

O'Dwyer's

Communications & New Media

Aug. 2022 | Vol. 35 No. 5



THE FINANCE ISSUE

WHY PR SHOULD BE A TOP INVESTMENT FOR STARTUPS

COMMUNICATING IN TIMES OF ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

FINTECH: TECH PR'S HOLY GRAIL 2021: PR'S RETURN YEAR

MEETING STAKEHOLDERS' COMMUNICATIONS EXPECTATIONS

COMMUNICATING IMPACT THE EVOLUTION OF ACTIVISM

MARKETING THE NEW PROFESSIONAL SERVICES MODEL

AUGUST 2022 | www.odwyerpr.com

BUILDING FINANCIAL BRANDS FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES

For over 20 years, Stanton has supported organizations across the spectrum of financial services, helping raise their profiles, enhance their reputations, and grow their businesses.



Thought Leadership

We identify and articulate unique and compelling perspectives for clients that enhance reputations and establish credibility with target audiences.



Strategic Communications

We are adept at creating relevant and effective messages, and finding the best means to communicate financial issues to investors, analysts, media, employees, communities, customers, and regulators.




Executive Visibility

We position executives at the center of the dialogue at high-quality events where they can connect with peers and influencers, and grow as leading voices in the financial and broader business worlds.

- ✓ 35-person firm with offices in New York and California, and a strong track record in corporate and financial communications.
- ✓ Effectively supporting global, mid-sized and growing organizations across the U.S. and around the world.

- ✓ Deep understanding of financial services companies--from banks and brokerages to private investment, insurance, and fintech.
- ✓ Strategic communications that help navigate challenges and seize opportunities to secure lasting leadership positions.



PUBLIC RELATIONS | CONTENT MARKETING | BRANDING

**Financial Services
Communications Specialists**

Build Brands | Drive Growth

ASSET MANAGEMENT | FINTECH | PRIVATE EQUITY | IMPACT INVESTING

BackBayCommunications.com

Boston | London

617.391.0790 info@BackBayCommunications.com

EDITORIAL

AMERICANS' MEDIA TRUST LOWEST IN WORLD

U.S. media trust is lower than any place in the world.

ONLY THREE IN 100 PITCHES GET RESPONSE

Out of every 100 pitches sent to the press, only three get a nibble.

PR LEADERSHIP ON REBOUND

A report suggests the quality of leadership at PR firms has improved.

COMMUNICATING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Silence during economically uncertain times sends the wrong message.

MEETING STAKEHOLDERS' PR NEEDS

A strategic approach for corporate leaders to improve communications.

HOW SHAREHOLDER ACTIVISM HAS CHANGED

New realities in the current stakeholder economy.

WHY PR SHOULD BE A TOP INVESTMENT

Building a communications infrastructure for asset managers.

FINTECH: THE HOLY GRAIL OF TECH PR

How the fintech market is changing the financial services sector.

WITH GROWTH COMES NEW CHALLENGES

Communicating impact authentically and effectively.

BE BULLISH ON PR IN A DOWN ECONOMY

During hard times, companies should double down on PR.

SHOULD YOUR COMPANY HAVE A SOUL?

How doing the right thing builds loyalty and creates opportunities.

6

8

9

9

10

12

14

15

16

18

20

22

24

28

29

30

37

38

39

40

45

48

49

HOW TRIATHLONS ARE LIKE RUNNING A PR FIRM

Endurance sports give lessons that can be applied to business.

WHY 2021 WAS PR'S COMEBACK YEAR

Three separate surveys conclude 2021 was a great year for PR.

PEOPLE IN PR

PROFILES OF FINANCIAL PR & I.R. FIRMS

RANKINGS OF FINANCIAL PR & I.R. FIRMS

HOW TO MARKET A NEW PROF. SERVICES MODEL

How SaaS capabilities are changing professional services firms.

EFFECTIVE PR FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Knowing when to spread the news and when to lie low.

PROFILES OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS

RANKINGS OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS

WASHINGTON REPORT

INTERNATIONAL PR NEWS

COLUMNS

46

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fraser Seitel

47

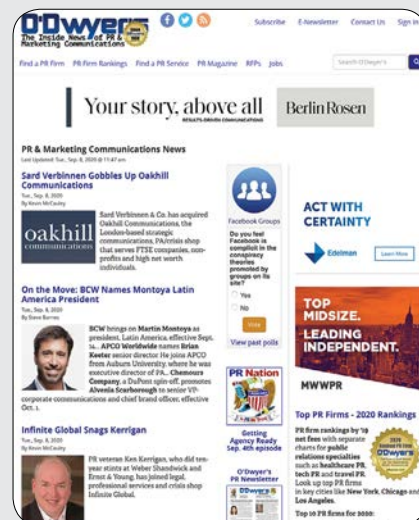
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Dominic Rovano



WWW.ODWYERPR.COM

Daily, up-to-the-minute PR news



EDITORIAL CALENDAR 2022

January: Crisis Comms. / Buyer's Guide

March: Food & Beverage

June: PR Firm Rankings

July: Travel, Tourism & International

August: Financial, I.R. & Prof Services

October: Healthcare & Medical

November: Technology & Social Media

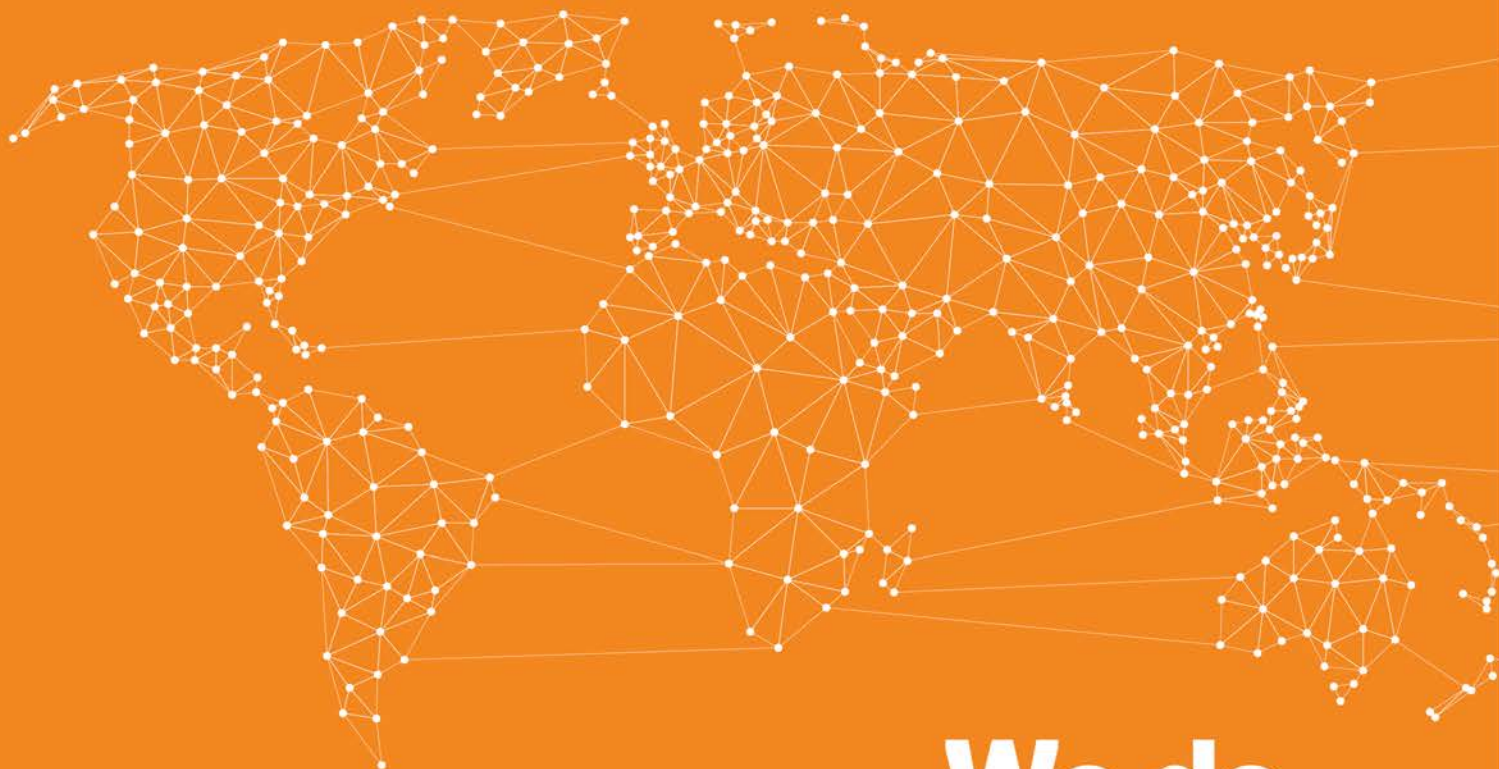
ADVERTISERS

BackBay Communications.....	3
The Bliss Group.....	17
Butler Associates, LLC.....	28
Edelman.....	26 & 27
Feintuch Communications.....	8
FGS Global.....	11

Finn Partners.....	Back cover
FTI Consulting.....	19
Gould+Partners.....	9
ICR.....	13
Joele Frank.....	21
Kekst CNC.....	23

The Levinson Group.....	7
Montieth & Company.....	5
Sitrick And Company.....	25
Stanton.....	Inside front cover

What happens when your
biggest opportunity meets
your greatest challenge?



We do.
Montieth & Company.

Specialist communications for the real world.

- Marketing Communications & PR
- Corporate & Financial Communications
- Issues & Crisis Management
- Litigation Communications
- Public Affairs & Government Relations
- Branding & Website Development

**BUSINESS
INSIDER**

Top 15 Boutique
PR Firm 2021

O'Dwyers

Top 20 financial
PR Firms 2021

OBSERVER

Top PR Firms 2018,
2019, 2020, 2021, 2022

T TechSullion

Top PR Firms 2018

PRNEWS

Platinum PR Awards
Finalist 2017

M&CO

New York
London
Hong Kong

montiethco.com

A tale of two countries

Ever get the feeling we're living in two countries? It's not a stretch to say we're experiencing a period of near-historic division and upheaval, but what I'm talking about is even bigger than that. Sometimes it seems that we're speaking a different language when we interact with those who don't share the same views. Sure, we've had a lot to argue about in the past 15 years or so, from Obama to Trump to a spate of recent monumental rulings by the Supreme Court, but I'm going to suggest these developments only accentuate our division; they weren't the cause of it. It isn't that the country is moving backward, necessarily—through I suppose a case could be made that it *is*—nearly insomuch as it feels as though its people are interacting with different versions of reality. It's hard not to think that we're witnessing a country being cleaved in half, a civilization on the brink of collapse.

And yet, I'm going to suggest that most Americans agree that we're not headed toward a good place. Sometimes it's hard to imagine things getting worse, but I suspect most of us predict that's exactly what's going to happen.

It's impossible to say exactly how this happened, but I'm guessing the news industry's slow metamorphosis from a service to a product had a lot to do with it. The media landscape today is a toxic ecosystem of extreme partisanship that curates subjective realities to suit its customers' expectations (for example, while the "liberal" media gave extensive coverage to the Jan. 6 Congressional hearings, conservative outlets barely acknowledged it). Social media, meanwhile, has taught everyday Americans that they too can become brands; it's a place where public perception means everything. It feels good to fit in, and we quickly learned that we can get some easy attention and a quick dopamine hit whenever we yell at those with whom we disagree or take a position identical to our peers.

Worse, these are also the spaces where the most extreme views in the room are the ones we listen to the most. This has caused the national conversation to tilt to the furthest edges and has resulted in a remarkable recalibration among media, politicians and brands who take advantage of our culture wars for their own benefit. Opportunistic brands pathetically hop on whatever social issue is happening at the moment in a desperate attempt to build audiences and boost their bottom line. Conservative politicians outwardly embrace authoritarianism, turn a blind eye to leaders who attempt to subvert our democracy and now take political positions they would've considered extreme a decade ago. On the other side of the political spectrum, politicians brand-build on Twitter with the most performatively woke positions imaginable for an audience of ideologues who harbor views so extreme that you'll be greeted with "racist!" for suggesting that due process and freedom of speech remain principles to be cherished.

The result? An increasing number of us sit somewhere near one of two political extremes. We reside in media echo chambers where we communicate only with those who share our beliefs. We spend too much time cheering for the political home team as opposed to thinking critically. Everyone is stricken with this moral panic that the "other side" is constantly trying to push its agenda onto them. Objective reality has become a dispensable casualty.

