



Social Media Special

Cambridge Analytica scandal: data's watershed moment **Shaking up influencer campaigns**

Hyper-partisan content still dominates Facebook **Navigating sudden executive transitions**

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Facebook, Cambridge Analytica: perfect together

Hurray! The grateful nation thanks you, Zuck. Mark Zuckerberg has deemed it worthy of his time to testify before U.S. Congress about how data firm Cambridge Analytica, which has links to former Trump advisor Steve Bannon, got access to the information on more than 50 million Facebook users without their permission. That trove of Facebook user data ultimately may have helped put Trump in the White House.

Facebook initially denied the breach was a “breach,” but then cut Cambridge from its site. Its PR strategy has focused on unleashing a barrage of defensive blogs and tweets, while CEO Mark Zuckerberg tightened up his hoodie and lay low.

COO Sheryl Sandberg, the former Google executive who was brought in to provide some adult supervision for Team Facebook, is hardly leaning-in on the mess. She’s AWOL.

Zuckerberg has faced intense PR pressure for his tardy response to the initial news. The Facebook chief then told CNN that he’d be happy to chat with Congress “if it’s the right thing to do.” Growing pressure from politicians, media, public and the nascent #DeleteFacebook movement has made it the right and only thing to do.

On the deletion front, Playboy Enterprises in March announced it’s stripping its accounts from the social media site, joining luminaries such as Tesla’s Elon Musk and WhatsApp co-Founder Brian Acton, the guy who sold the mobile messaging application to Facebook for \$19 billion.

As for Cambridge, the firm issued a statement March 19 to blast its “entrapment” by Britain’s Channel 4 News. CEO Alexander Nix acknowledged that perhaps he went a little overboard when he babbled on tape about gathering damaging information about political opponents. Nix said they could “send some girls around to the candidate’s house,” and said Ukrainian girls “are very beautiful. I find that works very well.”

He now says it was all in good fun.

Apparently looking for some cover, Facebook has now hired forensics firm Stroz Friedberg to investigate Cambridge. In a bid to regain PR traction, the site in late March also promised new tools to give people ways of seeing and deleting the data that it collects on them.

“We’ve heard loud and clear that privacy settings and other important tools are too hard to find and that we must do more to keep people informed,” Erin Egan, Chief Privacy Officer, and Ashlie Beringer, Deputy General Counsel, posted on FB’s website.

Their blog is titled, “It’s Time to Make Our Privacy Tools Easier to Find.”

A better headline: “It’s About Time We Made Our Privacy Tools Easier to Find So You Can Delete Private Information That We’ve Been Sharing with Others to Monetize Your Data Without You Knowing About It.” Granted, it’s a little lengthy.

Zuckerberg has also stiffed British lawmakers, who wanted his testimony about the privacy scandal, by promising to dispatch two underlings to London instead. In contrast, Cambridge Analytica’s suspended Chief Alexander Nix has agreed to make his second appearance before Parliament’s Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee.

Zuckerberg has few friends in D.C. these days and should have jumped at the chance to face Congressional inquisitors. Zuck though finds it hard to relate to people outside Facebook headquarters. e.g., Remember Zuckerberg’s “listening tour” of America, which was touted as the prelude to a future presidential run? Geez.

Trump is the only person in Washington mum on the Facebook scandal. Axios reported in March that the President is “obsessed” with “taking on” Amazon. That report initially drove the price of Amazon stock down more than seven percent. Trump reportedly is upset about Amazon’s growing influence and its impact on “mom and pop” retailers.

Where’s he been for the last decade? Protection of mom and pop stores is a pretty lame cover. He wants to take on Amazon because its founder Jeff Bezos owns the *Washington Post*, which has been a thorn in the side of the tweeter-in-chief.

Trump owes Zuck a lot. His silence on Facebook speaks volumes.

Former New Jersey Governor Tom Kean became a TV celebrity during the 1980s when serving as spokesman for Garden State tourism and delivering the line, “New Jersey and You. Perfect Together.”

Kean could update his pitch for the digital era: “Facebook and Cambridge Analytica. Perfect Together When it Comes to Dimwitted PR.”

Both parties are in it up to their necks in meddling and disinformation. Lousy PR is making the matter worse. How about giving Tom a call about some Jersey vacation ideas? ●

—Kevin McCauley

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Hyper-partisan content still dominates Facebook

Despite Facebook's recent attempts to downsize the prevalence of divisive content on its platform, a recent study finds that reporters working for hyper-partisan outlets still drive the largest audience engagements on the social media site.

By Jon Gingerich

Politics, for better or worse, continues to drive conversations on social media. According to a March study by analytics firm NewsWhip, hyper-partisan publishers and their staff writers appear to engage some of the largest media audiences on Facebook.

NewsWhip in February ranked the top 100 reporters for English-language publications on Facebook by engagement and then analyzed that content to discover what underlying trends those reporters have in common.

The study found that an overwhelming majority of the most popular authors for February represent hyper-partisan publications such as the Daily Wire (conservative), Truth Examiner (liberal), Breitbart (conservative), the *Washington Press* (conservative) or small but similarly politically-charged outlets. Big publishers were strangely un-

derrepresented in the list, with five reporters — representing *The Atlantic*, the *New Yorker*, MSNBC and Fox News — comprising the only appearances of a major media outlet in the top 25.

Writers working for conservative publishers by far outnumbered their liberal counterparts: six writers in the top 25 are employed by conservative site the Daily Wire, while two are employed by liberal source the Truth Examiner and one writes for The Huffington Post.

One top-ten author writes for UK-based soft news and viral video publisher LADbible, and writers working for Indian viral publisher RCVJ Media appeared twice in the top 25. One author from a fake news site — Your Newswire — appeared in the list. Only one writer in the top ten represented an “established” news source: Terri Peters, a contributor to “The Today Show.” Ryan

Shattuck, writer for satirical site The Onion, took the number-one spot.

Given the partisan nature of many of the most popular authors on Facebook, the NewsWhip study suggests that content that polarizes or outright misinforms readers continues to engage and drive an enormous amount of the conversations happening on the social site. Arguably, the study couldn't come at a worse time for Facebook, as the findings arrive after the platform's well-publicized recent attempts to curtail politically divisive content in exchange for more meaningful engagements.

Reporting on the study's findings, NewsWhip concluded that “weird news, current events, and politics” with headlines that “tend to be attention-grabbing, full of provocative verbs or short, eye-catching statements” comprised the most common features among top reporters' stories.

— Continued on next page

Google gives media a \$300M boost

By Kevin McCauley

Google in March unveiled a \$300 million campaign to help mainstream media “thrive in the digital age,” according to a blog post by Chief Business Officer Philipp Schindler.

The search engine, which took heat for distributing misleading and fake news during the presidential campaign, says its Google News Initiative will strengthen quality journalism, elevate business models to drive sustainable growth and empower media through technical innovation.

Google, which claims to be combatting fake news on its own platforms, will promote authoritative content and work with publishers to launch DisInfo Lab to identify misinformation in breaking news.

It is teaming with the Poynter Institute, Stanford University and Local Media Assn. to develop “MediaWise,” a program to teach digital media literacy to young people.

Schindler says Google, which controls the lion's share of the digital ad space, is committed to helping publishers diversify their revenues base.

For instance, the company will let users purchase newspaper subscriptions via their own Google accounts. The *New York Times*, *Financial Times* and *Washington Post* are among papers to sign up for this service.

According to Schindler, GNI demonstrates that news and quality journalism is a top priority for Google. ○

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Thanks for asking

Big data, algorithms and artificial intelligence are driving today's decision-making in PR. But there's a big difference between data and intelligence, information and insight.

By Paul Oestreicher

In the age of big data, algorithms and artificial intelligence, decision-making will never be the same. We're fortunate to have such massive amounts of information at our disposal.

Despite our growing reliance on digital sources, a recent *Harvard Business Review* article makes the case that surveys remain one of the best ways of measuring employee engagement and intent. The lesson is that, in addition to querying our databases, we must continue to query our employees (and constituents, customers, investors, etc.). Surveys remain relevant in the digital age; quantitative and qualitative methods are not mutually exclusive.

More broadly, when there's an issue or opportunity, people don't ask enough questions. Yes, use your analytics. Use your judgment. But asking creates engagement. Asking offers a degree of acknowledgement and validation.

Some may see surveys as annoying — even invasive — or vehicles only to justify what the survey sponsors want to know. Those are all indications of poor survey design or bad intent. Surveys are often too long, have little incentive to complete, or contain obvious language bias.

Designing a survey and reaching the appropriate audiences are not trivial. You know, it's the old "garbage in, garbage out" routine.

So, there's actually a lot on the line when it comes to asking good questions. The novelist Thomas Berger said, "The art and science of asking questions is the source

of all knowledge." And the way one asks questions (see Nobel Prize winner Richard Thaler's work on choice architecture) can help "nudge" behaviors in the direction of positive change.

There may be other reasons why surveys are less appealing these days. There's less ownership and more anonymity in observing online behaviors and sifting through the numbers. And sometimes we don't ask because we don't want to know. I have teed-up surveys only to have them pulled by the client because of this concern more than once in my career.

We need the courage to ask, to have the inquisitiveness to learn more, and to take the initiative to interact with our key audiences. In the business arena, for example, there are many questions to ask but even some basic ones — too often unused — can save untold time and money:

Do we have an understanding of the prob-

lem? What needs to be accomplished and by when? Who are the people, organizations, etc. who have influence over our success or failure and what are their issues/concerns? Where are the gaps in our understanding and how can we use those to do/make something new? Is there something that needs to be stopped, promoted or changed? What resources are needed and how do we access them?

Asking goes beyond information gathering and good business practice; it can create and deepen relationships. Anxiety about receiving unflattering news or believing the investment is not worth the return must be weighed against the power new knowledge would bring and who comes along with it.

Paul Oestreicher is the author of "Camelot, Inc.: Leadership and Management Insights from King Arthur and the Round Table" and the blog C-O-I-N-S: Communication Opinions, Insights and New Strategies. Follow him at @pauloestreicher. ○



Paul Oestreicher

HYPERPARTISAN CONTENT

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The report's March release caught a lot of attention on Twitter, where NewsWhip CEO Paul Quigley eventually responded, stating in a series of tweets that "The larger problem — people opting into tribal bubbles — is bigger than Facebook. Right now, Facebook is the messenger — showing us that we live in a tribal world. It's fun for media people shooting the messenger ... but it won't solve the problem." Quigley wrote.

"To be clear, if Facebook starts blocking the sharing of sites based on the accuracy of every report, it turns into the biggest censor in history, deciding 'right' and 'wrong' views for 2 billion people. How does that sound?" Quigley wrote. ○

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Cambridge Analytica scandal: data's watershed moment

Facebook was thrown into a major crisis after a Trump-linked political firm harvested the unauthorized personal data of millions of the site's users. As the scandal kicks off a debate surrounding the role Internet platforms have in keeping their users' data safe, it becomes a meditation on our behaviors in the digital realm as well.

By Jon Gingerich

For the second time in the last year, Facebook has found itself in the reputational crosshairs, after it was revealed that data analysis and political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica had improperly collected the private data of 50 million of the site's users without their permission, once again positioning the social media giant in the unwitting role of disinformation specialist. With pressure mounting on the site to win back users' trust and assuage fears regarding potential future breaches, it's clear this issue signals not only a decisive turning point for Facebook but for conversations regarding data security in the U.S. as well.

The shadowy London-based firm relied on "psychographic" profiling techniques that could allegedly identify and target individual voters on behalf of its clients. How the company acquired the data pool it needed to put those concepts into practice for the 2016 election, however, is the source of its subsequent controversy. Christopher Wylie, a former Cambridge Analytica research director turned whistleblower, detailed to the *New York Times* in March how the firm relied on a personality app developed by an outside researcher that collected Facebook users' personal information. Paying several hundred thousand of the site's users in early 2014 to take a personality test under the guise of a fake academic study, the app that participants downloaded gathered information not only on them but on their contacts as well, surreptitiously harvesting a trove of more than 50 million Facebook accounts without users' knowledge or consent. Cambridge Analytica then used this illicitly obtained dataset to build profiles on persuadable voters and then pitched them Trump-related materials.

