypt, Australia follow at 10 percent each.

Taiwan and Thailand are truest believers in warming, notching only a two percent denier score. China, a main source of warming emissions, is next at three percent.

President Trump has called warming a hoax perpetrated by his arch-enemy China. "The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive," he tweeted in 2012. MAGA, indeed.

The YouGov poll was released ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Summit slated for New York beginning on Sept. 23.

Guess which world leader intends to snub the summit?

Trump, who spent 15 minutes at the summit, decided to toss a bone to his evangelical base by hosting a religious freedom meeting at the UN during the climate conference.

Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and ex-United Nations commissioner on human rights, hit the nail on the head, saying Trump dodged the climate conference and used the religious meeting as "the distraction factor."

He's been the Master of Distraction from the first day that he took office.

Tim Bell must be spinning in his grave.

Eight global PR firms nixed the opportunity to craft a multi-million-dollar branding campaign for Hong Kong to help it overcome "negative perceptions" triggered by pro-democracy protesters, according to Hong Kong CEO Carrie Lam.

She must be wondering, "Where's Bell Pottinger when you need it?"

Bell, who orchestrated the rise of British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, lived by the credo that morality is for priests, not for PR men.

Bell Pottinger certainly ascribed to that philosophy by representing the likes of Chile strongman Augusto Pinochet, Belarus dictator Alexander Lukashenko and the repressive regime of Bahrain.

The Economist credited Bell with making London

the global center for reputation laundering.

Hong Kong wasn't always such an untouchable client.

Major PR firms tripped over each other in the race to handle the June 30, 1997 handover of the former British colony to the People's Republic of China.

A year ahead of that transition, Ketchum scored a \$600K two-year contract to push the "business as usual" theme in the aftermath of the handover.

Burson-Marsteller, Capitoline/MS&L and Rowland Co. then joined Ketchum in pitching the line that it would be suicidal for China to stifle freedom for Hong Kong, which then ranked as the world's No. 8 trading economy.

Times have changed, but Hong Kong's message remains the same. Lam is looking for a PR firm to allay concerns about her city's "positioning as a global business and financial hub with a stable environment underpinned by the rule of law."

Hong Kong, though, isn't as important to China these days as it was 22 years ago when the city served as its vehicle into the global financial markets.

Now the world's No. 2 economy, China has been chipping away at the freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kongers and the city's vibrant press.

In rejecting the Hong Kong account, PR firms are playing it safe. They avoid the nightmare scenario of China launching a Tiananmen Square-like smackdown of the city.

After all, those who live by the sword die by the sword.

Bell Pottinger imploded in 2017 after running a racist campaign in South Africa on behalf of the Gupta family.

Even Bell distanced himself from the Gupta disaster. "I had nothing to do with this account," he told the BBC.

Surprise, surprise: fifty-seven percent of US journalists believe freedom of the press has declined over the past year.

With the media demonized day after day as "the enemy of the people," that finding in Cision's State of the Freedom report is hardly "fake news."

Though journalists believe press freedom is under attack, they still have the backing of nearly seven-in-ten Americans.

A Pew Research Center survey released Sept. 19 found that 68 percent of Americans agree that journalists either all or some of the time do a good job reporting news that serves the public.

The Pew poll didn't ask whether the president was doing a good job in handling his duties and serving the needs of the public.

My hunch: Trump would have fallen well short of the mark received by journalists. —Kevin McCauley