Suffice to say, this isn't working for the rest of us. In fact, it seems the one thing we all agree on is the fact that we're collectively pessimistic about the future. A whopping 88 percent of Americans think the country is moving in the wrong direction, according to a July Monmouth University survey, an all-time low since the polling group began asking this question a decade ago. In a brilliant May essay in the *Atlantic*, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt details the harm social media has caused on society and suggests it's threatening the future of our democracy. He might be onto something. A July *Times/Siena* poll found that a majority—58 percent—of Americans now think our democracy is in need of major reforms, if not a complete overhaul.

It appears that we have more in common with each other than we think. Indeed, a June FiveThirtyEight/Ipsos poll discovered that Americans hold some pretty extreme misperceptions about one another. For example: As it turns out, most Democrats and Republicans agree that abortion should be legal in instances of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother. However, the FiveThirtyEight/Ipsos poll found that most Democrats assumed that only a minority (less than a third) of Republicans actually agreed with this statement. Face it: We don't know as much about the other side as we think. And therein lies the key to figuring out a solution.

Cooperation is a prerequisite for any functioning democracy. Studies show that we learn more when we interact with those who hold different views. We need to recognize the effects that partisanship has had on this country, and we need to do something about the wedge that today's media ecosystem has driven between us, and I'm going to suggest that a first good step is to embrace diverse viewpoints and instill the value of having good-faith discussions and debates. My guess is that this charge will be led by the moderate majority who recognize the danger that lies ahead and finally decide that staying silent is no longer an option. ○

— Jon Gingerich

O'Dwyer's

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kevin McCauley
kevin@odwyerpr.com

PUBLISHER

John O'Dwyer
john@odwyerpr.com

SENIOR EDITOR

Jon Gingerich
jon@odwyerpr.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Steve Barnes
steve@odwyerpr.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Fraser Seitel

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS & RESEARCH

Jane Landers
Melissa Webell

Advertising Sales:

John O'Dwyer
john@odwyerpr.com

O'Dwyer's is published seven times a year for \$60.00 (\$7.00 a single issue) by the J.R. O'Dwyer Co., Inc.
271 Madison Ave., #1500
New York, NY 10016.
(212) 679-2471 Fax: (212) 683-2750.

© Copyright 2021 J.R. O'Dwyer Co., Inc.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

www.odwyerpr.com

Breaking news, commentary, useful databases and more.

O'Dwyer's Newsletter

A six-page weekly with general PR news, media appointments and placement opportunities.

O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms

Listings of more than 1,250 PR firms throughout the U.S. and abroad.

O'Dwyer's PR Buyer's Guide

Products and services for the PR industry in 50 categories.

jobs.odwyerpr.com

O'Dwyer's online job center has helped wanted ads and hosts resume postings.

“In the trenches,
on the field,
in a boardroom
or a courtroom,
on the front page,
or online,
You want TLG in your corner.”



A STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND ISSUES MANAGEMENT FIRM WITH A GLOBAL REACH
WASHINGTON D.C. | NEW YORK | LONDON | www.tlgcommunications.com

Americans' trust in news lowest in world

Trust in media in the United States is lower than any other country in the world, which has resulted in a rising number of Americans who are now actively avoiding the news altogether, according to a Reuters Institute report.

By Jon Gingerich

The U.S. now exhibits the highest rate of media distrust of any country in the world, according to a recent Reuters Institute report.

Reuters' global report, which analyzed news consumption habits around the world as well as the public's sentiment toward media and the press, found that only 26 percent of U.S. residents said they trust the news most of the time, the lowest among the 46 countries analyzed.

Americans' trust in the news has fallen three percentage points in the last year, according to the report. While the Reuters survey noted that trust in the news has fallen in about half of the countries analyzed, the international average of people who said they trust most news most of the time is 42 percent, or about four in ten.

Among U.S. respondents who identified as right-leaning, only 14 percent said they trust the news, down nearly 10 points (25 percent) from 2015. By contrast, 39 percent of those claiming to be left-leaning trust

the news most of the time, which actually reveals a four-percent uptick in trust from the 35 percent reported in 2015.

As a result, less than half of Americans (47 percent) today claim they're generally interested in consuming the news, compared to 67 percent in 2015. A similar number of U.S. respondents (42 percent) said they now avoid the news entirely, up from 41 percent in 2019 and 38 percent in 2017. The percentage of U.S. residents who said they consumed no news at all in the last week has skyrocketed in recent years and now stands at 15 percent, compared to only 3 percent in 2013.

Americans' reasons for disconnecting from the news generally depend on their political leanings. Those who identify as right-leaning are more likely to avoid the news because they think it's untrustworthy or biased (65 percent, compared to 20 percent of those on the left). Left-leaning Americans, on the other hand, are more likely to avoid the news because it brings down their

mood (57 percent, compared to 54 percent of those on the right). An additional 49 percent of right-leaning respondents said they think the news is too heavily focused on COVID-19 and politics, compared to only 23 percent on the left.

Only 19 percent of U.S. residents said they currently pay for news content via online subscriptions. This is actually slightly higher than the international average, 17 percent.

Internationally, the Reuters report found that the number of news consumers who now claim they avoid the news has increased sharply. Brazil currently tops the list of countries for news avoidance, at 54 percent, followed by the UK (46 percent). By contrast, Finland boasts the highest level of trust in the news (69 percent).

Reuters Institute's "Digital News Report 2022," was based on a YouGov survey of more than 93,000 online news consumers in 46 countries. Surveys were conducted in January and February. ○

PR THAT DRIVES BUSINESS RESULTS.

Meet Feintuch Communications.

A boutique PR firm focused on delivering ROI.



11 East 44th Street, Suite 1201, NY, NY 10017 • 212.808.4900
info@feintuchpr.com • www.feintuchcommunications.com



TECHNOLOGY • AD/MARKETING TECH • FINTECH • CLEANTECH • AV • CONSUMER ELECTRONICS • START-UPS



PRSA-NY Big Apple
Marketing B2B
NCSolutions



PRSA-NY Big Apple
Integrated Comms. B2B
NCSolutions



PRSA Silver Anvil
Integrated
Marketing/B2B
NCSolutions



PRSA-NY Big Apple
Reputation and
Brand Management
ZeeVee



PRSA-NY Big Apple
Reputation and
Brand Management
Convence



PRSA-NY Big Apple
Best Business/
Campaign Outcomes
Convence

Only three in 100 pitches get a response

Out of every 100 pitches that get sent to journalists, only about three get nibbles, according to a recent report.

By Steve Barnes

Out of every 100 pitches that get sent to journalists, only about three manage to snag a response, according to the Q3 2022 Propel Media Barometer.

That number continues to slide, going from 3.7 percent of pitches sent in Q2 2021 to 3.25 percent in Q2 this year—a drop of 12 percent.

Most pitches don't even get opened. Between manual opens and opens from automatic email filtering technology, the open

rate for pitches sits at about 38 percent. Even after a response is opened, the likelihood of it drawing a response is only 8.6 percent.

In addition, journalists seem to be making their decisions on whether or not to respond to a pitch rather quickly. The Barometer says that nearly 20 percent of responses come within 10 minutes of a journalist receiving a pitch. Almost 60 percent of responses are received within four hours,

and around two thirds (66.20 percent) come the day the pitch is made.

Because of that, a strong first impression is a big factor in the success of any pitch. For subject lines, that means short is better—from one to five words long. Pitches of that length had a 4.03 percent response rate, while those with subject line of 16 words or more only attracted responses 2.03 percent of the time.

Pitch leads did best (a 3.96 percent response rate) when they ran between 50 and 79 words, which resulted in a 4.15 percent response rate. For the overall length of a pitch, those with 50 to 149 words did the best, with a 9.25 percent response rate.

The day of the week on which you send a pitch can also contribute to its success factor. The most pitches examined were sent on Tuesday (24.78 percent) and that day also had the highest open rate (24.35 percent). The weekend, not surprisingly, doesn't present much in the way of opportunity. Less than one percent of pitches were sent on Saturday or Sunday, and response rates were equally low.

Topics that garnered the best response rates were tech & computing, food & drink and business & industrial. ○

PR leadership on rebound

By Steve Barnes

The quality of leadership at PR firms appears to be on the rebound, according to The Plank Center's Report Card 2021.

The report gave PR leaders an overall grade of B-, up a notch from the C+ they received in the 2019 and 2017 versions. Grades also ticked up slightly in four of the survey's five areas: job engagement (from B- to B), trust in organization, job satisfaction and organizational culture (all of which rose from C+ to B-).

The grades for the fifth category, leadership performance, reflect a marked difference between how top leaders see their own performance, and how other employees rate them. While top leaders gave themselves an A- for leadership performance, other employees only rated them as a C+.

That disconnect is evident in several other areas as well. While 72.8 percent of top leaders described themselves as "engaged" in their jobs, that number drops to 55.6 percent for those who are not in top leadership positions. When it comes to job satisfaction, once again 72.8 percent of top leaders described themselves as "satisfied," with employees one level below top leadership showing a job satisfaction rate of 57.4 percent and just 53.3 percent of those two or more levels down saying they were satisfied with their jobs.

The divide between how male and female employees grade the PR industry persists in some areas and is narrowing in others. Female respondents give their organizations a lower trust score (4.96 out of a possible seven) than do male respondents (5.19). Women are also less willing to rely on their organizations to keep promises (4.95 vs. 5.20) and to trust them to take the opinions of employees like them into account when making decisions (4.77 vs. 5.12).

However, the gap between male and female employees when it comes to job engagement has shrunk. While the engagement rate for female employees plummeted from 61.3 percent in 2015 to 52.9 in 2017, the last two Report Cards have shown healthy jumps—to 57 percent in 2019 and 60.1 percent in 2021. Male respondents registered a 62.6 percent engagement rate in 2021, up from 62.3 in 2019. ○

Gould+Partners

EST. 2001

PROFITABILITY. BENCHMARKING. VALUATIONS.

21 Years

the Trusted Authority

RICK GOULD CPA, M.S., J.D.

Managing Partner

Gould + Partners • One Penn Plaza Suite 3200 • New York, NY
917-783-4500 (cell) • rick@gould-partners.com

How to communicate in times of economic uncertainty

For financial brands, silence during uncertain times sends the clear message that your organization hasn't prepared a plan to deal with the business challenges at hand.

By Scott Lessne

The macroeconomic picture has become increasingly cloudy over the past several months as key economic indicators point to a significant economic upheaval and recession fears mount. Inflation hit a fresh four-decade high in May, rising at an 8.6 percent annual rate. Oil and gas commodity prices continue to dip sharply. The IPO market has ground to a near halt, with more than 300 companies waiting to launch a new issue. And the crypto and tech sector sell-offs are eliciting memories of the dot-com crash.

Given this economic backdrop, financial brands may feel a natural inclination to pull back on proactive communications—whether due to weaker financial/portfolio valuations, the loss of a key piece of business or overall uncertainty in the market with no clear end in sight—and adopt a more cautious, wait-and-see approach to communications as events unfold.

That's the wrong inclination for several reasons, the most important being that your stakeholders still want to hear from you. Whether investors, business partners, customers or employees, it's important to keep your key audiences informed during times of uncertainty. No one expects you to have a crystal ball or predict what will happen tomorrow, but they will continue to look to you for perspective. In addition to providing unique insights, economic uncertainty presents an opportunity to reaffirm your company's long-term vision, underscore your core values and strategy and communicate how they will guide your organization through uncertain times.

Putting your head in the sand and not communicating during uncertain times, on the other hand, could be interpreted as a sign that your organization is struggling or has not prepared a plan to deal with business challenges. For investors and advisors, silence might also indicate that you're as lost as your clients on how to react, just when they need you most. Not communicating can result in a variety of other negative outcomes, including creating a perceived lack of transparency, providing negative fodder for the rumor mill, allowing it to run rampant with speculation or misinformation or exacerbating uncertainty.

Moreover, your competitors are likely to be talking even if you're not. If you fail to communicate, your competitors will fill the void, potentially luring new business and

seizing the thought leadership high ground. They will be seen as thoughtful, informed advisors and partners worthy of trust when the dust clears.

So, what should financial brands keep in mind when deciding how to communicate in this uncertain environment? The right approach will depend on many factors, including past practices, the firm personality, resources, and business strategy, but there are some general principles that can guide your response:

Establish a steady communication cadence. Ensure your communication is consistent in tone and cadence. When communication is sporadic, it's often less successful. Set a regular communication schedule—and stick to it—so people know they can count on you to provide reliable updates.

Convey strength from experience. It's important to emphasize how you've successfully navigated uncertain times in the past. This can be done by sharing stories, examples and anecdotes of successes or accomplishments arising from previous economic cycles or financial downturns.