The data firm, which is an offshoot of research company SCL Group, was formed in 2013 by former White House chief strategist Steve Bannon and billionaire conservative donor Robert Mercer. It has performed political consulting work around the world, including the Brexit campaign and last year's controversial presidential elections in Kenya. Bannon allegedly introduced Cambridge Analytica's services to the Trump camp in 2015 after it had initially worked for Ted Cruz's presidential bid the year prior. It was during this time that the company allegedly began testing slogans such as

"drain the swamp" and "build the wall" with audiences, phrases that later become staples of the Trump narrative.

Cambridge Analytica now finds itself currently under investigation by Parliament and government regulators in Britain. Just days after the *New York Times* report, undercover video shot by a UK-based TV reporter posing as a prospective client filmed Cambridge Analytica CEO Alexander Nix detailing the myriad services the firm could offer, including the use of sex workers, bribes and spies to entrap clients' political opponents. The firm has now suspended Nix and said it's launching an internal investigation in light of the report, though it also said in a statement that the video had been "edited and scripted to grossly misrepresent ... how the company conducts its business."

The *Times* story hit Facebook far harder, however, leaving the company to deal with a rapidly intensifying crisis, with the sheer number of forces now aligned against the social media giant making it increasingly difficult to find improved footing and manage the conversation. The Federal Trade Commission announced that it has opened an investigation into Facebook's handling of user data, and there's a growing consensus on Capitol Hill that Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg should testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Facebook's stocks plummeted a day after news of the controversy broke, falling \$37 billion in a 24-hour period. Some lawmakers will no doubt propose changing guidelines for how data is regulated on the social site, just as

they did after it was discovered that Russia-backed outfits placed political ads across social media platforms in an effort to spread disinformation and foment dissent in the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election. But arguably the greatest blowback Facebook has received has come from the public, with the hashtag *#DeleteFacebook* trending on social media channels as scores of the site's former loyalists now advocate abandoning the platform altogether over its failures to keep users' data safe. Trust in the site has faltered, among the media, the government, and the legion of users and marketers who use it. The underlying message is clear: Facebook has lost control of its platform.

A deficit of trust

The Cambridge Analytica controversy has kicked off a debate that intersects at a crossroads of modern political campaign tactics, digital marketing technology and a dialogue regarding social privacy and how Internet platforms treat user data. It deserves to be said that while Facebook's crisis has effectively been treated as a data breach, what it really constitutes is a breach of trust. Data is digital marketing's lynchpin. Facebook, for all intents and purposes, is in the data sharing business. APIs are the platform's foundation; the site collects data on its users for the sake of selling ads. The level of information Facebook possesses on its users is vast, and the unusually high quality of that data, coupled with the length of time

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users spend on the site and the sheer reach it has — Facebook is one of the most heavily trafficked sites in the world, with more than two billion active monthly users, according to a Q4 2017 Statista forecast — is a reflection of its position in today's digital ad market. It's little wonder why such an ecosystem would be a prime target to have its data poached.



Michael Priem

"Facebook is being vilified for something they weren't first-party to," said Michael Priem, founder and CEO of Minneapolis-based advertising firm Modern Impact, which specializes in omni-channel marketing, traditional advertising and machine learning for programmatic advertising. "The technology Cambridge Analytica used is utilized heavily across the web. The idea of audience segmentation is nothing novel or new. Other credible companies use it all the time. Because it happened on Facebook, however, it causes us to question what's private and what's not when I'm logged in to what's perceived to be safely guarded information. The reality is, this could've happened to any publisher, and part of the reason Facebook has been put in the limelight is because of how pervasive it is and how well they've done with validating their user data."

Consumers will tell you they value their privacy online, but our behaviors regularly belie those claims. We routinely hand over credit card and banking information to make purchases without a second thought, readily publish our political opinions, employment history, relatives' names, shopping habits and advocate for beloved brands, yet appear incredulous when we discover that the data trail we've left behind is precisely the reason why we're allowed to roam across these channels for free. It appears that we couldn't do without these social tools today if we wanted to: Facebook is now Americans' number-one source for daily news, beating out Fox News, ABC, CNN, CBS and NBC, according to a recent survey by San Francisco-based tech PR firm Bospar. A deeply laid subtext to the Cambridge Analytica story reveals that these technologies themselves might be less the problem than the fact that they're influencing and changing our behaviors faster than we, or our lawmakers, can comprehend.

"We use Facebook as a platform for social

sharing. As consumers, we live in a world where we expect a lot of things for free. When we have those expectations, we push publishers to create a different economic currency, which has become the advertising currency that companies like Cambridge Analytica use to deploy technology to create audience segments," Priem said. "The bigger question centers on the safe havens of our private and public lives. We feel we have this sense of privacy that's basically implied in certain areas of the digital world, and don't like the fact that our data can be used to send targeted messages, when it's no different than being inside a store and being captured on video. In reality, there are a number of privacy protections online, but we don't have a very good idea of what's being collected and what's being used. My fear is that we, as consumers, have a deep misunderstanding of what marketers are doing and this causes a deep deficit of trust, and we're quick to vilify the technology when the reality is there's not enough conversation happening around the risk consumers face when we're in the public domain."

Silence, mixed messaging become story

It doesn't help that Facebook's initial response in navigating the backlash arguably made the crisis worse. As it turns out, Facebook knew about the Cambridge Analytica leak as far back as 2015, and demanded the firm delete the trove of data it had obtained — it appears the company didn't comply with those orders — but the site never disclosed that action to the public. The year prior, Facebook also began rolling back the access allowances it had previously granted third-party app publishers to users' content, but most of us didn't know about that until now either. Then there was the mixed messaging: Facebook initially downplayed Cambridge Analytica's breach, then backpedaled in light of the pending *Times* story, referring to the firm's actions as "a scam" and "a fraud" in a perfunctory press statement. Facebook has since announced that it has banned Cambridge Analytica from its platform and has demanded an internal audit of the company's data, but it all comes as a bit little, a bit late.

"It's been a multiphasic train wreck. Each day it's been another disaster," said Curtis Sparrer, co-founder and principal of Bospar. "In a crisis like this we recommend that clients come forward and scoop the journalists. I rarely think press conferences are a good idea, but here a rip-the-Band-Aid-off approach would've been a good thing. An excess of candor is needed. They've hurt themselves in a variety of ways, they have not responded adequately, and there's been a lot of reporting about Facebook's

heavy-handed approach to this that has turned people's stomachs."

Surprisingly absent in this response was Zuckerberg himself, who finally ended his silence during a March 21 CNN exclusive, four days after the *Times* story broke. Zuckerberg, who isn't known for his press interviews, said he'd be "happy" to testify before Congress "if it's the right thing to do." In a blog post the following morning, the Facebook chief outlined new steps the company was taking to protect its users' data, mandating tighter scrutiny for app developers and setting new restrictions on the data that developers are allowed to access. This is all welcome information, if for any reason that, until now, it had remained unknown what Facebook and its founder had been doing behind the scenes ever since the company was made aware of these problems three years ago.

"That's going to be something we're going to have to get some clarity on," Sparrer said. "Anytime we're left wondering why someone's staying silent, people start taking guesses that there might be something worse that he's hiding, and your absence becomes the story. You need to explain how you're going to solve the problem and show how [Zuckerberg] will handle this as a leader, because the question now is whether he can do it."

The *New York Times* report puts Facebook in crisis mode for the second time in the last year, coming after the role that site played during the 2016 election by circulating fake content over its news feed and selling political ads to Russia-backed companies. And changes to Facebook's algorithms in recent months, which now emphasize content posted by users' contacts, has hampered its value as a publishing platform among third-party sites that depend on the site for routing organic traffic to their published content. Reports are now surfacing regarding tensions inside the social media giant as a result, with chief information security officer Alex Stamos, a former Yahoo exec, announcing his forthcoming departure. One can't help but wonder how permanent the fallout will be, and whether the company's golden days are now sailing somewhere in the recent past.

One might also wonder if this crisis could influence the other victim in this story — Facebook's users — to begin considering the role our choices play in the digital realm as well. ○



Curtis Sparrer

Seven ways to shake up your influencer campaigns

Are your influencer campaigns producing the kinds results your brand deserves? If not, it's time to shake things up.

By Joseph Portuese

Today, influencer marketing is bigger than ever. Alas, now that everyone's activating influencer campaigns, brands must work harder to stand out from the crowd and challenge the norm. Obviously, that's easier said than done, but there are manageable ways to better develop your influencer campaigns and garner the results and relationships that your brand deserves.

Roll up your sleeves and approach influencer campaigns like a DIY project. Creating an impactful and creative influencer campaign doesn't always need to cost an arm and a leg to execute. In fact, many influencers appreciate when your kit or gift doesn't look overly manufactured, and that your brand put some creative and hands-on effort — rather than just dollars — into their relationship with you. Pinterest, Instagram, or a simple Google search is a great way to start finding inspiration for a craftier influencer program. As a next step, you can even back away from your computer screen — I know, what a concept — and find inspiration through your children's school projects or through a stroll in an artsy neighborhood.

If you're going to do it, do it right. Face it, gone are the days of the simple kit. Brands and influencers are looking for more excitement. The stakes are much higher to deliver post-worthy content. The old saying still holds: "quality over quantity" should be your guiding light. Starting with the influencers you choose to the creative idea that puts it over the top, when you start with a quality plan the results usually follow suit.

When it comes to influencers, brands should spend time researching how and why an influencer is selected to receive a branded gift from you. There are a few simple questions you should always consider when making influencer selections. Does this influencer share my brand's values? Are there risks associated with working with this influencer? If so, are the risks worth the payoff? Ultimately, when it comes to influencer marketing, it's all about the total package and bringing it together. First, ensure that you're selecting influencers that will be a good reflection of your brand. Next, make sure you're "wowing" them by really investing the time and money into your relationship with them.

Produce something you would want for yourself (or your best friend). This is simple, but so many brands forget that while they're brainstorming influencer kit ideas, they should be thinking of things they personally would be excited to receive. You should always use yourself — or best friends, significant other, etc. — as a litmus test of what's cool and innovative for your brand. Want a quick way to tell if your kit will evoke excitement for your influencers? Unassumingly leave out a kit or two around your office or home and see if your fellow coworkers or family members are tempted to steal some items for themselves. Sounds crazy, but it works!



3D custom art sculpture and influencer invitation created with dozens of custom art pieces allows influencers to create their own sculptures over and over again.

Go the extra step and personalize. Turn up the excitement level of your influencer campaign by simply adding some personalization elements to each of your gifts. Personalization doesn't need to be limited to adding the influencer's name to a letter; brands can personalize a gift to an influencer by paying homage to their home state, including a family member or creating an extra little trinket for their pet. Adding these personalization elements are important because they demonstrate to your influencers that they are more than just a name on a shipping list, and that your brand is going the extra step to really connect with their influencers on a more personal level.

Don't get boxed in to boxes. When most people think of influencer packaging, they often assume boxes, but custom packaging can come in so many other shapes and forms! While custom-printed boxes are on trend right now, consider how much fur-

ther a custom bag could work for a brand. Unlike boxes, bags are less disposable — great for environmentally cautious brands — and are more likely to be taken outside of an influencer's home and seen by an additional set of consumers. Furthermore, brands don't need to be limited to just a simple tote or shopping bag; there's a vast range of custom bags influencers would be ecstatic to receive, including: garment bags, makeup carriers, fanny packs, and backpacks. With custom fabricated bags, brands have the opportunity to create a truly "tailored" experience!

Dare to be different.

This may be easier said than done, but try the unexpected for your brand, and influencers will notice. While we're all so accustomed to the "go, go, go" nature of influencer marketing, oftentimes your brand will benefit from stepping back and allowing that extra time to develop greater influencer innovations. Additionally, don't limit the creative brainstorm to only your creative team members, everyone — interns, admins, etc. — should sit in and contribute to these brainstorm. If you get butterflies in your stomach or feel nervous, you're on the right track! Those feelings prove that you're challenging the norm and shaking things up in a good way. By taking the time for the creative process and opening up the room, you'll surely see your brand in a different light and your influencer campaigns will reflect that with more own-able ideas for your brand.

Your own product might be your best asset. If you really want to shine a light on your brand, look no further than utilizing your actual product — or product wrapping — in creating your influencer kits. Utilizing your product can be as simple as creating a custom box — or bag — and gifting large amounts of freebies and samples. Or it could mean that you quite literally, cover an object completely with wrappers or food product. The sky's the limit once you realize your own product can make a big statement.

Joey "Buffalo" Portuese is the Founder and Chief Creative Officer of Zing How Design, the one-stop-shop for influencer creations, innovations & logistics. He has 20-plus years in CPG brand creative development. ○



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Preparing for new kinds of crisis and controversy

PR professionals have an opportunity to prove their value to brands and the organizations they serve by helping them predict, prepare and be proactive when controversial issues emerge. *By Jacqueline Kolek*

Gun control debates. Racial tensions. Presidential tweets. The #Metoo movement. As communications professionals, we've never worked in a more volatile social and cultural environment. Just a few years ago, a major communications crisis constituted a workers' strike at a factory or a vice president accused of embezzlement. But now those situations resemble the good old days by comparison.

Today, consumers view brands through the lens of where they stand on important social and cultural topics. A recent Global Strategy Group survey found that more 80 percent of people believe corporations should take action on important issues. Seventy-six percent said businesses should stand up for their political beliefs, whether or not they're controversial. Consumers also want swift action: 52 percent said a company should respond to an event within 24 hours.

Working effectively in this new normal means we must be more prepared for potential issues and be innovative to predict vulnerabilities.

Here are four ways to thrive in this era of upheaval.

Assess all your risks

We all monitor for potential PR crises. But today, you must consider all your reputational risks and expand your monitoring strategy accordingly. Your brand may not have a political stance, but are any executives major political donors? #MeToo isn't isolated to Hollywood, so has any executive ever been accused of sexual misconduct? And it's not just your brand you need to worry about.

Smart activists are going after an organization's entire business network. Following the Florida school shooting, they attacked the NRA by targeting brands offering discounts to NRA members. Does your company have any business relationships that are vulnerabilities? You need to think like an activist — or an investigative reporter — to assess all of your reputational risks.

Let your purpose do the talking

Given that many consumers want companies to speak out, do you know where your stands? If your organization does not have a corporate purpose, it's time to focus on one. A corporate purpose explains why a company exists beyond making money. What benefits does it bring to society?

If it does and your executives agree on it,

you can work to define how that purpose relates to the issues of the day. Use it to decide what topics are appropriate for your company to own, and preplan responses to them if and when they emerge. If your healthcare company's purpose is helping consumers live longer lives, prepare a meaningful statement on gun control. Alternatively, you may decide you don't need to take a stand on immigration because it's outside your purpose.

It's also key to have your CEO ready to step out front with purpose-led messages. Three-quarters of Americans think CEOs have a responsibility to create social change, according to a study by Global Strategy Group.

An ounce of prediction

Armed with a comprehensive risk assessment, you can now turn to technology to monitor for trouble and — ideally — predict a coming crisis.

Whatever monitoring software you're using, make sure it can support your expanded universe of keywords, phrases and other information you've identified. If your CFO donated thousands of dollars to a political candidate and is mentioned anywhere near that candidate's name, you need to know before it erupts.

Make sure you deploy tools that can easily scan channels of interest: broadcast, traditional and social media, blogs, etc. In our experience helping clients with monitoring, we have yet to see a reliable, all-in-one dashboard that aggregates mentions across channels. When it comes to reporting, human validation is still critical for consolidating this information and spotting patterns.

Your software should offer real-time reporting for both volume and channels. This is key because an abnormal spike in mentions on a platform you rarely use could signal a crisis. For example, a B2B manufacturing company suddenly trending on Facebook should raise a red flag.

Create a channel roadmap

When you understand where and how audiences are mentioning your brand, focus your plan on the relevant channels. This step is crucial as consumers become increasingly multi- and cross-channel communicators. According to a Google study, 90 percent of people who own multiple devices switch between three per day. A Salesforce study found that 34 percent of mar-

keting budgets today are spent on channels that didn't exist five years ago.

When responding to an issue, it's almost always best to prioritize the channel where the crisis originated. For example, if a YouTube video shows your EVP telling crude jokes at a sales meeting, go where the conversation is and post a purpose-led YouTube video response, even if your brand doesn't normally use that channel. Follow up with statements on your website and other owned channels.

Using the proper channel(s) drastically increases a message's power and gives you the ability to customize your message to the medium. During a controversy, this personalization is important. Salesforce shows 52 percent of consumers and 65 percent of B2B buyers are likely to switch brands if communications aren't personalized to them.

Final thoughts

Marketing communications is more challenging today than ever before, but it's also more exciting. Great corporate communicators have an opportunity to shine by helping their organizations prepare for, predict and be proactive when controversial issues emerge. By assessing risk, leading with purpose and spotting problems before they happen, PR professionals can become even more valuable to their brands and the executives who run them.

Jacqueline Kolek is Partner and Managing Director at Peppercomm. ○



Jacqueline Kolek

PR news brief

Finsbury guides RB as it pulls Pfizer deal

Finsbury is handling press for Reckitt Benckiser Group, which yanked its \$20 billion deal on March 21 to acquire Pfizer's consumer healthcare business.

CEO Rakesh Kapoor decided that Pfizer's consumer health business wasn't a good fit, opting instead to concentrate on the \$16 billion integration of Mead Johnson's nutritional formula business and the reorganizing of operations into health and hygiene business units.

GlaxoSmithKline today said it also has decided not to pursue the acquisition of Pfizer's consumer healthcare unit.

"While we will continue to review opportunities that may accelerate our strategy, they must meet our criteria for returns and not compromise our priorities for capital allocation," said CEO Emma Walmsley in a statement.

Pfizer is reviewing its strategic alternatives, which could mean sale, spin-off or retaining the consumer operation.

Evolution of influence follows era of print

The influx and impact of emerging channels and platforms has changed communication's core tenets, challenging PR professionals to expand their efforts and pivot in their strategies to deliver ROI and engagement for their clients.

By Cindy Riccio

They say you always remember your first placement. As a young public relations professional, "your first" signified a major magazine placement you finally and painstakingly, after months — if not years — of pitching, secured for your client.

For me it was *Vogue*, which was the equivalent of winning gold for my client, Argyle Diamonds of Australia. The sheer influence and reach of *Vogue* set the standard for fashion, beauty and lifestyle media coverage, and it was — and remains — at the top of every client's wish list. And while *Vogue's* staying power continues, today we operate within an industry that is constantly evolving.

With technology driving our lives, it wasn't surprising to hear that *Teen Vogue* gave up its imprint to go digital, or that social influencers are securing front-row seats at fashion shows and new product mega reveals. As for my staff today, their firsts look quite different: they exist in real time with social influencers who have millions of followers.

"Superinfluencer" Arielle Charnas has proven this paradigm with her recent Nordstrom deal for a standalone Something Navy collection set to launch this fall. The "Elevated Basic" collection will feature a line of apparel, jewelry and accessories priced between \$49-\$399. Bag Snob co-founder Tina Craig started her career with a passion for handbags before becoming an influencer in her own right after launching a bag collection with DKNY and landing articles in *Women's Wear Daily*.

The news of *Teen Vogue's* print shuttering created a swirl of buzz, but it was a wickedly smart move for the publication to recalibrate its format, platform and voice to reach digital-dependent Millennials. For PR professionals, technology challenges us each day to pivot our strategies in order to deliver strong ROI and engagement for our clients as the evolution of influence has changed the core tenets of communication.

Another case in point is the inevitable demise of *Time* in light of Time Inc.'s purchase by Meredith Corporation. This structural shift is a direct correlation with the rise in digital marketing and advertising. Where people had once received latest news, beauty and style tips from emerging business brands, now they're directing their attention to a superfluity of digital networks that induce content from profitable constitu-

ents. This evolution, promoted by venture capitalists, depict the ineludible migration from print to digital networks and platforms.

As we counsel our clients on the influx and impact of emerging channels and platforms along with tutorials about the influencers and voices that are critical to a brand's marketing success, we find an eagerness for them to examine their communications efforts in a bright new light that's all-inclusive and open minded to the reduction of print editorial.

For lifestyle product marketers, we're customizing and "characterizing" our messages to an audience of influencers that reaches far beyond editors, writers, producers and researchers. WWD has said that these influencers are the new sales associates, and as we've seen, if they believe in your product, their endorsement — paid or otherwise — can be a powerful sales tool. We now have exciting web personalities whose blogs, Vlogs, Instagrams and Snaps deliver critical access to reach potential customers.

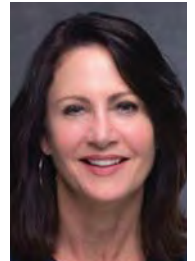
These influencers are self-proclaimed fans of fashion, beauty, food and everything else, stylists who have the ear of A-list celebrities, former journalists who have re-imagined their voice and are using new platforms and channels to share their opinions. While they continuously push out content, many are approached for magazine features, TV talk and reality shows and ad campaigns. Even my own team members are creating their own blogs as a channel to share their product passions and style imprints. So, as we navigate the ever-evolving digital deities, the greater challenge we face is #howtostandout with real time news, noise and queries to Alexa.

Amidst this shifting media landscape, I've found that two truths remain: you must have an interesting and authentic story to tell; and all those influencers require content. The best stories pique curiosity, take a stand, solve a problem, fulfill an unmet need, offer a new perspective, inspire awareness, challenge conventional wisdom and most importantly, compel others to tell your story. Whether you're talking to a journalist, producer, blogger, stylist, celebrity or BFF to a star, you can #standout on the strength of a story that's customized to reach your customer of choice. Stories can be told with smart copy, vibrant visuals, 140 characters, #great news, emotion, an invita-

tion and good reason.

So, as the evolution of influence evolves, we'll continue to work with our clients to tell interesting stories to interesting people and along the way, continue to help our staff members celebrate their firsts.

Cindy Riccio is President and Founder of New York-based agency CRC. ○



Cindy Riccio

PR news brief

Publicis Groupe antes up to combat 'fake news'

Publicis Groupe leads a \$6 million investor group financing NewsGuard, a venture announced in March by media entrepreneur Steve Brill and former *Wall Street Journal* Publisher Gordon Crovitz, to combat "fake news."

They plan to hire dozens of journalists to review 7,500 of the most-accessed and shared websites, and give each a green (trusted source), yellow (proceed with caution) or red (fake news) reliability rating. Those English language sites account for 98 percent of the articles read and shared in the US.

Sites also will receive "nutrition label" write-ups containing info about who owns/edits the site, what it covers and notable awards/mistakes.

The ratings and nutrition labels will be licensed to social media platforms and online search companies.

A NewsGuard "swat team" will be on alert 24/7 to act on suddenly trending stories from an unrated source or a site just launched to promote a fictitious story.

Brill, Founder of Court TV, *The American Lawyer* and *Brill's Content*, said NewsGuard's use of experienced journalists operating in an accountable fashion "will apply basic common sense to a growing scourge that clearly cannot be solved by algorithms."

Maurice Levy, Publicis Group Chairman, called NewsGuard a concrete and answerable answer to the concerns of clients.

"Advertisers care about the quality and credibility of the brands they support, and we are delighted to be the lead investor in NewsGuard as a key part of the solution to the crisis of fake news," he said in a statement.

Levy noted that advertisers are concerned about brand safety and don't want to finance or appear alongside fake news.

He said NewsGuard will publish and license "white lists" of news sites that clients can use to support legitimate publishers while protecting their brand reputations.

Brill and Crovitz expect to launch NewsGuard ahead of the November mid-term elections.

O'Dwyer's guide to SOCIAL MEDIA PR

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Ronn D. Torossian, President & CEO

5WPR is a top 15, award-winning agency in the U.S., trusted by brands across consumer and corporate categories, to create and execute fully integrated and multi-faceted digital media campaigns. Our programs enhance visibility for brands and build connections with the most coveted audiences around the world.

From content creation to social media management, brand storytelling/strategy to influencer partnerships, 5W partners with brands and marketers to target their consumers and create the ultimate, results-oriented social media advertising strategies and campaigns.

As the digital landscape continues to expand, playing an integral role in communications for savvy brands, 5W has been one step ahead, adding digital natives from across the industry to our team. Our digital media division is led by strategists and content creators with backgrounds on both the agency and media sides of the business. These category experts coupled with our talented 5W veterans provide clients the utmost in strategic counsel and client service. Our digital and social specialists are fully integrated into brand campaigns, ensuring a hands-on approach and programs that deliver results.

Our consumer and corporate divisions focus on Tech, B2B, B2C, Beauty, Food & Beverage, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Health & Wellness, and Apparel & Accessories.

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Bliss is an integrated communication Agency with 43 years of digital marketing and public relations experience. Every day, Bliss counsels its innovative and diverse client roster of B2B and B2C companies in the professional, financial and healthcare sectors.