There's no substitute for direct communication. Whether you're delivering your message to stakeholders via email communication, memo/letter, teleconference or in an in-person setting, direct communication provides many benefits. It allows you to convey a clear message, lowers the possibility of misunderstanding or confusion, and increases the level of trust and transparency.

Talk less about yourself. Bankers and private investment firms can be reluctant to engage with the media when the market or recent fund performance is down. However, both are well-positioned to provide commentary on the broader investment environment and key trends affecting the economic landscape, showcasing their organizations as knowledgeable experts.

Choose the right medium. Communicators have a greater choice of media than ever. The challenge is to match the medium with the right content. For example, a deep, macro-economic analysis probably isn't appropriate for social channels. By being selective about where your content appears, and in what form, you can deploy a nuanced communications program that connects with a variety of audiences.

Overcommunicate with employees. Employees are your organization's most

valuable asset. It's crucial to communicate early on and often to effectively address any concerns they have about the financial strength of the business and their long-term job security. Uncertainty can also be an opportunity to lean into celebrating the company's successes or milestones. If you win a new client or launch a new service offering, consider promoting it internally and recognizing the team members who played a key role.

What not to do

While advocating a bias toward action, it would be wrong to suggest that active communication during a downturn doesn't come with its own set of pitfalls. Organizations still need to be strategic and thoughtful with determining what's communicated and when. Here are three things you shouldn't be doing:



Scott Lessne

Make empty statements. During challenging times, there's a natural inclination to reassure and provide comfort, and you should respect this. But avoid using blanket statements such as "everything is fine" that lack specifics and rarely instill confidence.

Overcomplicate the message. Even if you're an economic expert, a deep dive into the intricacies of capital markets and the financial policy that creates volatility is probably not the best option. Use that knowledge strategically and selectively. Homing in on one key takeaway for your audience will serve you better than getting deep into the weeds.

Suffer from paralysis by analysis. It's understandable to take time to consider your communications options, but you may find yourself mired in possibilities and stalled by indecision. Remember, during uncertain times your key audiences want to hear from you in a timely and transparent manner. You may not have all the answers, and it's often better to say less than wait for a perfect solution that may never come.

Whether the economy ultimately falls into a recession later in 2022 or further down the line, the ramifications of a downturn will likely remain a key concern for your investors, business partners, customers and employees for the foreseeable future. Using proactive, strategic communications will alleviate concerns for your key audiences and help them better understand how your organization can weather and succeed in a challenging business environment.

Scott Lessne is a Senior Vice President at Stanton. ○

Our insights. *Your impact.*

FGS Global is the strategic advisor for the stakeholder economy. Through our deep expertise, global reach and fully integrated suite of tools, we help our clients reach the audiences that matter most.



- Corporate Reputation & Leadership Strategies
- Crisis and Issues Management
- Government Affairs, Policy, and Advocacy
- Transaction and Financial Communications
- Design and Creative
- Digital Strategy
- Presentation and Media Training
- Research and Insights

fgsglobal.com



Meeting stakeholders' communications expectations

A strategic approach for corporate leaders to improve their organization's communications functions and best tell their business stories.

By Saira Zaki and Michael R. Crittenden

Corporate leaders today are tested for their ability to successfully wield one of the most misunderstood soft powers in the C-suite arsenal: strategic communications.

Seismic external challenges, from inflationary pressures and fears of a global recession to geopolitical strife and battered supply chains, sit side by side with ever-present internal hurdles, including the fight for talent, reputational risk and fickle and demanding stakeholders. How leaders communicate their business stories and respond to headwinds has never been more important to achieving an organization's goals.

Tackling the current moment demands global leaders properly prioritize, assess and invest in their organization's communications function and plan for time-sensitive and critical issues.

This is imperative to ensure the proper calibration and protection of the organization's brand as well as prepare organizations when inflection points happen and prevent minor setbacks from becoming full-blown tempests that threaten business continuity. Within financial services and legal, for example, there's a critical need to move away from neutrality in marketing and communications and instead put strategic emphasis on the latter expertise.

As communications continue to evolve in complexity, so does the expectation from stakeholders that an organization's corporate communications will match that sophistication and depth. From investor relations to regulatory engagement and internal employee communications, these core audiences have an ever-growing appetite to engage and understand management's perspective and its approach to the assessment and remediation of risk. This is only heightened in times of macroeconomic dislocation.

With communications reaching stakeholders instantaneously around the globe, siloed or area-specific communications may no longer be the best avenue to achieving enterprise goals. A unified communications strategy with sensitive thought to international interpretation and engagement is best when assessing big picture challenges. As part of this approach, companies need to conduct a holistic, cross-border assessment of relevant needs and challeng-

es, particularly for publicly traded companies and firms with a global presence. Cross-border thinking also takes on added importance for issues management; big crises will almost always impact organizations on a global level creating both internal and external challenges which require an aggressive response. Add to that international enforcement, bilateral engagement and equivalency whether in the fight against money laundering or the future regulation of crypto assets, and all require cross-border foresight and unified cross-border thinking.

Leaders must also assess whether their organizational infrastructure is designed to best serve them in times of stress. In a true enterprise-wide crisis, the core team required to deliver at the very highest level of scrutiny is trinary: the executive, legal and crisis communications functions. To avoid leaving organizations exposed and ill-equipped, it's imperative that organizations ensure that their internal and external communications have the appropriate skills and expertise needed to engage hyper-aware audiences, including shareholders, policymakers, media and employees. Delineating clear lines of responsibility, creating a hardened issue-response infrastructure and establishing secure protocols to allow agile assessment and reaction to incoming challenges will all benefit the organization when enterprise-critical events occur.

As leaders determine their readiness and undergo these assessments, the emphasis needs to be on reaching the goal of an intentional and holistic communications strategy:

- CEO-led communications are ideally not delegated to tertiary executive levels. Otherwise, transmissions lack potency and authenticity in advocating values and promoting the brand.

- Assess, source and invest in the appropriate skillset to tackle the myriad communications channels and deliberations whether digital, generational, internal or external. Identify the talent mix your team needs and invest before you need to, whether it's in qualified writers, savvy media-facing spokespeople or a legal support team. There is tremendous added value in having outside advisors integrated before a time-sensitive issue arises.

- Build communications teams that are nimble, agile and high quality. Advisors can work in partnership with other external vendors or in-house teams to deal with conflict and bolt on highly specialized or complementary advice as appropriate.

- Put an internal priority on harnessing voices from across the enterprise to institutionalize efforts across business units and employee groups so your organization orients towards shared strategic goals. A company's workforce can serve as an invaluable ambassador.

- Bring in the experts: Prepare incident response plans and worst-case scenarios for when an enterprise-critical event hits because it will.

Whether and how influential and respected a business can remain in the face of these significant challenges depends on the success or failure of this strategic approach. Successful management of an enterprise-wide crisis, even though difficult and tough decisions, can solidify a brand and its leadership, creating a long-lasting sense of trust, whether it be with investors, employees or the broader public. Failure instead can be an imperceptible death; a slow bleed of investors, clients and talent. Behind every urgent media frenzy lies a crucial inflection point for the organization subjected to negative headlines—headlines that act like deadly poison shared with the market over and over by the most brutal of competitors at the most opportune times.

While not a new challenge, the broad-based acceptance of a strong communications function has been a topic of heated debate across corporate America for decades. But for organizations taking that important evolutionary step to own their communications, the moment is now.

Saira Zaki is Senior Managing Director, London, at The Levinson Group. Mike Crittenden is Senior Managing Director, D.C., at The Levinson Group. **Q**



Saira Zaki



Michael R. Crittenden



Welcome to the arena.

Where everyone with a phone is a reporter.

And fortunes can be lost over a single tweet.

ICR provides integrated communications for leaders who are focused on building and protecting the value of their businesses.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATIONS
& ADVISORY

ICRinc.com

Evolution of shareholder activism

Embracing new realities in the current stakeholder economy.

By John Christiansen, Bryan Locke and Jared Levy

Activist shareholders used to target companies primarily when they were showing concerning losses, reducing dividends and making foolhardy financing decisions. In today's complex and dynamic sociopolitical and economic environment, however, shareholder activism has evolved into much more than identifying points of improvement and issues in a company's financial results. Delivering growth and profit remains paramount, but only part of a list of items for which boards and management teams are being held accountable.

At the same time, the expansion of the stakeholder economy is multiplying the strategic risks and challenges that companies face.

Management teams are being asked to explain how their political contributions and viewpoints align with their company mission and values. They're increasingly expected to comment on topical social issues, such as what they're doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across their supply chains, make workplace conditions and wages more fair and equitable and transform the business for the future while delivering strong shareholder returns today.

The stakes are high: Public debates with activist investors can tie up resources, distract employees and divert management's attention from its strategic plan. Worse, they can hurt the company's reputation, impact stock price and drive volatility. To win, companies need to plan early and react quickly.

An expanded threat matrix

Environmental and Social considerations—commonly encapsulated under the broader “ESG” label—have dominated conversations among management teams, government officials, media and investors both large and small. So far in 2022, shareholders have filed 172 environmental proposals at public companies' annual meetings, up 39 percent over 2021. Proposals regarding companies' political lobbying also increased in 2022, accounting for 26 percent of total ESG campaigns, compared with 23 percent in 2021.

ESG issues will continue to take center stage as proposed changes to SEC regulations will result in more shareholder proposals as well as contested annual meetings. Fueling this trend is the sharp increase in funds that claim to apply sustainable principles to their investment goals, which today have total assets of \$35 trillion, according to data from Bloomberg Intelligence.

In the past, activists demanded disclosures for issues such as environmental impact and gender/racial pay gap. Today, these firms are asking for specific targets. Tomorrow, they'll be demanding accountability if those targets are not reached. Companies considered to be engaging in “green-washing” will likely take a hit to their reputation; companies need to be vigilant in setting ambitious but realistic targets and monitoring their progress.

In addition to the focus on ESG themes, traditional economic activism remains strong. First-time activists accounted for 37 percent of all campaigns launched in the first half of 2022. Both newcomers and established activists continue to critique companies' executive teams, compensation packages, strategy, operations and capital allocation, reinforcing the need for companies to be increasingly forward-thinking in their anticipation of activist demands.

Despite a challenging investing environment, the total number of campaigns launched in the 2022 proxy season is on pace to match recent years, and changes such as the SEC's mandated use of Universal Proxy cards in public solicitations beginning in September, is expected to lead to a greater number of campaigns, particularly from new ESG activists, unions and CEOs/Founders seeking to gain representation on a company's board. After the new rule goes into effect, shareholders will be able to launch campaigns at a fraction of the cost, and campaigns are expected to more frequently result in at least one or two dissident directors winning board seats, given shareholders' newfound ability to “mix and match” director candidates from both the company's slate and the dissidents'.

As such, management teams should continue to educate themselves on the current activism landscape, analyze key trends specific to their industry, evaluate their potential vulnerabilities and understand their shareholder composition and sentiment. While companies are most vulnerable when shareholders can submit proposals or nominate directors, the traditional proxy calendar has expanded, with activists making initial approaches well before the annual meeting season.

Building an action plan

Like any other threat to a company's reputation or performance, companies can actively prepare to address an activist threat.

Identify your team. Just as companies

should have a crisis playbook on the shelf, they should also be prepared for public agitation from activist shareholders. After establishing an internal activism preparation team including key personnel across corporate functions and operating segments, engage outside advisors with specialized expertise in planning for and engaging with shareholder activists, potentially including a strategic communications consultant, law firm, investment bank, corporate governance specialist and proxy solicitor.

Maintain a shareholder base with regular touchpoints with top shareholders.

Regularly solicit and assess feedback through a mix of normal course investor relations activities, including sell-side engagements, conferences, earnings calls and investor days. Also make an effort to engage with the corporate governance teams at your passive index funds, whose votes often determine the outcome of contested director elections.

Undertake a vulnerability analysis to evaluate weaknesses and likely angles of attack.

In addition to economic vulnerabilities including performance, corporate strategy, M&A history and operations, consider structural vulnerabilities, including your corporate governance profile, board composition, shareholder base and bylaw provisions. Consider how an activist may use these vulnerabilities as angles of attack; take preemptive action where possible and prepare response messaging accordingly.

Develop a comprehensive preparedness response plan. Having an integrated communications strategy and approach, response sequence, key messages and rebuttals to potential lines of attack and a suite of contingency communications materials for each scenario is essential in responding to an activist attack. This plan should solicit input from key stakeholders within your company, including the corporate communications and IR teams, management team



John Christiansen



Bryan Locke



Jared Levy

Continued on next page

PR should be top investment for startup asset managers

The importance of building a communications infrastructure before launching.