Collaborative and proactive, Bliss employs a variety of highly effective and data-driven strategies to help clients problem-solve, meet business goals and ensure the right measurement tools are engaged from the onset of the relationship. Bliss continues to deepen its digital, mobile and social media marketing services to keep up with client demand. The Agency specializes in performance marketing, paid media, SEO/SEM strategies, content creation for social and digital channels, influencer partnership management and uncovering growth opportunities at every stage of the customer journey to drive lead generation. Combined with an average client tenure of more than eight years, Bliss becomes an extension of its clients' internal teams, providing an unwavering, long-term partnership.

COOPERKATZ & COMPANY, INC.

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Ralph Katz, Principal
Anne Green, President / CEO

CooperKatz & Company, Inc. is highly-regarded for its strong strategic, creative and digital credentials. It offers full-service public relations and marketing communications capabilities to a national client base across multiple industry sectors.

CooperKatz takes an integrated digital approach across earned, owned, social and paid as part of every client engagement. The firm was an industry-leader in helping clients develop and execute social media and digital strategies.

Specific capabilities in the social

and digital arena include: content strategy and marketing; influencer engagement; social channel development; community management; social campaign execution; video and graphics production; monitoring and analysis; online issues management; paid content strategy; and more. The agency has executed award-winning digital work for such clients as Coldwell Banker Real Estate, National Fire Protection Association, Otis Elevator Company, Petfinder.com, Polar and many more.

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Social Media LIVE™ is a turn-key solution from event production to a live, broadcast quality video feed to more than 25 social channels at the same time. Live video streaming including Facebook Live and Periscope are among the fastest growing marketing channels for brands and our service dramatically increases campaign reach. Social Media LIVE™ can turn any live event into a multi-stream event with broadcast quality content through multiple Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other popular social channels simultaneously. It has a powerful multiplier effect that significantly increases the audience for your activations.

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Companies that partner with Feintuch Communications to plan and manage their social media programs are partnering with a team with experience in using social media to establish an online brand personality; open communications channels with desired audiences; engage with relevant influencers, including media; and support traditional PR efforts to achieve concrete communications and marketing objectives.

Our methodology for developing, implementing and managing your company's social media program is a proven blueprint for strategic engagement and comprehensive analytics based on metrics that best support your company's business objectives. We continuously monitor engagement and audience shifts to be sure content is relevant to targeted audiences allowing us to meet benchmarks and improve performance.

By layering social media into clients' on-going PR and marketing communications programs, we help organizations amplify their voice in market, create synergy between multiple media channels and balance client resources efficiently.

If you're wondering why your firm's social media efforts aren't driving sought-after results, it might be time for a social call ... with Feintuch Communications.

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Our digital marketing team continues to grow. With over 100 people internationally, we're passionate about building integrated solutions that are powered by strong insights and compelling

creative, and social media is no exception. We build social strategies as an extension of user experience, shaping the way consumers engage with a brand, driving intrigue into action. We've worked across industries with clients including: IEEE, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Hotels.com, Steaz, the Jamaica Tourist Board, Allianz Global Assistance, and Rioja Wine USA. We see our clients as partners, and blend smart, analytical thinking with strong strategy and creativity to enhance our clients' success.

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French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the preeminent integrated marketing firm in the Southeast and one of the nation's leading public relations, advertising and digital media agencies. The firm is the winner of the *Bulldog Reporter* 2017 Stars of PR Awards, including the Grand Prize for Best PR Agency of 2017. FWV earned first-place Gold Awards for Business-to-Consumer PR Agency of the Year, Midsize Agency of the Year and Most Innovative Agency. Additionally, the firm is the *Holmes Report* 2016 Consumer Agency of Year recipient. Founded in April 1997 by Agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV employs 103 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles and Tampa offices.

FWV is home to one of the nation's top digital services practices. A leader in award-winning, results-driven marketing campaigns, FWV executes multifaceted social media initiatives to drive sales and marketing objectives including brand awareness, consumer engagement, lead generation, product trial, conversion and loyalty on behalf of some of the world's foremost companies and brands across various practice areas, including: Wrangler Jeans, Riders by Lee, Moe's Southwest Grill, Pendleton Whisky, Atlantic Natural Foods, Airplus Footcare, Para-



Hunter Public Relations celebrated Valentine's Day 2018 by amplifying a popular social media meme, which positioned "Prime and Commitment" as the more aspirational alternative to "Netflix and Chill." Hunter PR developed a digital-first campaign for Amazon Prime that leveraged high-reach, meme-friendly influencer partners to share comical branded posts and lay the groundwork for the release of a branded video developed with one of YouTube's most popular personalities, Grace Helbig.

lyzed Veterans of America, Calligaris Home Furnishing, Concord Hotels, Tweetsie Railroad, Wilmington and Beaches CVB (N.C.), NC State University, the International Gemological Institute (IGI), Alltech, Vetoquinol, Tomlyn, and Melitta Coffee.

Comprised of a team of specialists in consumer insights, content creation, and paid social, our social media experts help clients better understand, navigate and utilize existing, new and ever-changing communications platforms to reach their goals. Capabilities include: research and strategy; media planning; video and animation; influencer marketing; social media analytics; conversion tracking; campaign optimization; social media analytics and attribution. FWV has established and maintains authoritative brand presences on both mainstay and emerging social platforms including Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, Tumblr and more.

FWV has achieved significant results on behalf of its clients, including establishing companies and brands as online and social authorities in their respective industries and lifestyles; developing brand loyal communities; maintaining a consistent increase in

engagement levels month-over-month and year-over-year; increasing brand affinity, reach and purchase intent; creating emotional connections with consumers; and driving online and in-store sales.

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Hunter Digital, a division of Hunter Public Relations, one of the most highly recognized firms in consumer marketing communications, utilizes a blend of established and emerging channels and technologies to secure buzz around new products, revitalize or reintroduce brands through trusted influencers

and advocates and engage consumers with thumb-stopping content that compels amplification. Hunter Digital has experience managing every piece of the ever-evolving social & digital media ecosystem, including strategic counsel and brand planning, creative production, content and micro-content creation, daily community management, influencer management, website development, media buying and content partnerships. Winner of digital media awards from *PR News*, *PR Daily*, *Bulldog Reporter* and SABRE Awards, Hunter puts its insights-based approach to social and digital media strategy to work for some of the most respected companies in America, including Amazon, Diageo, Keurig Green Mountain, McIlhenny and Wyndham Rewards.

Hunter Public Relations is an award-winning consumer products and services marketing communications firm based in New York City with staff located across North America, including Miami, Orlando, Seattle, Los Angeles and Toronto, offices in London and affiliate partners in Mexico City. Our mission is "earning it:" from consumer attention and long-term client relationships to our talented staff's dedication, we strive to earn it every day.

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Named to the 2017 *Inc.* 5000 List of Fastest Growing Companies in America and *Entrepreneur* magazine's 2016 Entrepreneur 360 List as one of the Most Entrepreneurial Companies in America, Marketing Maven is an expert at developing a solid social media strategy that outlines measurable goals. Content and context are key to successful social media campaigns and we provide the Call-to-Action to reach your target demographic.

Successful social media campaigns go beyond strategy. Properly managing the follow-through of your social media campaign is crucial to building brand ambassadors. We offer A/B testing, social media advertising, social listening (identifying competitive share of voice, sentiment analysis, and key influencers), content development, social media customer service, influencer engagement, live-event coverage, manage viral campaigns, promotions, page development as well as analytics on demographics, reach and engagement.

Marketing Maven is a federally recognized Native American Owned 8(a) and WOSB certified company. We are also a certified Small Business (SB) with the California Department of General Services (DGS) and a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

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Marketing Maven CEO and President, Lindsey Carnett, received an IMPACT Award for Social Media Campaign Integrated Strategy in recognition of its Simply Fit Board 21-Day Challenge social media entry for client Allstar Products Group at the Internet Marketing Association's annual awards celebration.

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses audience insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including *The Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Mid-sized Agency of the Year. *Fortune* has included the agency on its lists for 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

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Mark Ganguzza, President & CEO

Although our name is fun and kind of quirky, Pitching Monkeys Media is serious about the power of your message to make a difference, to raise awareness and to help maximize exposure for your projects, brands and campaigns.

A media relations and full-service production agency, Pitching Monkeys Media works with a variety of clients in industries including consumer, healthcare, lifestyle, business, sports and non-profit, to name a few.

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Mark Owens, CEO
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Social media revolutionized the brand/consumer relationship. A successful social strategy delivers more than likes: It's an authentic brand experience and conversation.

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At Rogers & Cowan, we customize each client's social story and create searchable and shareable content to increase exposure, desire and engagement with your target audience. We manage everything from outlet generation, infrastructure, activation, campaign integration, posting and community management to asset generation, growth hacking, influencers, paid media, online reputation management and more.

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proach starts with building listening programs, refining messaging, curating content, developing audience personas, identifying and engaging influencers, designing creative and compelling program concepts, and cultivating campaigns that build relationships and drive results. We help brands stand out in social media and use digital technologies to grow businesses from start-ups to Fortune 500 companies.

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Who We Are: Creating digital and social experiences begins with understanding your audience. In healthcare, it's not just a patient, caregiver or healthcare professional. It's a person. A human being. We translate science through understanding individual perspectives. This ability lets us connect deeper with the human behind healthcare. We deliver engaging experiences across the digital spectrum. Our capabilities include research & insights, content strategy and development, clinical trial recruitment, influencer activations, paid media (search, display, and social), HCP engagement, and custom digital executions to reach consumers and healthcare providers.

Our digital and social strategy team is part of the public relations

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We admit it. We don't have all the answers when it comes to social media. Are there smart strategies to grow your community? Yes. Should you be layering your organic social with some paid social? Most likely. Can social have an impact on your brand reputation? Definitely but positively as well as negatively if not handled properly. Who should own social: in-house, agency or a hybrid approach? We lean towards hybrid, but it's worth a deeper dive. Does a b2b company need to establish a social voice? All companies need to nail their social voice ... quickly. We package up the answers to these questions and more in what we call a Social Dash, a visual effort to define your social themes, messaging mix, property targets,

frequency and voice. Then we ensure that the social media strategy sits in the middle of the public relations and digital marketing efforts to maximize the overall brand reputation, engagement and transaction. Collectively, we have graduated from the question, should I have a social strategy to how best can I leverage social. Call us. We believe we know a thing or two.

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Chris Perry, Chief Digital Officer

Weber Shandwick is a global leader in digital communications and content marketing. As one of the largest brand publishing houses in the world, with over 100 major brand content assignments of learning to apply, the firm isn't resting on its laurels. With recent acquisitions and partnerships Weber Shandwick has developed deep capabilities in data and advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, mobile application development and digital paid media planning and buying.

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Zing How Design (ZHD) merges full service Influencer Marketing Services with CPG brand creative expertise. We are the custom excitement agency, and we bring the latest campaigns and customizations to life in our one-stop-influencer-shop. ZHD delivers the right balance of know-how and creativity through custom fabrication, creative solutions, graphic & 3D design, in-house art & textile studio, sourcing, creative fulfillment, warehouse capabilities and logistics.

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How to navigate an unplanned executive transition

Sex scandals have led to high-profile executive departures across the media, film, retail and banking worlds. What are the elements needed to successfully deal with the PR fallout?

By Rachel Chesley

With the momentum of the #Me-Too movement, there has been significant attention generated in the past few months on the removal of executives alleged to have engaged in inappropriate or predatory behavior. High-profile public departures across retail, media and film, banking and the culinary world have garnered scrutiny in media and the wider zeitgeist. But what about the companies these former executives leave behind? Internal investigations and swift public action are certainly key components of a response, but what are the key elements in successfully handling the immediate departure of a high-profile chief executive?

Public personal scandals like sexual harassment are just one company challenge that can spur an unplanned executive change. FTI Consulting conducted a survey of investors and employees to understand their perspectives on these challenging moments, and found that the situations that cause the greatest investor concern are also those that companies struggle the most to navigate. In fact, investors believe companies successfully manage the most concerning sources of unplanned transitions well under 50 percent of the time:

- Corporate malfeasance: 37 percent successful.
- Regulatory investigation: 43 percent successful.
- Public personal scandal: 44 percent successful.
- Sudden departure to a competitor or new opportunity: 48 percent successful

Investors are likely most concerned by these types of transitions because the greatest value — and even the company's very license to operate — is on the line. And in the current environment, that value is more at risk than ever.