By Chris Gillick

Well before a new investment management firm deploys its first dollar, founding partners spend a substantial portion of their time and personal savings on legal fees, technology and recruiting day-one employees. The communications function and timeline can be one of the last boxes to check.

For the reasons explained below, it should be one of the first.

Where to start

Likely years in the making, a successful start to this entrepreneurial journey begins with an amicable departure from one's prior gig. For prominent up-and-comers, news of their departure will end up in the trade media. Getting organized on messaging with one's soon-to-be former employer is crucial, as flubbing this step could kill the startup dream before it begins.

Once on "gardening leave"—Wall Street lingo for a non-compete period—aspiring managers should not only be honing their sales pitch to investors but also mapping out their new organizational infrastructure. "Three people and a Bloomberg" is a dated concept in 2022, and competition for investor dollars only gets more competitive with each passing year.

Beyond the investment team, new managers must secure the services of top-tier service providers favored by institutional investors in the legal, accounting and fund administration verticals. Formalizing the PR and communications functions can be an expensive afterthought. But what many fail to realize is that the brand halo of their former employer will last only so long as they get ramped up. The time to establish a public profile is limited.

Where does the comms. function sit?

Whether emerging managers like it or not, they'll have to devote time and resources to this function and assign it an owner. (It could be the founder!) Asset management startups are no different from those of any other industry: Every early employee does the job of three people.

In nascent and seasoned investment organizations alike, PR usually falls under the purview of marketing and/or investor

relations teams. Barring previous media relations experience, the person in this seat at a startup firm will seek agency assistance as an extension of the organization.

Choosing the right partner

Large agencies and sole proprietors alike can serve this niche audience well. But the best practitioners go beyond a page of impressive client logos: They understand the industry's wonky terminology, media outlets and centers of influence. It's those introductions outside the realm of reporters that can really move the needle. This is hardly a job for a generalist.

The right agency partner also understands that its fees at the beginning are coming out of a founder's personal savings—rather than a formal corporate budget. This dynamic creates a greater sense of urgency to deliver top results and advice—and show the same level of enthusiasm as the founding team. If the agency doesn't have this level of service orientation in its DNA, keep looking. Practically speaking, managers should also be mindful that the nature of a launch is frontloaded and that agencies might bill more upfront for their time.

Preparing to launch: Who needs to know?

An emerging manager's public debut is like that of any company going through the IPO process: Chances are, it will happen only once, and you only have one chance to get it right.

Savvy new managers know exactly whom they need to reach. Those executing liquid strategies will be focused on the allocator community and bank counterparties, while those investing in privately held assets will be more focused on potential sellers and intermediaries.

Once the audience is determined, it's time to start planning the outreach, which includes website content, targeted media lists, the core "launch" press release, a letter to a professional network and social media posts. As the firm matures and grows, founders can delegate this responsibility more, but they must be involved heavily leading up to launch day.

Regarding earned media in particular, managers should seek the most eyeballs

possible. If the news must be delayed to accommodate the priorities of a top outlet, so be it. Like an IPO, there's a short time window to take advantage of the spotlight.

Settling into the routine

Once the hoopla of a launch settles down, the day-to-day blocking and tackling begins: meeting more reporters, setting up a regular social media cadence and planning a conference and event calendar.

Depending on the investment strategy, PR and communications needs and goals will be different. Stock pickers, ETF sponsors and managers targeting retail investors might prioritize broadcast television and podcasts. Private equity firms will need press release and comms. plan templates ready for every transaction and fund closing. The same goes for venture firms.

Younger firms will take a while to ingratiate themselves into the right routine, but once it's there, they will be ready to punch above their weight.

Calculating ROI: reputation insurance

Fund managers spend the majority of their professional time assessing return on investment, "value add" and outperforming a benchmark. But applying a similarly linear framework to the PR and communications function can be short-sighted and ultimately costly.

The best investors know that any trade, buyout or venture deal has downside risk, and they work furiously to minimize it. Therefore, agency partners should be viewed not solely as an extension of marketing and fundraising efforts but also as a trusted insurance policy on your reputation when things inevitably go awry.

Sustainable investing franchises can't be built without sufficient assets, and institutional investors rely on reputation when entrusting their assets to their managers. Viewed in this context, when eight- and nine-figure checks are on the line, an upfront investment in a proper communications infrastructure is one that managers cannot afford to neglect.

Chris Gillick is a Senior VP at ICR. ○



Chris Gillick

EVOLUTION OF ACTIVISM

Continued from page 14

and members of a company's board.

Practice responses with the board and management team. Conduct regular table-top exercises to stress test the response plan

through simulation of likely scenarios, and make sure the plan remains current as the company's strategy, personnel and results evolve over time.

Today's activist strategies are becoming more sophisticated, increasingly leveraging media tactics to win the PR battle and

influence proxy advisory firms and shareholders. Any listed company can be a target. The question isn't "if," it's "how" and "when"—and what measures you have in place to mitigate the threat.

John Christiansen, Bryan Locke and Jared Levy are Partners at FGS Global. ○

Fintech: the holy grail of tech PR

A few recent innovations in fintech that illustrate how this market segment is transforming the financial services sector.

By Henry Feintuch

For many tech-averse PR practitioners, mention the word “fintech” and you’ll see the instant terror in their eyes. Tech is geeky enough for them, but marry it with financial and some go running to their corporate or consumer safe spaces.

For me, 30-plus years in the profession, it’s been quite the opposite. Pitching, winning and framing campaigns for a new fintech opportunity carries the same excitement and anticipation as during my early career jobs in broadcast journalism.

The term fintech applies to a broad range of financial technologies used to either compete with or improve upon traditional methods in the delivery of financial services. Common examples include mobile money and digital wallets, cross-border remittances, blockchain and cryptocurrencies, crowdfunding, online banking, payment and split payment services, regtech, cloud services, biometric security, trading technologies and more.

The U.S. fintech market stood at \$112.5 billion in 2021 with predictions for the global market to reach \$332.5 billion by 2028, growing at a compound annual growth rate of just under 20 percent. There are an estimated 10,755 fintech startups in the Americas as of November 2021. Deloitte reports fintech investment decreased to \$52.9 billion in the first half of 2022 alone. Whichever data is most relevant, and despite the current short-term economic uncertainty, the numbers point to long-term continuing growth. To PR practitioners, it means continually expanding opportunities.

For those of us drawing most of our income from the tech sector, fintech is really not that much different than other verticals. By and large, we use the same tactics, journalistic sensibilities and business ethics to build market awareness and share of voice.

Once consumer adoption takes hold, fintech is less scary. Think PayPal, Klarna, Quicken, Billpay, Venmo and Zelle as common examples of fintech apps or services that have gone mainstream. But when you hit the b2b market, fintech often creates a new ecosystem and vocabulary. Here are a few quick examples that underscore the excitement and potential of fintechs pushing their markets, and at times, creating new ones.

Financial and telecom services for underbanked and underserved communities

SurgePays, based in Bartlett, TN, is a tech and telecom company focused on the un-

derbanked and underserved communities. Its blockchain fintech platform is installed in approximately 8,000 convenience stores and bodegas to offer financial and pre-paid products—converting cash to digital, pre-paid top-ups and transportation payment cards—to consumers that many see as the last digital frontier. These transactions enable neighborhood stores to become tech-hubs while helping to transform store clerks into de facto fintech experts.

Recently, the company rolled out the capability for its merchants to offer Bitcoin and other digital currencies to consumers, who use this service as a cost-effective means of sending cash back “home” to their native countries. Between these services and its active participation in the federal government’s Emergency Broadband Program and Affordable Connectivity Program, SurgePays’ business and marketplace opportunity is growing rapidly underscored by its 2021 IPO on the Nasdaq. It’s a fintech and telecom company to keep your eye on.

Digital wallet technology for education and government users

Digital wallets may be old hat for some consumers, but take the same technology and move it into industries that are slow to adapt and they become transformative. A prime example is Miami-based ClassWallet, which went all-in on innovation to address the inefficiencies of moving monies within school districts and classroom environments. The company rolled out a platform technology allowing teachers to purchase authorized classroom supplies and technology without having to go through a long and cumbersome centralized district ordering protocol and an even lengthier reimbursement process. More and more districts—as well as many state government departments—moved to its technology.

But the big breakthrough happened when the pandemic hit and teachers were forced to set up temporary classrooms at home. They needed supplies and technologies almost overnight with limited mechanisms to acquire them. Broad market adoption soared. Then, when the prior and current federal administrations started pumping billions in grants to states, districts, families and students to help them purchase technology, supplies and specialized services to combat learning loss, state governments and districts hit a brick wall—many had little or no way to efficiently track, report and distribute those funds.

ClassWallet pivoted and began offering more services, based on its digital wallet technology, which could be used to support government grants, scholarship programs and funding for non-public schools and special ed students. ClassWallet’s digital wallet platform is also more secure, efficient and transparent than existing procurement systems in use by most schools and government agencies.

In its 2021 fiscal year, the privately held company reported a 700 percent increase in business and triple-digit increases in transaction volume and revenue. It’s on track to surpass that in 2022. ClassWallet is quickly becoming an industry standard and is now used in 27 states and by 19 state agencies, across 6,200 schools serving 4.1 million students.



Henry Feintuch

A crypto custody solution to encourage mass adoption

It may feel like “wintertime” for those who’ve purchased Bitcoin or other digital currencies, but for visionary companies such as start-up Vaultavo, it’s the perfect time to address one of the critical roadblocks to crypto’s mainstream expansion—the vulnerability of online trading, transacting and protection of digital assets.

In 2021, criminal hackers stole some \$3.2 billion in cryptocurrency, six times more than in 2020 and including six hacks of at least \$100 million. Digital assets are complex and difficult to manage. These conditions have created a growing global demand for secure and effortless custody alternatives to store and use digital assets.

Our team has been working with Vaultavo to position its solution to these problems, support its fundraising efforts and prepare for a marketplace launch in the second half of this year. To do that, we’re engaging with analysts, starting conversations with key journalists and influencers and securing speaking platforms at major crypto and fintech industry events. If digital currencies will survive and flourish in the future, it will be due to fintech trailblazers like Vaultavo which are creating breakthrough solutions to highly complex industry challenges.

It’s companies like ClassWallet, SurgePays and Vaultavo that bring the potential of fintech and related technologies to marketplace reality and make working in this fast-moving market so exciting to PR practitioners. Can’t wait to see what’s next on the horizon and how it will help all of us in our business and at-home lives.

Henry Feintuch is President of Feintuch Communications. ●



A NEW LOOK. A NEW ERA.

THE BLISS GROUP
500 5th Ave, Suite #1640
New York, NY 10110
+1 (212) 840-1661
info@theblissgrp.com

THE BLISS GROUP



With growth comes new challenges

Communicating authentically and effectively in response to a growing demand for impact investing.

By Bill Haynes and George Spencer

We are not a company with a mission,” said one impact-minded CEO at the MO CEO Summit in Portland, Oregon, which was presented by Big Path Capital in partnership with BackBay Communications. “We are a mission with a company.”

That pithy proclamation came from the chief executive of a consumer food company—one which has increasingly become a household name—as she described the experience of leading a business that’s committed to both profit and purpose in a time when capital is pouring into the impact market. Investments in her company have created tremendous new opportunities for growth, scale and even greater impact, she said. But scale and growth have also brought new challenges.

Variations on that theme are common across the current impact investing landscape. We heard it again and again at the MO Summit. After all, many of the CEOs in attendance had been recently named to the 2022 MO100 Impact Ranking, a list that highlights the leaders of momentum-fueled, mission-driven companies, based on the companies’ revenue, growth and impact. But we also heard similar threads of that “challenge-and-opportunity” refrain even more recently from an investor perspective, at Big Path Capital’s Impact Capitalism Summit on Nantucket.

Industry data bears out the expansion of impact-fueled investment. In 2020, the Global Impact Investing Network conservatively estimated the size of the global impact market at \$715 billion, a meaningfully larger total than the GIIN had estimated just two years prior. More encompassing measurements of “sustainable” investments now total more than \$35 trillion, or more than a third of all assets in five of the world’s biggest markets. Whatever the indicator, the trend toward fast growth is clear.

In this context, many CEOs of mission-driven companies are asking versions of the same questions: How do leaders stay true to mission and impact as the market heats up? And just as importantly, how do they best communicate that mission and impact to the stakeholders for whom it really matters? Meanwhile, the investors helping those companies grow have their own questions: How can we ensure that we’re actually generating the impact we intend? And how do we showcase that impact in ways that build stakeholder trust?

For both the mission-driven companies and the private equity and venture capital firms that invest in them, there are no one-size-fits-all answers for these big questions, but some useful approaches are clear.

The impact must be real. As the “impact” moniker is used more broadly, successful impact leaders know that they can only claim what they’re actually doing. Customers and staff increasingly see through hollow claims of impact that aren’t grounded in reality, recognizing it as empty marketing. For most leaders at the Summit, this is the easy part: many had the urge to generate a positive impact before they even had a business plan! For other CEOs who wish to follow their lead, intentional impact is foundational.

Impact culture is built from the inside out. Staying true to impact and mission begins with a company’s team. One impact CEO said her company sees financial metrics as the lagging indicator of success; the growth and development of her team, she said, is the leading indicator. Impact-minded leaders should find ways to communicate their own personal development and growth, as they push for similar progress among those with whom they work.

Staying still is not an option. For businesses, like individuals, nothing stays the same. We’re either growing, said one impact CEO, or we’re shrinking. A mindset that embraces the constancy of change allows leaders to hold on to what’s most important and to let go of what’s not. Such a mindset can be essential when the market around your company is changing quickly.

Authenticity matters. Authenticity increasingly shows up as a primary theme across the impact investing industry today. As a growing field of businesses and investment firms want to ride the impact tide, some are taking advantage of the loose definitions in this increasingly popular—but maturing—field. The result has been twofold: There’s been greater scrutiny on firms’ claims, including accusations of so-called “greenwashing,” and now, even the SEC is stepping in to crack down on misleading claims by funds. At the same time, there’s been innovation with powerful new tools for measuring, managing and optimizing impact. Among truly mission-focused leaders and investors, the bottom line is clear: If you’re going to be talking about the impact on your business or investments, you need to be telling your audience the truth—

whether that audience is your customers, your staff, your community or other stakeholders. Authenticity matters.

Measurement matters, too. The best way to prove authenticity is through evidence. It’s essential for mission-driven companies and the firms that invest in them to concretely describe the impact they aim to achieve—and then, to measure and report those outcomes. For investment firms, speaking clearly about the non-concessionary investment returns they hope to achieve for their limited partners is also vital. Many firms now create detailed annual impact reports with a full accounting of their outcomes based on a handful of commonly accepted metrics and measurement systems. From a communications perspective, these reports come to life with case studies, photos, infographics and videos that tell a story of positive impact on people and the planet.

The Impact Capitalism Summit offered good cause for optimism on the approaches, themes, and challenges described above. As temperatures across the United States broke records, the CEOs of impact private equity firms of all sizes, insurance companies, family offices and other industry players discussed the array of issues facing our world, but the climate was clearly at the top of the list.

Among the attendees, there was a feeling that the private sector can—and indeed, *must*—address the climate crisis and build toward a sustainable economy, hopefully with government assistance. The feeling of momentum was palpable. One participant said, “Great funds solving important problems will continue to attract investments.” And, of course, those funds will then flow to companies creating the sustainable economy of the future, keeping the flywheel of capital and innovation spinning.

As communicators, we need to showcase these important stories of success and hope, in the context of this market full of potential, to attract talent and capital to the businesses that will thrive in this new, more sustainable impact economy.

Bill Haynes is CEO & Founder of BackBay Communications. George Spencer is VP, Impact Investing Group, at BackBay Communications. ○



Bill Haynes



George Spencer



M&A IN A NEW ERA

EXPERTISE MATTERS

Investors, regulators, politicians, employees, unions, competitors, and more are all complicating the path to deal close, driving up cost, uncertainty, and time.

In comes **FTI Consulting's M&A Communications Team**. As a leader in strategic financial communications, we are uniquely positioned to support companies navigating transactions in the emerging era of stakeholder capitalism.

Who we are: Diverse team of experts comprising former lawyers, bankers, investors, analysts, journalists, press officers and policymakers.

What we do: Advise clients on how to lead a transaction campaign that reaches the right stakeholders through the right channels to secure investor approval, regulatory clearance, and integration success.

Pat Tucker

Senior Managing Director

Head of US M&A and Activism Communications

Pat.Tucker@fticonsulting.com

Get in touch: Email Pat Tucker to subscribe to “Crossing the Wall” – our monthly examination of issues around M&A and activism.

In a down economy, be bullish on communications

Why companies can and should double down on communications—including PR, advertising and social media—during hard times.

By Curtis Sparrer

Concerns about slowing economic growth are everywhere. Inflation—particularly in the form of rising gas and food prices—is catching the attention of the media and the public. International conflict, ongoing supply chain issues and rising interest rates are making everything cost more. The markets have responded; volatility and lower share prices are blunting the “wealth effect.” In the face of revenue misses and slimmer margins, some businesses are cutting back on capital spending, and many have paused hiring.

And what about marketing during downturns? What should companies do before markets go positive? I believe that in a down economy, companies can and must become bullish on communications—including PR, advertising and social media.

Maintaining your reputation: it matters

Companies build reputations on the success of the products and services that they deliver. Meeting customer needs is key, and the fundamentals that enable success don't change just because the economy is having a bumpy ride. Day in and day out, great companies will continue to execute—successfully—amidst the turmoil on any given day.

And for marketers, that is a good thing to focus on. Recessions are transitory, and there's already substantial debate about the possibility for a “soft landing” in 2023 and beyond. When markets are choppy, companies can be understandably reticent to engage in marketing activity, and it is relatively easy to “turn off the spigot” and begin to cut costs in areas like marketing and ad or PR agency spend, as well as headcount growth.

However, executives should think carefully about what can happen if they “go dark.” Disappearing from the radar during uncertain times can negatively impact your company's reputation with customers and key influencer audiences. Becoming invisible or scaling back creates an impression of weakness and adds to uncertainty about a company and its ability to take care of customers. To borrow an acronym from tech marketing, pulling back only plants FUD—fear, uncertainty and doubt.

Stay the course and tell good stories

However counterintuitive it might seem, downturns are the time to “stay the course” and tell good stories. Companies should

double down on storytelling and brand journalism, as well as outbound PR, marketing and advertising.

Efforts should focus on messages that will resonate during the downturn. Communicate the idea that your firm will help its customers thrive. Conveying a sense of resilience builds confidence and helps ensure that your brand will be there after the downturn has passed.

A downturn is the ideal time to punch above your weight and bolster your firm's perception as being bigger. This positions your firm to capture market share in a time when other competitors are scared and cutting budgets—and when things look most bleak.

When it comes to telling good stories in a downturn, PR and comms personnel are truly critical. Media outlets are under-resourced these days, and reporters need the services of the PR community to make them aware of—and effectively frame—good stories. In addition to carrying forward messages of resilience, these media relations efforts can help individual journalists build their audience and personal brand, which is helpful in uncertain times.

Great brands—and employers—don't go away overnight

Proactive storytelling can also have a positive impact on recruiting. For millennials and Gen Z workers, this downturn is the first of their adult lives. As such, they will likely be paying close attention to the brands that have gone missing in the face of adversity and will take this into account when evaluating their job choices—either now or when the economy recovers. Given the strong current demand for knowledge workers, this is not a trivial consideration.

By showing that your brand isn't going away anytime soon and marketing during a downturn, you can illustrate that your firm represents a stable employment opportunity. This is critical when recruiting the next generation of workers, including those who will track into executive management and leadership positions down the road.

Just as much as “we're always going to be around” is a key message, integrating a purpose-driven narrative is also useful. That narrative—which should show how your company delivers value, even in tough times—and moving quickly forward with it will help to get a lead on competitors and

inserts your company's larger mission and vision into the dialog. This also applies to recruitment efforts.

Be poised for the recovery

The future of most B2B and B2C companies is built around the right messages and letting the markets know that you're still an innovator. As an example, think of Apple's 2007 launch of the iPhone, which led right into the 2008-2010 recession—yet people still snapped them up because it was an impactful, useful product that everyone wanted. Ask yourself these questions: What will people buy in any economy, and how can I position my firm to be seen as offering must-have products and solutions?

In a time when discretionary spending is budgeted, marketing can be the difference between winning and losing a sale. And being bullish on communications in a down market means that your company will be poised for the recovery, when—not if—it happens.

Curtis Sparrer is Co-Founder and Principal at Bospar. ○



Curtis Sparrer

PR news brief

Fortune ranks tops in running funding pitches

Fortune is the most responsive target for PR pros pitching funding news, according to a new study from public relations management platform Propel.

Fortune responded to more than a quarter (25.64 percent) of funding pitches that came its way in the first half of 2022, far outpacing the average response rate of six percent. *The Wall Street Journal* came in at second with a 16.46 percent rate and Techcrunch took third at 12.12 percent.

The study also showed that Bloomberg was the platform that received the most pitches for funding news, with the *Wall Street Journal*, Business Insider, TechCrunch and NBC Universal following.

The six percent average for responses to funding pitches considerably tops the overall PR pitch average of 3.33 percent, which represented a 12 percent drop from last year. However, as Propel found in an earlier study of overall responses to PR pitches, one secret to higher success rates is keeping a close eye on the length of both pitches and subject lines.

Funding news pitches with subject lines running from six to nine words had a better chance of success (6.9 percent) than did those with a length of 10 to 15 words.

Producing results
when it matters most.

Take Control.

#1

U.S. M&A

– CORPORATE CONTROL ALERT,
H1 2022

#1

Corporate Shareholder
Activism Defense Advisor

– BLOOMBERG, H1 2022

**JOELE
FRANK**

Transaction Communications
Shareholder Activism
Restructuring & Bankruptcy
Crisis Communications & Special Situations
Litigation Support
Private Equity

IPOs, Spin-offs, SPACs
Corporate Governance/ESG
Investor Relations
Corporate Communications &
Media Relations
Design & Digital

joelefrank.com

Should your company have a soul?

How doing the right thing builds brand loyalty and creates untold opportunities for communications professionals.

By Ryan Barr

As communicators, we've written countless mission, vision and purpose statements in an effort to differentiate companies in the market and develop a guiding light for their decision-making. These values have become the cornerstone of corporate narratives and the foundation of communications programs for decades. In today's world, it's not enough to simply put words to paper. Companies must act more human. Companies need to take a stance on issues that connect with all their stakeholders. Companies can and should have a positive, lasting impact on society.

Whether you call it Stakeholder Capitalism, ESG, CSR or countless other terms, it's about doing better for all, not just a few. Business leaders have begun to adopt this philosophy and we've seen it play out in a variety of ways from carbon offsetting to stances on human rights to community reinvestment. However, at the end of the day, it's simply the soul of a company.

The challenge facing executives and, ultimately, communicators, is: How do you balance the needs of so many different stakeholders that often can't see the forest through the trees? Consumers want to get the best product from companies. Investors want to maximize shareholder value. Employees want to thrive within an organization. Communities want to trust their corporate neighbors. Meeting all these needs can be challenging as it's often difficult to see the intersection of diverging points. But if we accept the notion that companies are more than just profit centers, job creators or product manufacturers, we can see a path forward that creates lasting brand loyalty and investor affinity.

Let's first look at investor sentiment as it relates to stakeholder capitalism. Any investment rationale starts with the concept of maximizing shareholder value. It's a simplistic and often myopic point of view. Some believe that a company must do what is best for its bottom line and if anything varies from delivering maximum profitability it should be terminated. Marketers and communicators know this isn't true. How do they know? Sales teams constantly ask for new ways to engage consumers and create deeper, more meaningful connections that differentiate their brand in the market. This, in turn, sparks increased brand loyalty, driving revenue growth and

profitability. To make this happen, companies must invest in consumer relationships and not just put out superior products. According to a recent Gartner report, the benefits of investing in ESG goes beyond Wall Street. Companies that invest in ESG-driven activities more easily access capital, increase shareholder value, experience cost savings and create superior brand loyalty. Additionally, companies that invest in ESG also report higher levels of employee satisfaction, retention and recruitment.

In today's global marketplace, with thousands of options available to consumers, brand loyalty is earned through the actions of companies. Consumers want to feel good about the brands they buy and not just the products. According to a PwC survey, 76 percent of consumers say they'll stop buying from companies that treat the environment, employees or the community in which they operate poorly. Microsoft is globally recognized as one of the most influential and successful brands in the world. And according to The Motley Fool's ESG Compounder Checklist, Microsoft might not be perfect, but it did score a nine out of 10 while ranking as the third most valuable company in the world. Even small businesses recognize the power of social responsibility. Would Bombas sell as many socks if they didn't donate a pair to a homeless shelter for every pair purchased? These purpose-driven initiatives deliver on so many levels and do not sacrifice profits. In fact, they increase loyalty and drive bottom-line results.