Take, for instance, recent management upheaval in the tech startup space. Reports of a toxic workplace culture that varies from sexual harassment to intellectual property lawsuits to changing federal regulations have all resulted in leadership changes at high-profile companies. These issues touch on the most concerning transition for investors and can engulf a company and its leadership. These concerns are top of mind for investors, and the boards who report to them aren't afraid to act, with actions that include removing a CEO.

But there are clear communications strat-

egies a company can employ to mitigate risk and manage through a sudden executive departure. Our research identified the primary factors critical to a company's success:

Communicate a clear line of succession: With any sudden departure, regardless of whether a company has a succession plan on the shelf, it's vital to explain to stakeholders who's in charge. An interim appointment — which more than 80 percent of investors and employees expect — can help smooth a period of uncertainty while the company searches for a permanent leader.

Affirm business continuity: Especially during uncertain times, employees and investors alike are keenly focused on keeping the business running. While delivering information is critical, it should not get in the way of operational execution. During instances of unplanned management change, companies should emphasize business-as-usual messaging both internally and externally.

Manage morale of the employee base and senior leadership: Employees are the most important audience in an executive transition. Supporting both those most impacted by the change and those who are merely concerned by it can go a long way in maintaining business continuity. This is particularly important where an ongoing investigation may occur, of notable importance in situations of malfeasance or sexual harassment.

In our research, we found that employees and investors, surprisingly, had a lot in common. Both identified a company's employee base as the most important audience, followed by investors, customers, suppliers/partners and regulators. This highlights the focus on business continuity: the most important audiences are those that keep the business running, buying and supplying materials and ensuring its license to operate.

Perhaps surprisingly to some in the public and investor relations fields, media and sell-side analysts are relatively low priorities in times of executive upheaval. Reporters may be swarming to get a quote, and can be a tool for delivering key information. However, investors and employees alike expect to hear from the company first-hand.

In addition to delivering your message in times of management upheaval, strategic interaction with the media can also help companies not facing these issues

build their reputations ahead of unforeseen events. Proactive efforts include companies changing the criteria by which they judge potential chief executives. Quoted in the *Wall Street Journal* recently, Allergan CEO Brent Saunders noted, "As board members, we have to put our own elbow grease and time into thoroughly checking out the character of any CEO we hire ... Reputation management is becoming an increasingly important component of the valuation of a business."

Indeed, reputation is more important than ever. Moments of change can demonstrably risk reputation and the company's associated value, particularly high-profile events where all the facts may not be known. No doubt there will continue to be unplanned departures across companies, whether from the renewed focus on ethical behavior or more ordinary course reasons like shareholder activism or sudden illness. Regardless of the circumstances, companies facing the unplanned exit of a leader should be prepared to engage all stakeholders, underscoring a clear message of continuity and the plan to move forward.

Rachel Chesley is a Senior Director in the Strategic Communications segment at FTI Consulting. She provides counsel to clients in complex business situations such as transactions, restructuring, executive transitions, litigation, and crisis. ○



Rachel Chesley

PR news brief

Web access increasingly mobile

About 16 percent of all U.S. Internet users — or nearly 45 million people — will access the web exclusively via a mobile device this year, with mobile-only audiences expected to reach 55.7 million — or 17.2 percent of the entire U.S. population — by 2022, according to recent Internet user figures released by digital market research company eMarketer.

About 83 percent of U.S. Internet users now use mobile devices to go online, according to eMarketer's report, though desktops and laptops still maintain a slight lead, as 84 percent of Internet users are expected to access the web this year via a desktop and laptop computer.

The report mentions that smartphone adoption has now actually slowed in the U.S., as most Americans who want a mobile device already own one, and as a result, mobile growth is now expected to be less than two percent this year.

The one demographic where mobile adoption will see growth consists of seniors ages 65 and older, who are expected to be responsible for double-digit gains in smartphone use this year.

In search of the perfect television show

How the acquisition of a nationally-syndicated news program that focuses on integrated client messaging is a win for PR agencies.

By Kevin Foley

Not long after I launched KEF Media in 1986, I began thinking about a television program dedicated to airing my clients' video news releases. We kicked around a lot of ideas, from "Blue Chip News" to a show-and-tell type show. None of these ever got any traction because they lacked the requisite entertainment value TV programs need to hold the audience's attention. So we put the idea on hold, deciding if we did such a show, it had to be the right show.

Meanwhile, we watched various programs airing nothing but paid publicity content come and go. Variations on the idea evolved, too, from in-flight programs that carried sponsored news to radio programming that presented paid content. But, again, the problem with many of these seemed to be a lack of anything that might engage viewers. What was the point of producing a program full of client messaging that nobody watched or heard?

Thus, we focused our energies on earned media results for our public relations agency clients, primarily on network and local market television newscasts. To do this, we had to think each project through and ask ourselves: why will a news decision-maker air this? That meant melding the client's message with a legitimate news story that combined strong visuals and brevity. When clients took our counsel, they were frequently rewarded with great results.

To be honest, not all PR folks got this approach. They would hand us a press release and tell us to produce a VNR that looked and sounded like it; basically, a TV commercial. We'd push back, but occasionally we would end up doing as directed. When the results fell short of client expectations, everybody was unhappy.

Things changed as digital communications overtook television news. That was good for us, because we produce video, and video is king when it comes to digital messaging. We continued to reach out to TV news media but, increasingly, we also provided branded content to websites and bloggers targeting audiences our clients wished to reach.

The Daily Buzz

We also discovered "The Daily Buzz" some years ago, a syndicated television

show that aired on CW television stations across the country. Along with many other publicists, we frequently placed our clients' content on the show because it was something other such programs weren't: entertaining, fun and engaging. The producers creatively integrated our content into the show's format in a way that kept viewers watching. Then, in 2015, "The Daily Buzz" abruptly ceased production.

I found out later that the program's owners had a financial squabble that led to "The Daily Buzz"'s untimely demise. That's when I began thinking about acquiring the show and relaunching it, provided I could retain the producers and talent — the folks who made "The Daily Buzz" the big success it originally was.



As luck would have it, we hired the program's executive producer to work as a producer for our clients. This led to a meeting with one of "The Daily Buzz"'s former principles who was excited at the prospect of resurrecting "The Daily Buzz" and assured me it would be as good or better than the original. That's all I had to hear.

After acquiring "The Daily Buzz" trademark, we re-launched the show in June 2017 as a weekly on Pop TV, the former TV Guide Channel, which is carried nationally by every major cable and dish system in the U.S. CBS, the most watched network, together with Lionsgate, a major film and television program producer, co-own Pop and have dedicated the resources to make the network a success.

In addition to "The Daily Buzz"'s orig-

inal creative team, the show is anchored by its original hosts, Lance Smith and Kia Malone, and features West Coast reporter Scott Carty, New York correspondent Josh McBride, and Atlanta-based Summer Jackson.

Initially, while the show aired in a less-than-desirable time slot, Pop liked "The Daily Buzz" enough to move it to Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. Eastern as the lead-in to its morning program lineup.

It's a weekly program, so where does "daily" come in? In addition to re-launching the show, we reactivated "The Daily Buzz"'s substantial



Kevin Foley

online presence. Every day, we update the website, Facebook page and other platforms with celebrity and entertainment news, gossip and, of course, our clients' content. Every week, our on-air talent directs viewers to those Daily Buzz platforms and invites engagement. The result? We already have more than 100,000 active fans and growing in the highly-desirable 18-34 demographic. Thus, we know viewers are watching.

We have competition, of course. There are several programs that present sponsored content, however, like past programs these lack the quality production values and the following "The Daily Buzz" enjoys. While some of these shows air in major markets, they often appear in the early morning hours on weekends or on low power TV stations. Who watches? Who knows?

"The Daily Buzz" has let us revolutionize the way co-op media tours are done, too. For what agencies spend on a typical co-op tour, we deliver a far better value and a stronger client message that includes not only an appearance on the Buzz, but local market affiliate placement. All client content is, of course, repurposed for digital placement on the Buzz and many other platforms.

It took me 31 years, but I finally found the show I was looking for, one that airs in every major and secondary U.S. market, one that viewers actually watch and one that delivers the audience our clients are looking for. It was worth the wait.

Kevin Foley is CEO of KEF Media Associates, Inc., an Atlanta-based producer and distributor of electronic publicity. He can be reached at kfoley@kefmedia.com. ○

Don't forget radio!

Despite common misconceptions, radio is still roaring in the 21st Century.

By Wendy J. Meyeroff

Since I started providing expert editorial materials to clients more than 20 years ago, I've seen a lot of changes. There are more TV options. There's the Web. There are blogs and YouTube. Need I go on?

Sitting in an audio broadcast host chair — first over three years ago and now co-anchor of “Partners in Health & Biz” — I started asking over and over: why shouldn't any reliable expert take advantage of what can be the much lower-cost — and often more believable — publicity option: radio guesting?

The numbers still show how valuable a marketing tool this is. Yet I regularly get insights as to how few folks truly recognize, let alone use, this venue. I write about this because yes, I've been hosting/chatting on Podcasts, but that lets me trade appearances with radio hosts!

The numbers are there

This February, Nielsen re-emphasized that it's radio Americans use: 93 percent tune into AM/FM compared to “[watching] television, or [using] smartphones, tablets or computers.”

The strength remains past expected spikes. Of course, radio had strong listening trends during the 2016 election and the first year of the Trump term, but Nielsen found audience numbers are still solid; from 7.4 percent of listeners ages 25-54 in both '16 and '17 to 8.3 percent this past January.

Another stat: Holiday listeners didn't dissipate this past quarter. One example showed the Adult Contemporary market stayed great across the board; e.g., whereas listeners ages 18-34 were at 7.2 percent in January 2017, this January the segment was 8.0 percent, according to Nielsen.

My insights were enhanced when I suggested (then hosted) a panel called (wait for it) “Don't Forget Radio!” for the American Society of Journalists and Authors a few years ago. Folks piled into this seminar and while we didn't do an official survey (probably should have) this seemed to be a solid audience mix of current self-help authors, their ghosts and agents, plus many looking to get their “amazing book” on the market.

One of my panelists, Dan Smith, CEO/Founder of Smith Publicity in NJ, talked about the challenge of aligning fiction authors. His experience created this motto: “No One Interviews a Book!” In other words, “very few radio shows discuss an actual book.” Instead, he and his team make sure they tie the novel to a real-life event.

Another expert, Janet Appel of NYC's

Janet Appel Public Relations, noted, “We encourage authors to build a following on local radio shows because ... you may be one of the few experts [in the area],” and she meant geographic area. Need a PTSD recovery expert in NYC or Boston? They're easy to find. Seeking someone who's working locally with kids and families in the Parkville after that shooting (e.g. psychiatrists, social workers, bereavement counselors, even principals.)? Somewhere in there may be a current or would-be author, perhaps someone already being pitched by publishers to write a first-person story. (Bet you can imagine a book by one of the #MarchForOurLives movement's beacons, Emma Gonzalez.)

Think beyond the obviously dramatic

I get ghostwriting options from several sources, but probably my longest connection is what comes through the Editorial Freelancers Association. I don't remember too many ghosting gigs in the '90s, but from what I've seen in the last decade they've exploded. Fiction, non-fiction; bios and biz advice; health gurus...every type of editorial request comes through and most concepts don't sound as dramatic as Parkville or 9/11.

That doesn't mean they won't work. It's just means truly understanding your target. I remember one of Dan's stories and I hope I have the details right. It went along the lines of he'd booked the author of some biz insights to a small Iowa town's station. The author protested. After all, how important could a small-town audience anywhere be? Of course, Dan's savvy convinced his client and what happened? Some type of venture money supplier in that small town hooked up with the author!

Check out options

Get an eBook written to promote. I'm working on my own Small Biz Savvy eBook that offers shorts insights on “Marketing on a Shoestring” the subtitle to my previous broadcast, “Piggy Bank Promotions.” Or it could be a real book, like one of the first I helped promote: *The Family Caregiver's Guide*, sponsored by a home health aide manufacturer whose marketing savvy was growing. Just remember: you still need a story idea, not just a commercial. (That's called “advertising!”)

Contact by using the requested method. Sometimes when I desperately needed a guest on my original Piggy Bank Promotions show (usually only after an emer-

gency) I left my phone number to ensure immediate contact. But that was very rare. Instead I posted only my email.

Nevertheless, folks who figured their expertise was so educated/fun/inspirational ... you get the idea ... were sure I'd be thankful they called. Folks, don't assume any host will LOVE a long chat as you pitch “amazing” insights. Some have lots of work to do.