It's not just investors and consumers that companies need to focus on. Employees are the greatest asset of any organization and the scarcest in today's new workplace. Companies are competing for talent across industries and geographies as the traditional workforce becomes blurred. Like other stakeholders, employees want to feel good about the company they work for and hold more power in the relationship than ever before. Employee engagement is critical to a company's success. According to a recent Gallup Poll, companies with high levels of employee engagement see an 18 percent boost in productivity, 43 percent less turnover and 23 percent higher profitability.

All of this creates opportunities for communications professionals. Business leaders are relying on communications more than ever. Like many senior roles within an

organization, the evolution of communications has been profound over the past decade and accelerated during the pandemic. Communicators need to engage multiple stakeholders, address ESG issues, navigate volatile market conditions and motivate a mostly virtual workforce. This all starts and ends with the corporate narrative. One that embraces an inclusive storyline that builds affinity and loyalty. One that takes advantage of new channels of communication that engage stakeholders where they are and how they want to consume content. And, most importantly, one that bares the soul of the company in a transparent and genuine tone that demonstrates a company's commitment to doing better.



Ryan Barr

If you want to truly add value to your company or clients, be the agent of change. Challenge companies to do better and communicate with all stakeholders. Celebrate brands that are making the world a better place. Build brand loyalty through action and be rewarded for doing the right thing.

Ryan Barr is Managing Partner, Global Financial Services Practice Leader, at Finn Partners. ○

PR news brief

Finn Partners acquires SPAG

Finn Partners has acquired SPAG, an 85-member healthcare PR shop that has offices throughout Asia.

Aman Gupta, SPAG founder, joins Finn as managing partner and leader of the independent firm's Asian healthcare practice.

He will work closely with Gil Bashe, Chair-Global Health and Purpose, and Fern Lazar, Managing Partner and Global Health Practice Lead.

Shivani Gupta, SPAG co-Founder, becomes Managing Partner, Culture and Brand Reputation for health Asia.

Noting that Asia accounts for 50 percent of the world's population, Bashe said more and more life science innovators are looking to the continent for growth, while companies headquartered there are marshaling talent and financial resources to invest.

"SPAG and Finn share a mission to ensure that this innovation is available globally to as many people as possible to improve people's health," said Bashe.

He views SPAG as "an exceptional partner to achieve that market priority."

SPAG's offices are in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

Finn Partners ranked No. 6 in *O'Dwyer's* healthcare rankings with fees of \$44.2 million in 2021.

The SPAG deal puts Finn Partners' healthcare fees in the \$50 million range.

Judgment. Experience. Results.

Corporations and institutions around the world are confronting a series of unforeseen events that are fundamentally shifting the ways people work and live – and have the potential to redefine businesses and entire industries.

This is a moment in time where clear, transparent communication is essential. The demand upon leaders to communicate in a timely and effective way with employees, customers, investors, and other key stakeholders has never been so critical.

For more than five decades, Kekst CNC has been a world leader in counselling clients on the most complex special situations, including: corporate and financial communications, mergers & acquisitions, restructurings, crisis and issues management, shareholder activism and governance, regulatory investigations/resolutions, change management and employee engagement, issues and reputation management, public affairs, as well as IPO communications. In most every instance, our proven experience, sound judgment and results we achieve are supported by data-driven insights, based on proprietary research and analysis capabilities.

That's why more than 600 clients around the world rely on Kekst CNC as their strategic communications partner. With 300 experienced professionals located in 14 locations in key global markets, we create and implement communications strategies to support every aspect of our clients' business objectives.

Kekst CNC

A Leading Global Strategic Communications Consultancy.

New York, London, Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt, Stockholm, Brussels, Tokyo, Seoul,
Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Dallas, Boston, Washington, D.C and Paris

How competing in a triathlon is like running a PR firm

Endurance sports provide teachable lessons about overcoming life's obstacles and accomplishing your goals, all of which apply to being in business—especially when it comes to overseeing a PR firm.

By Hilary JM Topper

When I signed up for the NYC Triathlon in 2016, I felt like I was out of my element. I was nervous about jumping into the Hudson River and didn't think I could make it up the Henry Hudson Parkway hills on my bike. The NYC Triathlon is an Olympic-distance triathlon, which means that you swim nearly a mile (.9 miles), bike 26 miles and then run 6.2 miles.

Several weeks before the race, I went out to breakfast with a client. "What are you worried about?" she said. "You've jumped in the water before, and you climb hills every day in your business." Her statement put things into perspective. She was right. What was I afraid of?

Starting a business

I started my PR business in 1992. At that point, I knew what made a great story and how to pitch the media to garner a placement. What I didn't know was how to operate the business. Like triathlons, I jumped right in. I had no idea what I was doing when it came to running a business; I went to school for PR and communications. I just did it.

I started training for triathlons in 2014. At that time, I simply signed up for an event. I had no idea how to swim freestyle, had no idea what shifters were on a bike, and the only thing I knew how to do was to run (and I could barely do that without walking). But I figured it out, just like I did when I ran my business.

Finding the right staff

I had no experience hiring staff and had to learn through research and joining various organizations. An entrepreneurial organization helped by providing me with the tools I needed to succeed. Hiring the right staff made all the difference when it came to growth. By having the right team in place, we were able to grow to a million-dollar business. I put in the time and the investment, and it happened.

When I started triathlons, my friend told me we needed to hire a coach. I didn't understand why we couldn't just use an online training program. But she was more athletic than me, and I trusted that she was right. Hiring a coach was the best thing I could've done. I had great coaches through the years who have helped me grow and develop as an athlete and I could not have done it without them.

Surviving things outside of your control

There were at least three times in the last

30 years when we saw a downturn. The first was during 9/11, then in 2008 when the stock market crashed. We also lost staff and business during Superstorm Sandy. But we always thought about ways to reinvent ourselves and pick it back up. For example, when the economy went sour, we published our first book on social media marketing. Then we had a complete turnaround. Or after Sandy, we created Glasslandia, the first Google Glass Reality Show on YouTube. This again created attention and provided us with new clients.

Comparing this to triathlons, weather and conditions are out of our control. That's why it's important to train for any condition. There have been times when we had to train in torrential downpours and nor'easters, like when I ran the Suffolk County Half Marathon. Things will happen out of your control, and you just need to go with the flow.

When you lose a client

Triathletes get injured. When that happens, we feel defeated. In a way, it's like losing a client. When you lose a client, you feel like you did something wrong. You tried so hard to keep them. You got them decent placements, and yet, they let you go. Most of the time, they won't even tell you why. When that happens, you feel like your business is going downhill and you're not sure when you'll be able to pick it back up.

Learning new elements of the business

When social media became prevalent in the early 2000s, I became intrigued. I had to learn everything I could. I read books and articles and researched. This led me to write my first book, "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Social Media."

Since then, I constantly find myself reading everything about social media so I'm always up-to-date on the subject, especially since I also teach it at Hofstra University. I recently published my second book, "Branding in a Digital World," which uses that research.

Triathlons are the same. I find myself entrenched in everything triathlon. I read, research and even write about everything from running apparel and bike gear to wet-suits and swim techniques. I started a blog, ATriathletesDiary.com, on the subject when I first started running in 2011. There's always something new and exciting when it comes to triathlon training, and I'm always one of the first to try out new things.

When my SEO guy told me I needed to clean up my blog, I started removing sto-

ries I'd written about my experience. This led me to my third book, "From Couch Potato to Endurance Athlete—A Portrait of a Non-Athletic Triathlete." The book takes you through ten years of business, personal experience and triathlon training and puts it all into a comprehensive overview with the theme that you can make anything happen if you really want it.

Landing that big client

There's nothing better than landing that big client; landing a big placement feels the same. Your adrenaline pumps and you feel like you're on top of the world. You worked so hard, late into the evening and on weekends. You did your homework, researched the market and put together a stellar proposal. You competed against many other PR firms, and you won.

Landing a new client is like finishing a race. It takes months to prepare. You train hard for all three disciplines. You learn about proper nutrition and hydration. You learn how to set up transitions and how to do them fast. Then, you're at the start line of the swim. You swim as hard as you can with hundreds of other triathletes kicking and pushing you down. But you ignore them and try the best you can to get away from them. Once you finish the swim, you run into transition, put on your bike gear and run out with your bike. At the mount line, you clip into your peddles and take off. After miles on the bike, you come back to transition. You're exhausted. You feel like you have nothing left, but you know you need to finish. So, you put on your sneakers and run for miles and miles. During that run, you're tired. You feel like you can't go on, but you know you need to get through that finisher's chute in the distance. You know that now's the time to step it up and turn on the accelerator.

Running a business is no small feat. It takes a lot of patience, persistence and due diligence to get it going and to be successful at it. Being a triathlete is the same. But if you have the patience within yourself, if you're persistent and continue to educate yourself, you will cross that finish line.

Hilary JM Topper is CEO of HJMT Public Relations Inc. in New York. **O**



Hilary JM Topper

WHEN EVERYTHING IS ON THE LINE WHO DO YOU WANT REPRESENTING YOU?

“The City’s Most Prominent Crisis-Management Firm.” – *New York Times*

“The crew from the television magazine is banging on your door. You can have the security guard throw them out and know they’ll trash you. Or you can sit down with them and figure that out of the hour you give them, they’ll use only 40 seconds on air. And those 40 seconds will make you look very guilty. Better solution, call Mike Sitrick.” – *Forbes Magazine*

“The Winston Wolf of public relations had arrived. Wolf, you will recall, was the fixer in *Pulp Fiction*. Played by Harvey Keitel, he washed away assassins’ splatter and gore. Sitrick cleans up the messes of companies, celebrities and others, and he’s a strategist who isn’t averse to treating PR as combat.”—*Fortune Magazine*

“Now (they) have hired Michael Sitrick, whose Los Angeles (based) public relations firm is known for going atomic on opponents, using “truth squads,” “wheel-of-pain” tactics and high profile journalists (to write profiles...That’s unbelievable (said the head of the PR firm for the opposing entity). This is the heavy artillery.” – *BusinessWeek*

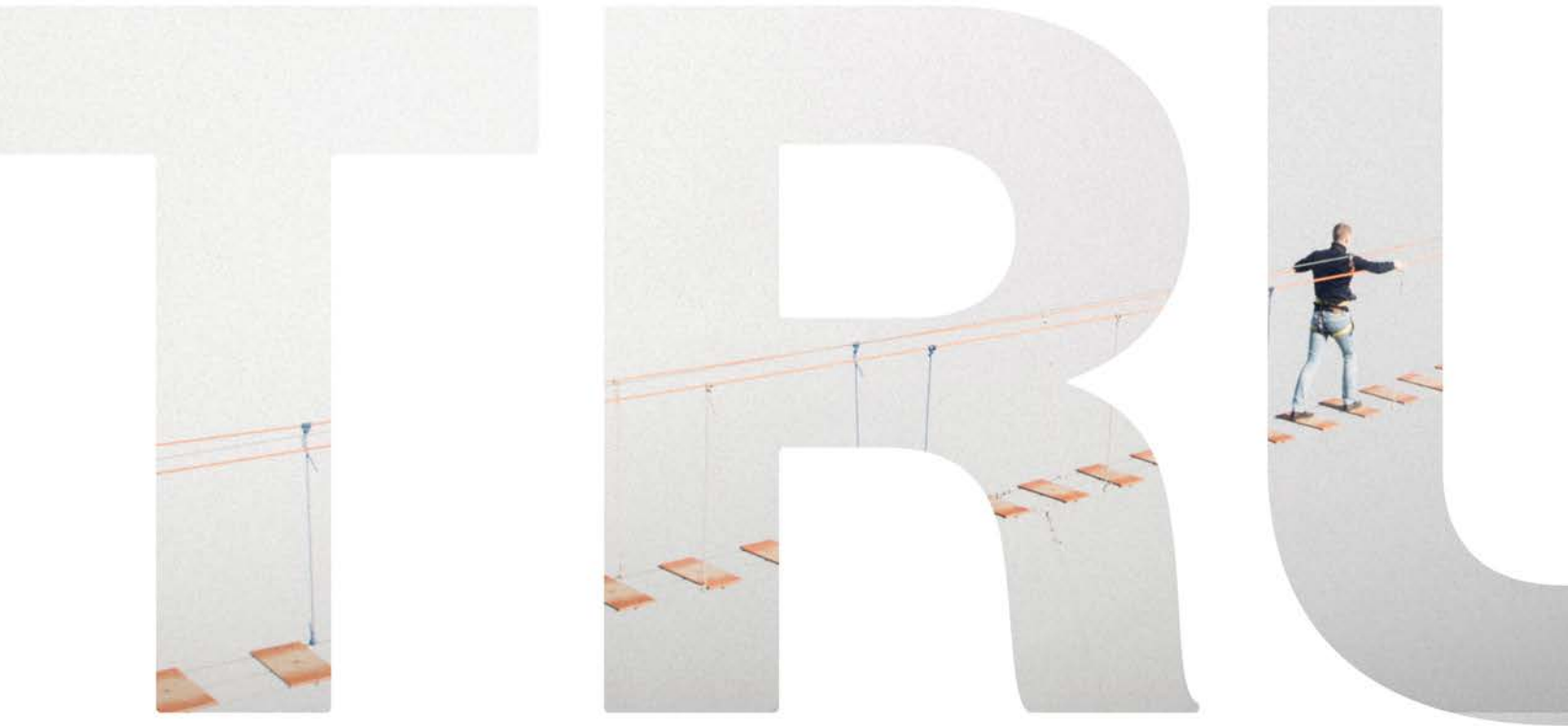
TechCrunch: “When it comes to handling crisis situations in particular, Sitrick is as well regarded as they come.” “We’ve been in a tricky position a number of times and the thinking (in Silicon Valley) has historically been to ignore reporters, says one Bay Area tech founder. “Sitrick takes the opposite approach. You’re made to get into the trenches and engage.”