Pick a specific topic. I got too many calls with totally generic pitches, like, “We can talk about social media.” Yeah, so? Which aspect of social media ... and what makes yours different? You can talk plastic surgery. Again ... so what? A health show is more likely to book someone who knows specifics like: “I can tell your listeners the breast surgery mistakes I most often have to repair after someone else made them — and how to avoid those mistakes.”

By the way, when conducting research on possible guest spots, make sure a show features related topics. If it's a stock market program, a gastrointestinal expert is usually not the first guest needed. (Unless execs are getting ulcers from all the ups/downs.)

Prepare a background. I always sent upcoming guests an email reminding them of the show's date and call-in info, but I also asked for a bio — two or three sentences — and a few questions they'd like me to ask. If a program doesn't allow the latter, send an FAQ sheet showing more about what you usually cover. Hosts may end up using some, or at least spark some ideas in their minds about what to discuss. See how Partners in Health & Biz gets folks involved here.

Don't bail out! Once an appearance date has been set, keep it. You never know when a show's audience will get bigger. (Oprah didn't start as a megastar.) Piggy Bank Promotions grew by 300 percent after I launched it, especially in the Baltimore/DC corridor.

The bottom line: Aside from a few megastars, no one should expect radio (or any venue) to automatically roll in clients/customers. Still, this great promotional outlet should be re-explored.

Wendy J. Meyeroff is Owner and President of WM Medical Communications and has been providing copywriting, custom content and marketing consults to health clients for 20+ years. See www.wmmmedcomm.com and www.issuu.com/wmmmedwriter. She can be contacted at wendyj.m.PIH@gmail.com. ○



Wendy J. Meyeroff

What '70s flicks can teach us about authentic storytelling

The cinema of the 1970s provides PR professionals some great examples of storytelling as well as the power of an honest, authentic voice.

By Ryan McDermott

Before we dive into the infinite wisdom of Jack Nicholson's films, let me explain something. I understand the idea of authenticity in PR and marketing isn't new. Like any industry, trends come and go. Consumers grow fatigued by one style and, as PR professionals are typically concerned, we pivot to the next trend.

The problem, as I see it, is that we often treat authenticity as a tactic that has a concrete start and finish date. If we can't win our audience over with a flashy campaign then we'll turn to a more bare-bones, "honest" approach. While there's nothing wrong with shifting strategies, the minute you start using authenticity as a rhetorical device, you're sunk.

Authenticity isn't a tactic, or a style or an event. You can't deploy it simply where you see fit. That's because authenticity, by definition, isn't about being raw or gritty, it's about acting in a way that's consistent with your (or your company's) values and beliefs.

Authenticity should be baked into everything you do. Whether you're highlighting serious work being done to improve lives or promoting an aspirational consumer product that lifts us out of the drudgery of our daily routines, customers are looking for a human narrative that touches on the struggles and successes we all experience.

Storytelling on the 70s big screen

The cinema of the 1970s provided us with powerful examples of storytelling and the human experience. Bob Rafelson's *Five Easy Pieces* — a chamber drama about an oil-rig worker — gave birth to the gritty realism that ruled most of 1970s and mirrored society's post-hippie era cynicism. By the end of the decade, America was consumed with the epic space opera *Star Wars*, which relieved film-goers of those dark burdens in favor of good triumphing over evil.

These two movies occupy separate sides of the genre spectrum and bookend a turbulent decade. But what they share is authenticity.

In *Five Easy Pieces*, Bobby Dupea (Jack Nicholson) struggles to reconcile his working class life in the oil fields with his privileged upbringing as a piano prodigy. The impending death of his father forces him to confront not only his family's demons, but also those of his own making. Estranged from his father, Bobby has to accept the past he rejected as well as his own internal

anger. But much like life, there's no concrete resolution. We leave Bobby once again running from his problems. And that works because, even with all he's learned, it's within Bobby's character to run away. That's not necessarily a good thing, but it's definitely authentic.

Seven years later, the first *Star Wars* film is perhaps most noted for its impact on the future of special effects as well as its epic scale. At the time, however, it was also an effective way for people to escape a decade that saw an end to the Vietnam War, Richard Nixon's resignation, gasoline rationing and increasing urban decay.

Buried in that space opera about the Rebel Alliance's struggle against the Galactic Empire is a story as intimate and relatable as *Five Easy Pieces*. Luke Skywalker comes from a humble background as a farmer dreaming of doing something great with his life, when he finds out that his father was actually a Jedi Knight. The journey makes him reevaluate not only the nature of good and evil, but also what it means to be a family member.



Bobby Dupea (Jack Nicholson) sits on an oil rig in *Five Easy Pieces* (1970).

These are both stories about the human condition, albeit from different galaxies. The influence of the original *Star Wars* and the subsequent franchise that followed is immeasurable. The movie became iconic and its characters became part of our own lives. While *Five Easy Pieces* wasn't the blockbuster-defining film of the decade, it was nominated for four Academy Awards and five Golden Globe Awards. In 2000, it was selected to be preserved by the Library of Congress in the National Film Registry.

What does any of this have to do with PR?

While these movies were afforded millions of dollars and thousands of production hours to compile long and compelling narratives, the truth is that PR professionals can create the same authentic voice in a

tweet, a media advisory or even a blog post.

Storytelling has become such an integral part of PR and marketing that, as professionals, we're constantly trying to shape narratives around the brands we represent. But those stories are worthless if they're inauthentic. Customers have access to more information than ever, and if you try to fool them you're likely to fail.

This isn't just fluff. There are hard numbers to back up the power of storytelling and, by extension, thought leadership.

A June 2017 survey of 1,300 business decision makers and C-suite executives by LinkedIn and Edelman showed that nearly half said thought leadership directly led them to award business to a company. The same number said thought leadership helps companies command a premium for their goods or services.

A great case study in authenticity comes from Ann Handley, head of content at MarketingProfs, and author of *Everybody Writes*. Handley wrote on her blog last year about a LinkedIn post that became a sensation, largely due to its authenticity.

"As an exacting writer and a proponent of a slow and strategic marketing, I should be having an aneurysm (Ann-eurysm?) over how a single, swearsy, typo-infested LinkedIn post slopped together in 20 minutes sparked a flurry of online engagement and \$90,000 in sales," Handley wrote. "But I'm not. Because from a marketing and writing point of view, there's a lot to love about the post-I-should-hate."

Handley explained how Cara Mackay, who owns a family shed-building business in Scotland, published a profane, grammar-defying post about what it's like to work from home. It took Mackay all of 20 minutes to write, but it gives a stunning look at what it's like to juggle work, family and everything else that gets in the way.

"Imagine a world where you are not shackled by the restraints of your never ending house of doom," Mackay's LinkedIn post reads. "Imagine a place you can call your own [fade out wavy dreaming-ness]..."



Ryan McDermott

— Continued on next page

Broadcast coverage, social media amplification

How to effectively tie broadcast and social campaign elements together for optimum results.

By Andrea Pass

Every public relations campaign has its end goal, messaging and strategy to achieve client results. Today, an integrated message communicated via broadcast and social media platforms ties together unified brand outreach to increase sales, grow positive reputation management and engagement over multiple channels.

Via mobile touchpoints, the domino effect is vital for a successful program. Traditional press and social media amplification need to work together using quality placements, content and links.

Consumers are still watching broadcast and cable television at a rate of over five hours per day, or just less than 35 hours per week, according to Nielsen data. Time spent watching online video content continues to increase with audiences spending an estimated two hours per week. Younger viewers watch almost one-and-a-half hours of video content per week via smartphones. Therefore, PR pros need to blend a method of traditional and new media to effectively integrate campaigns.

Broadcast media adds to social content

Broadcast media offers opportunities for brands to showcase news in an editorial context. By securing interviews on local, national and online video outlets, pre-interview outreach and post-interview video posting shows an ongoing and up-to-date awareness for the business or product.

Booking clients on morning shows reaches a targeted audience of those getting ready for working, preparing the children for school and retirees, for example. The national broadcasts as well as their local counterparts have dedicated viewership that oftentimes does not waiver. In New York, if “Good Day New York” on the Fox affiliate is the favorite, that consumer will not flip to “PIX 11 Morning News” on the CW affiliate. One media outlet will not book a guest secured by the competitor. Think through and carefully plan segment bookings to be sure to best service client and media needs.

Use social media to effectively promote upcoming appearances prior to airing. Then, secure the segment link and highlight on all client and appropriate social media channels to fully integrate the broadcast placement while increasing SEO. By tagging the media outlet, host, booker and others, increased awareness can occur.

Keep the integrated message consistent

throughout client interviews and social media content.

Online video outlets boost engagement

In keeping up with online broadcast media growth, Cheddar is a live post-cable network — basically CNBC for Millennials. Broadcasting from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, this media outlet combines live video content with a social media outreach. Only two years old, Cheddar TV understands the value in expanding audiences via multiple channels including Amazon, Vimeo, Twitter, Sling, Xfinity, Pluto TV, RachMe TV and 60 percent of smart TVs in the U.S.

For hyper-local video segments, be sure to research individual states to secure placements in online broadcast outlets. Again, the integration of segment content plus social media placement will continue to grow client recognition.

Reposting of interviews and content, even months later, will result in an increased bump in engagement, especially when placements are evergreen.

Online video plays well to integration

PR firms should be producing video content as an integral part of the overall strategic plan. With the consistently expanding opportunities for online video placement, marketers integrating Facebook live and YouTube are continuing to see growth.

Clients should place video content on a

variety of platforms to increase potential eyeballs. Create content that can be viewed with or without sound since many will view without turning on the audio. Several sources have noted that approximately 85 percent of video is absorbed without sound.

The trend of live streaming allows clients to bring the “on air” experience to consumers following that business or brand. From entrepreneurial ventures to *Fortune* 500 companies, each can create and disseminate content to engage with key audiences. All it takes is a smartphone, tripod and social media account.

Support traditional PR with social media

Last year, 81 percent of those in the U.S. had a social media profile, meaning that 19 percent of Americans were not on social media. These are still valuable consumers to a brand. Therefore, be sure to tie-in both traditional print, broadcast and online press outreach with social media content and integrate two for more complete coverage.

Tie together broadcast public relations with social media amplification to keep that integrated message alive.

Andrea Pass is Vice President, Media Relations, for bi-coastal agency Marketing Maven. She can be reached at Andrea@MarketingMaven.com. ○



Andrea Pass

’70s FLICKS & AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING

— Continued from page 24

What made the post successful was its authenticity. The use of profanity and its hectic nature would never have worked if it came from a C-suite executive at a starched-collar legacy company.

“It boils over with the tension anyone feels when trying to balance home, family, work, recycling day, laundry, walking the dog, dinner,” Handley wrote of the post.

The numbers don’t lie. While Mackay’s previous posts barely made a sound, with fewer than 100 views and only two comments, the work from home rant garnered 1,702 comments, 617 shares and nearly 10,000 likes. It was effective because Mackay told an authentic story about her struggles every morning and naturally tied them into her own business making boutique sheds.

“It’s not rocket science, get out the house get into the shed and actually make something worth working for,” Mackay concludes before tagging the post #shedlife.

Not long after that post, Mackay updated her LinkedIn audience with a video addressing her tone and language.

“I know there are going to be some people who are absolutely disgusted. But I also understand there are plenty of people out there who think that profanity as a use in the Scottish dialect is a beautiful thing,” she wrote.

Now that’s an honest and authentic voice.

Ryan McDermott is an Account Executive at Sage Communications. He’s a public relations writing professional, content creator and former print reporter working at the intersection of technology and government. ○

O'Dwyer's guide to VIDEO & BROADCAST FIRMS



Erin Lahey Schwitter and Kara Leibowitz from Artisan Production House on set with Michael Symon and Bobby Flay.

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Artisan Production House is a full service production house specializing in food & lifestyle publicity. We create brand content that resonates with your audience, keeps them engaged and brings value to their lives. Our innate understanding of story relevance and personal relationships with TV producers and media influencers throughout the country gets your

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Do you want to turn your leaders into influencers? Create awareness for campaigns and initiatives? Win the competition for attention at trade shows? If you do, broadcast has to be a part of the equation. It seems harder than ever to break through the noise, earning media to get your story on television. You need a specialist.

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Paul Gourvitz, President

For the past four decades Gourvitz Communications has always been a step ahead of the competition. Nothing has changed as GCI moves ahead in the twenty first century. Realizing that earned media has become nearly impossible to get, Gourvitz Communications has come up with the GUARANTEED MEDIA placement service. For a very reasonable price any company can get their b-roll package or interview in front of millions of US television viewers. Not satisfied with just one major innovation, GCI has also created a Mini SMT package which gives our clients the ability to deliver digital to stations without the need for a satellite feed and without those dreaded three AM west coast live interviews. Every interview on our Mini SMT's are guaranteed placements.

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The May issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile our ranked PR firms. If your firm is ranked and you would like to be profiled, contact Associate Editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2089 or steve@odwyerpr.com.



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Rockey Dies at 90

Jay Rocky, who built The Rocky Co. into the largest PR firm in the Pacific Northwest and sold the shop to Hill and Knowlton in 2000, died Feb. 24. He was 90.

Seattle-based TRC had more than 50 staffers and offices in Portland, Spokane, Anchorage, San Francisco, D.C. and New York. It counted Boeing, Washington Mutual, Alyeska Pipeline, British Airways and Nintendo as clients.

Rockey was first exposed to PR during a stint in the Navy's press shop in Honolulu. Upon discharge, he became a newspaper reporter in Olympia, United Press International staffer and PR rep for Alcoa in Vancouver, WA.

He made his initial mark on PR as director of the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle, which attracted luminaries such as Elvis Presley, Ed Sullivan, Nat King Cole and John Glenn. Rocky secured coverage for the fair in the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Los Angeles Times* and a *Life* cover, which featured a picture of the still under construction Space Needle. The Seattle fair event was the first international expo to turn a profit.

After the World's Fair, Rocky launched Jay Rocky Public Relations, which was recast as TRC. In 1976, Rocky was elected National President of the Public Relations Society of America.

A memorial service is slated April 21. ○



Jay Rocky

Tom Harris dies at 87

Tom Harris, who served as President and partner of Golin Harris as well as being an author, independent management consultant and adjunct professor at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, died March 26 after a long illness.

Harris teamed with Al Golin in 1978 to form GH, after having founded Foote, Cone & Belding Public Relations, where he also served as President, in 1973.

He also held executive posts at Edelman; Needham, Harper & Steers (now DDB); and North Advertising.

After Golin, Harris started his own agency, working with such clients as Allstate In-



Tom Harris

surance, Gillette and Procter & Gamble.

"Tom not only was a smart and influential PR person in his own right, he was instrumental in growing Golin into a marketing PR powerhouse," said Golin Vice Chair Ellen Ryan Mardiks in a statement. "We don't have Harris in our name anymore, but we do have his legacy in our client base and in our people." ○

APCO adds ex UK foreign secretary media lead

Simon McGee, former Press Secretary for UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, has joined the London offices of APCO Worldwide, where he's been named Executive Director in the agency's global solutions practice.

McGee has served as a personal communications advisor to four cabinet ministers and was media head for three government departments, including leading Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service's worldwide media operations.

He was previously a parliamentary lobby correspondent as well as a reporter for the *Sunday Times*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Yorkshire Post*.

As Executive Director, McGee will help lead the global solutions practice internationally, which advises clients though geopolitical issues, investment opportunities and crises. ○



Simon McGee

Edelman's Hall takes Telemundo post

NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises has named Krystyna Hall VP of Corporate Communications.

Hall joins the Spanish-language media company from Edelman, where was a Senior VP with responsibility for PR, corporate reputation and crisis management for such brands as PepsiCo, URBN, Mars Inc., Microsoft and Samsung.

Before that, she was a Senior VP at FleishmanHillard.

In her new role, Hall will develop corporate communication strategies designed to increase awareness of NBCUniversal Telemundo Enterprises and



Krystyna Hall

its brands among key stakeholders.

She'll be a part of the team that will coordinate the inauguration of Telemundo Center, the company's new headquarters, as well as playing a key role as Telemundo and Universo become the exclusive Spanish-language networks for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia this summer. ○

Hofstra U's comms. school taps Lukasiewicz

Mark Lukasiewicz, who left NBC News last year after a 17-year run, will become Dean of Hofstra University's Lawrence Herbert School of Communication on July 1.

At NBC, Lukasiewicz was Executive-in-Charge of the news group's transformation project, Senior VP of news specials and the unit's first VP for digital media.

He produced and planned coverage of Osama bin Laden's death, Pope Francis' U.S. visit, Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding and interviews with former presidents Obama and Bush II.

Prior to NBC, Lukasiewicz spent 11 years with ABC News and began his career as a reporter/columnist with *The Globe and Mail* and later as a Senior Producer with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. ○



Mark Lukasiewicz

Jernstedt joins Prosper Group

Prosper Group has added former Golin CEO Rich Jernstedt to its roster of strategic advisors. He will continue to lead his consultancy, The Jernstedt Company, located in Chicago.

Earlier, Jernstedt spent four years as a consultant at Porter Novelli and seven years at FleishmanHillard as CMO. He served on the boards of the Arthur Page Society, Institute for PR Public Relations and PR Council, where he was chairman.

"Rich's depth of experience as an agency leader will help guide today's agency CEOs through the challenges and opportunities of growth and development," said Prosper Group Managing Partner Alex Halbur. ○



Rich Jernstedt

Zuckerberg should ditch Facebook and go direct

By Fraser Seitel

To begin fixing his public relations problem, Mark Zuckerberg should stop using Facebook.

By that, I don't mean the boy billionaire should join fellow Silicon Valley swells Elon Musk and Brian Acton in backing the #DeleteFacebook movement. Musk,



Fraser P. Seitel has been a communications consultant, author and teacher for more than 30 years. He is the author of the Prentice-Hall text, *The Practice of Public Relations*.

the thin-skinned founder of Tesla, holds a grudge against Zuckerberg for bad-mouthing his rocket ship. Acton sold his WhatsApp creation to Facebook for \$19 billion several years ago, and today — having apparently graduated from the Trump University Charm School — is now calling on others to boycott the network.

While Mr. Zuckerberg shouldn't abandon the social network he founded in 2004 — with or without the Winklevoss brothers — in his dorm room at Harvard, he should seriously think about relegating Facebook to backup communicating status as he wends his way through his current public relations thicket.

Two weeks ago, the *New York Times* and *London Observer* both blasted out front-page stories detailing how the personal data of 50 million users was stolen by a Republican-backed research firm, Cambridge Analytica, and used to help Donald Trump get elected President.

In a ham-handed attempt to get out in front of the story, Mr. Zuckerberg used his communications medium of choice, Facebook — surprised? — to file a late night blog post announcing that Facebook had suspended Cambridge Analytica for misappropriating user data. That attempt to preempt did little but energize journalists to probe further. And since the story hit, Facebook has been besieged.

The Zuckerberg public relations response has been typical of Silicon Valley hotshots, who know lots about technological communications but little about human interaction.

How did Mr. Zuckerberg confront the Barbarians at Facebook's gate?

By going radio silent.

For five excruciating days, while the media continually bashed Facebook's brazen

violation of user trust, critics lit up Twitter with calls for Zuckerberg's removal or the company's downsizing, with whiny Facebook employees publicly wondering if they should transfer from the primary social network product to other less-tainted areas of the company. Zuckerberg, meanwhile, said nothing. Nor did anyone else in Facebook's executive ranks, most notably the CEO's typically loquacious right-hand woman, Sheryl Sandberg. In the face of all those Barbarians at Facebook's Gate, Ms. Sandberg, for once, wasn't leaning in.

Finally, with Congressional jackals calling for his head, the fallen Facebook founder reemerged — on Facebook. In a long and winding diatribe, Mr. Zuckerberg acknowledged that Facebook had failed in its responsibility to protect user data and "if we can't, then we don't deserve to serve you." He went on to describe the steps Facebook would take to work to ensure that a similar breach doesn't happen again.

Mr. Zuckerberg's attempt at written redemption only seemed to fan the flames of his denouncers. By week's end the Wizard of Facebook had moved out from behind the curtain to speak — for 30 minutes on the phone — with *Times*' reporters and then later to address an internal employee gathering.

So what should Zuck do now to slither out of Facebook's worst crisis in 14 years, and what can he learn from this ordeal to aid him

and the company in the future?

In a phrase: Go direct.

What was needed here, what is needed in virtually every similar catastrophic calamity that occasionally confronts an organization is face-to-face communication. People need to see the top dog; they need to hear from him or her; and they need to be reassured by his or her demeanor, grasp of the situation and his or her confidence in getting through it.

In a crisis, communicating via social media is an important element in a communications plan. But it should be secondary to more direct, face-to-face communications to primary stakeholders.

In the Cambridge Analytica case, Zuckerberg must now summon the courage to depart his Menlo Park cocoon and venture forth to meet his adversaries: newspaper and TV journalists, institutional investors and Congressional inquisitors. He must tell them what the company knows so far, what it's doing to correct the problem, and how it has no plans to succumb to the wishes of its critics by cutting back or reimagining or downsizing away from the money-making operations that have made it a "winner" as opposed to foundering rivals like Twitter and Snapchat.

In other words, the only way for the Facebook CEO to begin to put this crisis behind him is to go direct. ○

Budget cited as top PR challenge

Cost remains the greatest obstacle facing the corporate communications world and daily concern for professionals working in the industry today, according to a recent survey published by newsletter and online community Job of the Week.

That survey, which covered professionals' top challenges within the industry, as well as the trends and measurement tactics influencing much of their current work, underscored a consistent theme of being expected to do more with communications budgets that seem to grow increasingly smaller.

Most respondents said the biggest challenge facing PR functions today is financial in design. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) cited budget as their top obstacle, followed by the task of proving value or ROI to their business (54 percent).

Cost also consistently comprised the single greatest determining factor behind why communications agencies were fired. When agencies were let go, cost was traced to that decision 79 percent of the time, followed by service (50 percent) and results (40 percent). By contrast, 54 percent of corporate

communications pros reported that they retained an outside agency because they needed an extra pair of hands; half of respondents noted that expertise or a specialty was the top reason compelling them to do so.

Meanwhile, the financial challenges facing corporate communicators comes as more than half of those polled — 57 percent — also reported experiencing an ever-expanding list of duties. About half of respondents — 51 percent — said they expected their budgets to remain about the same next year.

Communications pros also cited several key functions within the industry that they claim have become more difficult in recent years. 51 percent said they believe media relations is getting harder, while about a third (32 percent) claimed that it's about the same, with only three percent saying that role is getting easier.

The JOTW survey was conducted in partnership with Atlanta, GA-based B2B technology shop Sword and Script Public Relations. It polled 155 communications pros primarily focused on corporate communications in February. ○

Questions for cable TV political know-it-alls

By Arthur Solomon

Prior to entering the PR business, as print dailies began to fade, I worked as a journalist and editor at several newspapers.

As a political junkie, I spend a lot of time watching on TV what I consider the poisoning of American politics: the 24/7 cable TV political programs.



Arthur Solomon was a senior VP at Burson-Marsteller. He now is a contributor to public relations and sports business publications, consults on PR projects and is on the Seoul Peace Prize nominating committee. He can be reached at arthursolomon4pr@juno.com.

If I was still a journalist, here are a few questions I would ask of the producers, reporters and pundits on the cable shows:

- If your reporters have so many “sources,” how come they rarely break any news?
- Why don’t you admit mistakes like newspapers do and chyron corrections?
- Why do producers still allow

Kellyanne Conway to appear on programs despite her “alternative facts” answers to questions?

- How can producers expect intelligent, unbiased discussions when they hire former GOP and Democratic operatives and office holders for their panels?
- How often does a producer check the veracity of comments by political guests and call out the lie on the spot?
- When was the last time producers checked the facts behind the opinions expressed by pundits?
- When was the last time producers checked the veracity of their beat reporters’ stories, like print pubs do?
- When was the last time a pundit said, “I’m not qualified to discuss that subject?”
- Why do producers rely on the same pundits who said: a) Trump will never get the GOP nomination; b) Trump will never win the election and c) Clinton is a sure bet to be elected President?
- Why do producers use the same pundits to discuss every political and nonpolitical happening and issue that occurs? Are they all Renaissance people?
- Why do cable TV shows keep discussing Trump’s tweets despite saying how terrible they are, when major print pubs began ignoring all but the most outrageous

ones many months ago?

- Why do cable TV hosts keep repeating that Trump’s tweets “change the subject” and determine what will be covered that day. (Funny, how the tweets don’t determine what the print pubs will cover.)