“You cannot put your firm’s interests ahead of the client’s interests,” **Michael Sitrick as quoted in the *New York Times*.**

SITRICK AND COMPANY

CORPORATE, FINANCIAL, TRANSACTIONAL, REPUTATIONAL AND CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS
WWW.SITRICK.COM

LOS ANGELES • NEW YORK • SAN FRANCISCO • BOSTON • WASHINGTON DC • DENVER
800-288-8809 (24-HOURS/DAY, 7-DAYS/WEEK)





It's crucial when credibility
is questioned.

It's the best insurance against
competitive disruption and
consumer indifference.

It's what our 6000 experts
help companies and brands
earn every day.

Why 2021 was a comeback year for the PR industry

Three separate surveys conducted by Gould+Partners arrive at the same conclusion: 2021 was an incredible year for most PR firms.

Gould+Partners conducts three major surveys annually: one on financial benchmarking, one on billing rates/utilization and one on industry growth. All participating firms are tracked by size and regions.

All three surveys this year arrived at the same conclusion: 2021, the post-COVID year, was incredible for most PR firms. PR firms grew in each of the four size categories and in each of the ten regions tracked in Gould+Partners' annual surveys.

Our study provided excellent insight regarding the pulse of the industry and which size groups and regions are the fastest growing. 241 North American firms were included in the stats. The overall growth was 17.7 percent, up from 3.1 percent, pretty incredible in a post-pandemic year. The \$10-\$25 million firms grew the most rapidly: The 47 firms in this category grew 24.7 percent.

All ten regions we tracked had substantial growth. Northern CA (27.1 percent), Southwest (23.9 percent) and Southern CA (21.6 percent) were the top three.

Second straight year for increased billing

For the second year in a row, PR firms

increased billing rates, and utilization rates were consistent with the previous year. Our annual survey that focuses on revenue and cost metrics reinforced last year's conclusion that PR agencies were laser-focused on maximizing billing rates and utilization.

Our survey report found that average hourly CEO billing rates increased most dramatically at firms bringing in between \$10-\$25 million in net revenues annually, whose CEOs charged an average of \$439 per hour in 2021, up from \$388 in 2020. CEOs at the largest PR shops—or agencies boasting more than \$25 million annually—billed an average of \$492, compared to \$483 in 2020. CEOs at firms with net revenues between \$3-\$10 million billed \$414 per hour on average, compared to \$400 in 2020. CEOs at the smallest firms polled—those with under \$3 million in net revenues—billed at an average hourly rate of \$338, up from \$307. Billing for VPs and account managers was virtually flat. Billing for account executives was up, at \$183 versus 2020's \$179, and account coordinators charged \$149 versus 2020's \$143.

Our survey report disclosed that utili-

zation, the metric by which productivity is measured, was treated by firms as a high priority. CEO and VP utilization is in line with our goals. AE utilization is below the goal, being at least 90 percent.

The profitability metrics indicate size of firms do matter, that there are economies of scale that go to the bottom line. Although labor cost—which includes base salaries, benefits, payroll taxes and incidental labor costs—increases as firms grow, the economies of scale are with overhead. Fixed overhead percent decreases as revenue increases. Profitability increases as firms grow. Firms in excess of \$10 million, on average, reach the 20 percent profitability goal. A major reason for this is that firms that bill mainly on retainer average higher retainers.

So, when we measure the valuation of a firm we must evaluate billing rates, utilization and average monthly retainers, in addition to the profitability of the firm and its year over year growth in net revenues.

Rick Gould is Managing Partner of Gould+Partners. ○

By Rick Gould



Rick Gould



2021 PRSA-NY Winner
#1 Campaign for Reputation/Brand
Management/Brand Engagement



Consistent. Creative. Impact.

For Corporate Leaders & the Organizations They Lead



Contact Us: TButler@ButlerPR.com | ButlerPR.com | 212-685-4600
353 Lexington Avenue, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10016

Bird Flies from M Booth Health

Tim Bird has transitioned out of his Chairman role at M Booth Health three years following its acquisition by UK's Next Fifteen Communications.

He is now focused on growing Slope Drive Consulting, which he formed to drive growth of purpose-driven clients.

Bird is available for short-term projects handling strategic counsel/implementation and thought leadership.

Prior to leading M Booth Health, he had a two-year run as CEO of Health Unlimited and a ten-year stint at the helm of CooneyWaters.

The healthcare PR veteran is keeping his eye out for a full-time opportunity to join an integrated team that is involved in communications for change. ○



Tim Bird

META's ESG chief moves to Blackstone

Arielle Gross Samuels, Global Head of Environmental, Social and Governance Activity at Mark Zuckerberg's Meta, is joining Blackstone, the world's largest alternative asset manager and commercial real estate owner.

In September, she takes the job as Global Head of Marketing on the corporate affairs team of a company with \$941 billion in assets under management.

At Meta, Samuels handled ESG strategy, positioning, social good, equality and sustainability.

Blackstone has long been a target of Democratic Senators such as Elizabeth Warren. She has accused Blackstone of financing the destruction of the Amazon rainforest due to its investments in a Brazilian infrastructure company and for contributing to the U.S. housing crisis.

Samuels was Facebook's Business Lead for Global Marketing and Creative, Global Program Manager for its Creative Shop and Manager of Product Operations. ○



Arielle Gross Samuels

VP Harris' fundraiser joins Invariant

Amanda Bailey, Senior Advisor to the Black Economic Alliance, has joined Invariant to work with clients to develop CEO and C-suite engagement activities to ensure their outreach resonates with target audiences.

The BEA is a non-partisan coalition of business leaders and advocates pushing for economic development and prosperity for Black communities.

Earlier, Bailey was lead fundraiser for VP Kamala Harris' presidential run and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's campaign. She also devised strategy for Congresswoman Karen Bass' run for Mayor of Los Angeles and Citigroup Global Vice-Chair Ray McGuire's campaign for NYC mayor. ○



Amanda Bailey

KemperLesnik picks Proserpi for EVP

KemperLesnik has named David Proserpi EVP and Managing Director.

Proserpi was previously SVP of Communications for the Options Clearing Corporation, the world's largest equity derivatives clearing organization.

He has also held senior communications roles at Aon, CME Group and the Chicago Board of Trade. Proserpi also served as Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation under President George H.W. Bush, and Assistant White House Press Secretary under President Ronald Reagan. ○



David Proserpi

BCW's Joseph switches to Ketchum

Former BCW Global President Jim Joseph is coming on board at Ketchum as Global Chief Marketing and Integration Officer, a newly created position.

In addition to working with Ketchum's teams worldwide, Joseph will collaborate

with agencies across the Omnicom Public Relations Group and overall network to develop client solutions and drive thought leadership.

Most recently, Joseph served as Chief Customer Solutions Officer at IPG Health. He has also been CEO at Citizen Relations and President and Partner at Lippe Taylor. ○



Jim Joseph

Teneo hires H+K's ex-technology chief

Amanda Groty, who served more than a dozen years at Hill+Knowlton Strategies and exited as Vice Chair and Global Technology Head, has joined Teneo's London office as a Senior Managing Director.

At H+K, she was also Client Relationship Manager in the EMEA for the key LG Electronics account, Global Vice Chairman-Strategy and Marketing, and Head of the EMEA technology practice.

Groty also did a two-year stint in Japan as Nissan's Global Corporate Communications Manager, a year in Switzerland as VP-Head of Communications for ABB's electrification business and almost a year in Luxembourg as PayPal's Senior Director and head of EMEA Communications. ○



Amanda Groty

FGS Global adds Reed

Anthony Reed, who spent 14 years at Archer Daniels Midland agribusiness giant, has joined FGS Global in Washington as a partner.

As VP-Federal Government Relations, Reed handled energy, environmental policy, sustainability and biotechnology issues at the \$65 billion company. Prior to ADM, Reed served in the EPA during the Bush II administration as Deputy Associate Administrator for Congressional Relations. He also was Chief of Staff for former Republican Speaker of the House Denny Hastert. ○



Anthony Reed

O'Dwyer's guide to FINANCIAL PR & INVESTOR RELATIONS

BACKBAY COMMUNICATIONS

20 Park Plaza, Suite 1409
Boston, MA 02116
617/391-0790
www.backbaycommunications.com

14-16 Great Chapel Street
London, W1F 8FL
+44 (0) 203 475 7552

Bill Haynes, Founder & CEO

BackBay Communications is an integrated public relations, thought leadership content development, and digital marketing agency focused on the financial services sector, with special expertise in private equity, asset management, fintech, and impact investing.

BackBay is known for helping companies develop strong brands and drive new business through thought leadership, media relations, research and message development and integrated marketing campaigns. BackBay has very close relationships with the business and trade media. With 30 employees and offices in Boston and London, BackBay serves companies across the United States, Europe and elsewhere, leveraging global partners.

BackBay takes a brand-centric, content-driven approach to developing and executing market positioning and integrated communications programs for financial services firms including marketing strategy, content development, creative design, and multi-channel distribution of company news and perspectives to build brand awareness, credibility and drive new business for our clients.

Our services include strategic integrated marketing plans, media relations, content creation, branding, website development, marketing materials, videos, advertising and social media.

Our industry work and experience includes: Accounting, Advi-

sory, Asset Management, Banks, Consulting, Financial Technology, Hedge Funds, Impact Investing, Insurance, Legal, Private Equity, Venture Capital and Wealth Management.

THE BLISS GROUP

Member of The Next Practice
and The Worldcom Public
Relations Group

500 5th Ave., Suite 1640
New York, NY 10110
212/840-1661
Fax: 212/840-1663
www.theblissgrp.com

Bob Pearson, CEO
Michael Roth and **Cortney Stapleton**, Managing Partners
Greg Hassel, SVP and Leader of the Financial Services Practice
Liz DeForest, **Reed Handley**, **Miles Hill**, **Alexis Odesser**, **Sally Slater**, **Bill Smith**, **Keri Toomey**, **Megan Tuck**, **Judy Welage**, SVPs
Meghan Busch, **Marisha Chin-sky**, **Alana Gold**, **Erin Harrison**, **Courtland Long**, **Quintin Maidment**, **Janice Miller**, **Meghan Powers**, VPs

The Bliss Group is a next-generation marketing communications agency with an award-winning financial services practice catering to the biggest names in retirement, insurance, investing, banking, private equity, and fintech. Decades of experience allows the firm to reach both B2B and B2C audiences by packaging complex business opportunities into strategic thought leadership campaigns that resonate with stakeholders.

We pride ourselves on developing creative strategies and engaging materials to help clients reach their goals across the PESO spectrum. With us, there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach. Our talented team of communications professionals bring innovative thinking to each and every situation.

BOSPAR

Serving 15 locations, including San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Austin.
415/913-7528
success@bospar.com
@BosparPR
vimeo.com/571954519

Chris Boehlke, **Curtis Sparrer**,

Tom Carpenter, Principals
Tricia Heinrich, Chief Content Officer
Joseph Krasinski, Chief Financial Officer

Hey! Yeah, you, the person reading this.

Is it us, or do all these agency descriptions sound alike?

"We're an integrated global communication and marketing agency that BLAH, BLAH, BLAH."

That's not the thinking that's going to get you noticed.

Yet, the PR industry and business world have noticed Bospar for our work in tech, social media, content marketing and PR:

- *Financial Times*: America's 500 Fastest-Growing Companies list in 2022
- *O'Dwyer's*: 50 Top PR Agencies in 2022
- *O'Dwyer's*: Top 5 San Francisco PR firms in 2022
- *Fast Company's* Best Workplaces for Innovators in 2022
- *Forbes* named us one of the best PR agencies of 2021

Bospar is a team of pushy yet polite tech PR and communications professionals with purpose and relentless joy for what we do. We are comprised of former journalists from social and traditional media and marketing, influencer, financial, SEO, and public affairs experts. As a team, we get smart on contact, build relationships and launch PR campaigns grounded in strategy and infused with creativity.