One aspect of cable TV entertainer punditry that truly was astonishing was their fast opines when President Trump nominated Judge Gorsuch for the Supreme Court. Faster than a speeding bullet, the collected wisdom of the pundits was that Gorsuch was the best the Democrats could hope for. It surprised me that so many who have been wrong so many times are also Constitutional experts. Who knew? Maybe I underrated them.

Political junkies probably know that the *Literary Digest*, a respected publication, ceased publishing after it predicted that GOP Presidential candidate Alfred Landon would trounce Democratic President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the 1936 election. When the votes were counted Landon won only Vermont and Maine. A rival poll by George Gallup predicted an easy FDR victory, which is what occurred, and the *Digest* ceased publishing the next year. Over the years, it has been said the loss of the publication’s credibility helped cause its demise.

The cable TV political pundits have been wrong about their analysis more times than was the *Literary Digest*, which in 1916, 1920, 1924, 1928 and 1932 correctly predicted the Presidential Election outcome. Yet cable pundits’ flawed analysis continues (and is made worse with the addition of former GOP and Democratic strategists).

But it’s more than the ubiquitous punditry that bothers me about cable TV. On September 29, MSNBC’s Hallie Jackson reported that President Trump would visit Southeast Asia allies on an extended trip. Ms. Jackson then added, “We’ll be very busy.” Her comment crystallizes my main complaint about cable TV. Unlike TV news talent of the past, most of the cable people act as if news is a show biz production and they are the stars. The same is true for network newscasts, which send their anchors to trouble spots so they can share the spotlight with the happenings.

In other businesses, employees would be terminated for making so many mistakes, so often. And while I don’t like to see anyone lose their job, some culling of pundits is justified after the more than a year-long prediction of a Hillary victory, which might have caused some voters to stay home and

provide Trump with the slight margins he needed in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin.

However, there’s one aspect of coverage at which political cable entertainers excel. It’s their split-second change from calm questioning and reporting to a shouting and exasperated individual, according to the topic being reported. (Having worked with some of the greatest show biz actors at a theatrical PR firm for 10 years before joining the corporate world, I can say some of the performances on political cable TV are worthy of a Tony, and their scripts are rewrites of reporting from the morning print pubs.)

So, I tell friends to keep an open mind, and don’t depend on TV (or radio and print pundits) for your political decisions. Be cynical when these all-knowing pundits speak out. Remember, at one time your mother thought you knew it all ... and then you brought home a report card. ○

PR news brief

U.S. travel spending to pick up in 2018

Spending on domestic travel could see a boost in the U.S. this year, if recent findings from a quarterly survey of Americans’ travel plans conducted by travel, hospitality and entertainment marketing agency MMGY Global are any indication.

Gauging what the survey calls “Traveler Sentiment” — which measures Americans’ interest, time available and personal finances earmarked for travel, as well as current perceptions surrounding travel’s affordability, quality and safety — MMGY reported its recent Travelhorizons survey found this metric was up a point from findings the agency reported a year ago.

More than six in 10 U.S. adults — or 62 percent — said they’ll travel for leisure within the next six months, and Americans collectively said they plan to take an average of 2.5 trips during this timeframe. Both figures remain unchanged from percentages recorded during an early 2017 iteration of the survey.

However, nearly a third of respondents — 28 percent — said they now plan to spend more on a vacation within the next six months compared to the same period last year, with only 12 percent reporting that they plan to spend less, yielding a positive difference of 16 points.

Reporting on the survey’s findings, MMGY said this turnaround can be attributed to increases in the perceived affordability of travel as well as gains in personal finances available for vacations. MMGY’s latest findings come after the agency gauged a five-point decrease in Traveler Sentiment between the first quarter 2016 and 2017’s first quarter.

The Travelhorizons report was conducted by MMGY Global’s market research team and polled 2,300 pre-qualified U.S. adults in late January.

PETA taps ex-congressman in animal testing push

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals has enlisted former Congressman Joe Heck (R-NV) to lobby in support of the Best Practices Act, which phases out the use of animals in live combat trauma training over a five-year period.

Heck, a physician and retired Army Reserve brigadier general, lost to Democrat Catherine Cortez in the 2016 race for Harry Reid's Senate seat. The Reserves last deployed Heck in 2008 when he commanded an emergency room in a combat hospital outside Baghdad.

Heck launched RedRock Government Relations, as part of Las Vegas-based RedRock Strategies, a year ago.

Georgia Congressman Hank Johnson (D), Pennsylvania Representative Tom Marino (R) and Oregon Senator Ron Wyden (D) are pushing the Best Practice Act to require the military to replace animals with medical technology to trauma courses.

They contend artificial simulators better mimic human anatomy than animals, provide superior training, save taxpayer money and are more humane. ○

Team Obama alum takes Pandora PA slot

Parita Shah, who was Chief of Staff at the Millennium Challenge Corp., the U.S. foreign aid agency that grants assistance to countries committed to sustainable development and reduction of poverty, has joined Pandora streaming service as public affairs head.

Prior to MCC, Shah was VP at APCO Worldwide and press secretary for President Obama's Commerce Dept. chief Gary Locke and ex-Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

She served as New Mexico Communications Director at Obama for America and as a member of the John Kerry for President advance team.

Pandora made news March 21 with the acquisition of AdsWizz, one of the few adtech firms that focus on digital audio.

The Interactive Advertising Board reports digital audio advertising is growing at a 42 percent clip.

Pandora expects AdsWizz will help it monetize inventory and make it easier for advertisers to buy space and measure campaign effectiveness. ○

USTA appoints lobbying group to boost U.S. travel spending

Travel trade non-profit the U.S. Travel Association has hired lobbying firm Klein/Johnson Group for Capitol Hill representation on issues related to government appropriations and tourism, as experts across the travel industry fight to reverse a downward trend in international visits that has gripped the U.S. for more than a year.

USTA has retained K/J on issues related to "encouraging safe travel to and within the United States for both business and tourism," according to lobbying registration documents filed in March.

The travel and tourism trade group has also hired K/J for help with appropriations bills as they relate to travel and Brand USA, the large-scale, public-private campaign to promote travel and tourism to the United States.



Inbound international travel to the U.S. has experienced a precipitous drop since President Trump's inauguration, a trend that many travel industry pros have begun referring to as the "Trump Slump," pointing to travelers' reaction to America's current political climate as well as policies such as travel bans from Muslim-majority countries as potential reasons for the decline.

According to recent figures by the National Travel and Tourism Office, the U.S. counted 41 million total foreign visits during the first seven months of 2017, a four percent decline from the same period a year before. Travel spending dipped around three percent during the same period.

An analysis by the USTA concludes this slump translates to a spending loss of about \$4.6 billion and 40,000 jobs.

In 2016, America's travel industry generated \$2.3 trillion for the U.S. economy (approx. 12 percent of the U.S. GDP) and supported 15.3 million jobs in the U.S.

Klein/Johnson Group was launched last year by two Podesta Group alums, Izzy Klein and Matt Johnson. Klein was previously communications director for Sen. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and was also formerly press secretary and legislative assistant to Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA). Johnson worked as chief counsel to Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-TX). ○

Congress targets Al Jazeera

A group of Congressmen has written to Attorney General Jeff Sessions, arguing that Arab TV satellite company Al Jazeera — established and funded by the Government of Qatar — should be required to register under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. The Justice Dept. last August required RTTV America, which is funded by Russia, to file under FARA.

The letter quotes Qatar's US ambassador calling AJ "one of Qatar's most valuable political and diplomatic tools," and an outlet "used as a chip" to shape Qatar's relations with other governments.

The Congressmen are troubled that AJ's content "undermines American interests with favorable coverage of US State Dept.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, including Hamas, Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, and Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria."

They told Sessions that AJ's "record of radical anti-American, anti-Semitic and anti-Israel broadcasts warrants scrutiny from regulators to determine whether this network is in violation of US law."

American citizens "deserve to know whether the information and news media they consume is impartial, or if it is deceptive propaganda pushed by foreign nations."

New Jersey Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D) and New York's Lee Zeldin (R) organized the letter signed by 16 other Congressmen and Texas Senator Ted Cruz (R).

AJ has a TV presence in DC, New York, Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles. Its broadcasts are accessible on social media.

Its PR unit has not yet commented on the FARA letter. ○

APCO scoops up \$1.6 million in Saudi work

APCO Worldwide has scooped up Saudi Arabia's National Center for Performance Measurement, which evaluates the efficiencies of public agencies.

The Center's goal is to build greater accountability and public trust in governmental units.

APCO's work calls for strategic communications, media relations and outreach to U.S. policymakers about the Kingdom's efforts to benchmark and measure its progress toward long-term objectives.

The Washington-based firm is to receive a flat fee of \$1.6 million plus expenses for its work that runs through April 30. ○

Fratelli Group signs on with Singapore

Public affairs shop the Fratelli Group has inked a two-year contract to provide media and PR consultancy services for the government of the Republic of Singapore.

Fratelli Group's activities for Singapore will focus on media monitoring and counsel, as well as "raising awareness and a deepening understanding of Singapore as a longstanding and strategic partner of the United States among key stakeholder groups, including the U.S. government and its agencies, Congress, media and thought leaders," according to Foreign Agents Registration Acts documents filed in March.

Scope of the work will include media monitoring, strategic counsel, message and materials development, public outreach support

and contact with members of various media relating to recent congressional activities, as well as recent actions by the executive branch.

The two-year campaign, which Fratelli will be performing on behalf of Singapore's Embassy in Washington, began on March 1. It brings the agency a total of \$432,000 payable on a monthly basis, with an option available for the Embassy to extend the contract for an additional year at a cost of \$216,000, or \$18,000 a month.

The Fratelli Group was founded by Francis O'Brien, who was press secretary to former Congresswoman and VP candidate Geraldine Ferraro. ○

Avenue Strategies advises Ukraine's former leader

Avenue Strategies Global is representing Yulia Tymoshenko, the former prime minister of Ukraine, under a six-month agreement that went into effect Feb. 28.

The firm, which has close ties with the Trump administration, provides strategic communications, government relations and outreach to media and US policymakers on behalf of Tymoshenko, who led Ukraine in 2005 and from 2007 through 2010.

It is positioning Tymoshenko as a supporter of democratic reforms, economic transparency, liberalism and the establishment of rule of law in Ukraine.

Barry Bennett, who ran Ben Carson's unsuccessful presidential run and then advised Trump, launched ASG following the 2016 election with Corey Lewandowski, a Trump campaign alum. Lewandowski is no longer associated with the D.C. shop.

ASG's consulting agreement is worth \$65,000 per month. ○

FARA News



NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT FILINGS

Below is a list of select companies that have registered with the U.S. Department of Justice, FARA Registration Unit, Washington, D.C., in order to comply with the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938, regarding their consulting and communications work on behalf of foreign principals, including governments, political parties, organizations, and individuals. For a complete list of filings, visit www.fara.gov.

Sorini Samet & Associates, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Mar. 26, 2018 for Embassy of the Dominican Republic** (through Gerdau Metaldom, private sector steel company in the Dominican Republic), regarding advice on steel trade.

Dentons Canada LLP, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, **registered Mar. 7, 2018 for Alberta Ministry of Economic Development and Trade**, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, regarding trade policy issues between the US and Canada.

Miller & Chevalier Chartered, Washington, D.C., **registered Mar. 15, 2018 for Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain**, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, regarding legal advice and assistance in connection with Section 232 tariffs to be imposed on aluminum and steel imports in the US.

Lobbying News



NEW LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT FILINGS

Below is a list of select companies that have registered with the Secretary of the Senate, Office of Public Records, and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Legislative Resource Center, Washington, D.C., in order to comply with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. For a complete list of filings, visit www.senate.gov.

Ernst & Young (Washington Council Ernst & Young), Wash., D.C., **registered Mar. 20, 2018 for Major League Baseball**, New York, NY, regarding tax reform issues affecting professional sports leagues.

TeleMedia Policy Corp., Wash., D.C., **registered Mar. 27, 2018 for Newsmax Media, Inc.**, Boca Raton, FL, regarding legislative & regulatory matters relating to carriage of independent cable television programmers.

Choharis Law Group, Wash., D.C. **registered Mar. 26, 2018 for Qatar National Human Rights Committee**, Doha, Qatar, regarding human rights in Qatar and the Gulf region as well as the blockade of Qatar.

Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid, Wash., D.C., **registered Mar. 23, 2018 for Airbnb**, Wash., D.C., regarding travel/tourism policy.

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