If you want to get known fast, accelerate adoption, or drive impact, Bospar exceeds all expectations.

With breakthrough coverage and visibility, our clients speed ahead—no "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" about it!

BUTLER ASSOCIATES, LLC

353 Lexington Ave., 17th Flr.
New York, NY 10016
212/685-4600
www.butlerpr.com

290 Harbor Dr.
Stamford, CT 06902

Thomas P. Butler, President

Butler Associates is a team of exceptional communicators with a

proven track record of consistent, creative, high-impact results. It is the winner of PRSA-New York's 2021's Best Reputation Brand Management Campaign, 2020 & 2018 Best Legal Marketing Communications Campaign, 2019's Best of the Best Award, and much more. With clients across the nation, Butler is among the New York media market's top agencies for its legal, business, financial, professional services, public affairs, environmental and crisis management practice results.

Butler Associates campaigns range from victorious *Fortune* 50 shareholder proxy matters, messaging for significant litigations, crisis, public affairs, and public safety campaigns. The CEOs and organizational leaders we advocate on behalf of, are highly visible and respected opinion leaders. The Butler group includes smart, seasoned media and communications pros absolutely committed to their clients and delivering results. Its Litical Solutions division produces intelligent and highly targeted digital engagement.

Clients Include: American Triple I Partners, Association of BellTel Retirees, Inc., Association of DuPont Retirees, Barasch McGarry P.C., Building Trader Employers Association-NY, Carver Federal Savings Bank, Clean Energy Jobs Coalition-NY, Clear Vision Impact Fund, Cognitive Assessment Group, Davidoff Hutcher Citron LLP, FDNY EMS Local 2507, Friars Club, Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association, Home Health Care Workers of America, Home Health Care Employers Association of New York, Hunts Point Cooperative Market, Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Rice University, Knights of Saint Patrick of New York City, Metropolitan Package Store Association, Nationwide Mortgage Bankers, New York City Fire Pension Fund, New York-New England Dairy Consortium, LLC, Patriot Bank, NA, Plaza College, Sharps Technology, Inc., Shank Williams Cisneros Company, Siebert Williams Shank & Co., LLC, Social Equity Impact Ventures, LLC, Stamford Innovation Week, Stamford Partnership and Zara Realty Holdings Corp.

The October issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile Healthcare PR firms. If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2089 or steve@odwyerpr.com

DUKAS LINDEN PUBLIC RELATIONS

100 W. 26th St.
New York, NY 10001
212/704-7385
info@dlpr.com
www.dlpr.com

Richard Dukas, Chairman & CEO
Seth Linden, President
Zach Leibowitz, Executive VP

Dukas Linden Public Relations (DLPR) is a communications partner for leaders in finance, asset management, professional services, fintech and B2B technology. We create compelling narratives that expand our clients' share of voice, enhance their brand value and — most important — engage key audiences in a global marketplace.

Ranked #9 on *O'Dwyer's* list of



From top: DLPR Chairman and CEO Richard Dukas; and President Seth Linden.



Feintuch Communications' fintech client, SurgePays, celebrates its recent IPO at Nasdaq Marketsite in New York with CEO Brian Cox.

top financial PR firms, we're driven by a passion to deliver targeted strategies and creative solutions that provide measurable benefits to clients—and help their businesses grow and succeed. Our full suite of integrated communications services includes: comprehensive messaging and media relations across multiple platforms, content creation, media and presentation coaching, crisis and special situations communications, online reputation management and internal communications.

DLPR's clients include well-known, large and middle-market companies in key areas of finance, including: institutional investing, mutual funds, ETFs, wealth management, alternatives and private equity, and investment and community banking. DLPR has proven professional services experience within accounting, business consulting, compliance, cybersecurity, economics, risk management, management consulting and law. DLPR also has strong experience in fintech and B2B technology.

DLPR has an exceptionally strong broadcast group that, on average, secures approximately 50 bookings per month, primarily on CNBC, Bloomberg, Fox Business and Yahoo! Finance.

Clients Include: ARK-Invest, Adams Street Partners, BlueMountain Capital, Brandes Investment Partners, Brightstar

Capital Partners, Brown Advisory, Crossmark Global Investments, Kroll, EisnerAmper, Global X Management, JMP Group, Kearney, Livingstone Partners, Navigant, Neuberger Berman, Ocean-First Bank, Raymond James and Robeco Global.

EDELMAN

250 Hudson St., 16th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212/768-0550
Fax: 212/704-0117
www.edelman.com

Edelman is a global communications firm that partners with businesses and organizations to evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Our 6,000 people in more than 60 offices deliver communications strategies that give our clients the confidence to lead and act with certainty, earning the trust of their stakeholders. Our honors include the Cannes Lions Grand Prix for PR; *Advertising Age's* 2019 A-List; the *Holmes Report's* 2018 Global Digital Agency of the Year; and, five times, Glassdoor's Best Places to Work. Since our founding in 1952, we have remained an independent, family-run business. Edelman owns specialty companies Edelman Intelligence (research) and United Entertainment Group (entertainment, sports, lifestyle).

FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS

11 East 44th St., Suite 1201
New York, NY 10017
212/808-4900
henry@feintuchpr.com
www.feintuchcommunications.com
www.PRWorldAlliance.com

Henry Feintuch, President
Doug Wright, Vice President

From fintech to financial services, the Feintuch Communications team has the experience and know-how to help you achieve your business objectives—whether you are a start-up, a high growth challenger brand or the established marketplace leader.

Our fintech and financial services experience is broad—with decades of hands-on support to companies in virtually every facet of the business from foreign exchange and payment technologies to compliance software, loan platforms, trading technologies, blockchain and more.

We provide integrated financial communications services to public and private companies seeking to raise capital, burnish their image or inform markets. Our senior team helps companies to fine-tune their corporate story for the investment community—and their market position and differentiation to the

Continued on page 32

FEINTUCH COMMS.

— Continued from page 31

business and trade press.

We are supported by the global financial services specialists in the PR World Alliance, an international alliance of premier independent PR and IR consultancies.

FGS GLOBAL

909 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022
212/687-8080
www.fgsglobal.com

George Sard, Roland Rudd, and **Carter Eskew**, Co-Chairmen
Paul Holmes, Vice Chair
Mike Feldman and **Paul Verbinen**, Co-Chairs of North America
Alexander Geiser, Global CEO
Andrew Cole, Deputy Global CEO and Co-CEO of North America
Joel Johnson, Paul Kranhold and **Winnie Lerner**, Co-CEOs of North America
Faeth Birch, CEO of UK, Middle East and Asia
Brigitte von Haacke, CEO of Europe

FGS Global is the strategic advisor for the stakeholder economy. Headquartered in NY, the firm is a global strategic advisory and communications consultancy, with over 1200 multidisciplinary experts across the world's major financial, government, business and cultural centers. FGS Global is a leader in crisis, corporate reputation, public affairs and capital markets and M&A advisory, as well as an acknowledged leader in boardroom communication counsel. The firm supports its clients in addressing a myriad of stakeholder concerns leveraging its capabilities in research and insights, media placement as well as content, digital and data. The company was formed through the merger of leading strategic communications consultancies Finsbury Glover Hering and Sard Verbinen in December 2022. FGS Global serves its global client base from offices in Abu Dhabi, Beijing, Berlin, Boston, Brussels, Dubai, Dublin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, Houston, Kingston (NY), London, Los Angeles, Munich, New York, Paris, Riyadh, San Francisco, Shanghai, Singapore, South Florida, Tokyo, Washington D.C. and Zurich.

FINANCIAL PROFILES, INC.

11601 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1920
Los Angeles, CA 90025

310/622-8220
mconlon@finprofiles.com
www.finprofiles.com

Chicago, IL
San Francisco, CA
New York, NY

Moira Conlon, President

Financial Profiles is a national strategic communications firm that helps companies enhance their profiles, manage their reputations, and build credibility and support among key stakeholder groups. The firm has a demonstrated track record of leveraging best-in-class communications to create value for its clients.

Financial Profiles partners with public and private companies as well as professional services firms to provide expert counsel, value-based positioning and messaging, and access to investors, analysts, and the press. The firm works across industry sectors and has practices dedicated to investor relations, corporate communications, and ESG. Our senior team has deep expertise across a range of communications services, including IPO preparation, M&A support, crisis and issues management, corporate positioning and messaging, ESG benchmarking and program development, media relations, spokesperson training, content creation and design, and more.

Financial Profiles is a WBENC-certified woman owned business.

FINN PARTNERS

301 E. 57th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10022
212/715-1600
www.finnpartners.com

Ryan Barr, Managing Partner,
Global Financial Services Practice
Leader

Finn Partners' Global Financial Services Practice advises companies on strategies to navigate today's highly competitive markets and complex regulatory environments. They also help clients achieve successful business outcomes through purposeful storytelling and integrated communications, and identify the most meaningful ways for clients to engage key audiences and inspire action. Led by industry veteran Ryan Barr, the practice has continued to grow globally working with clients in various stages of their lifecycle and attracting industry experts in the U.S., Europe and APAC. In today's ever chang-

ing environment, FINN's senior counselors understand that modern companies must engage customers and clients in ways never before imaginable. Whether broadening brand awareness, building appreciation for clients transforming an industry or driving adoption of new products and services, FINN's Financial Services practice combines smart data and analytics with creative programming and flawless tactical execution to deliver bold, meaningful and amazing work for clients.

FTI CONSULTING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

555 12th St., N.W., #700
Washington, DC 20004
212/850-5600
www.fticommunications.com

Mark McCall, Global Segment
Leader

The Strategic Communications segment (formerly Financial Dynamics) of FTI Consulting designs and executes communications strategies for clients managing financial, regulatory and reputational challenges. C-suites, board of directors, and business leaders from around the world come to FTI Strategic Communications with their most complex, business-critical issues that require diverse skill sets and integrated disciplines. As part of a global business advisory firm, we help these organizations manage change, mitigate risk and enhance their market position by combining decades of deep subject matter expertise with functional and disciplinary experience. With approximately 700 consultants worldwide, FTI Consulting Strategic Communications has the depth and expertise to solve the world's most critical challenges.

GOULD+PARTNERS

One Penn Plaza
Suite 3200
New York, NY 10119
rick@gould-partners.com
www.gould-partners.com
917/783-4500
Fax: 212/896-1909

46 Woodbine Ave., Suite #4
Northport, NY 11768

Rick Gould, CPA, J.D., Managing
Partner
Jack Bergen, Strategic Partner
Mike Muraszko, Jennifer Casani,
Partners
Sally Tilleray, Senior Advisor,
London/UK

Don Bates, James Arnold, Robert Udowitz, Senior Counselors
Don McIver, COO Services
Seth Rosenstein, CFO Services
Yadi Gomez, Account Coordinator

Gould+Partners is an M&A Advisory Firm consisting of a team of very senior veterans of mergers & acquisitions and operations management.

We identify buyers for sellers, sellers for buyers, make the introduction and manage and facilitate the process.

We also, on a regular basis, perform Valuations, Operations Reviews and prepare firms for an ultimate sale. Our books on M&A and PR firm management validate our commitment to the PR profession.

ICR

685 Third Ave., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10017
646/277-1200
www.icrinc.com

Thomas Ryan, CEO
(tom.ryan@icrinc.com)
Don Duffy, President
(don.duffy@icrinc.com)
Phil Denning, Partner
(phil.denning@icrinc.com)

Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to execute strategic communications and advisory programs that achieve business goals, build awareness and credibility, and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm's highly-differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 1000 clients in approximately 20 industries. ICR's healthcare practice operates under the Westwicke brand. Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and advisory firms in North America, maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, San Diego and Beijing. ICR also advises on capital markets transactions through ICR Capital, LLC.

Learn more at icrinc.com. Follow us on Twitter at @ICRPR.

JOELE FRANK, WILKINSON BRIMMER KATCHER

622 Third Avenue, 36th Floor
New York, NY 10017
212/355-4449
www.joelefrank.com

One California Street, Suite 2275
San Francisco, CA 94111
415/869-3950

Joelle Frank, Managing Partner
Matthew Sherman, President

Joelle Frank provides effective and disciplined communications counsel and support to help our clients take control in advancing their business and strategic objectives.

Our clients range from large, global public companies to smaller, private enterprises across virtually all industries. Our professionals have been recognized by our peers, the financial community and journalists for their quality work, strategic acumen and creative approach to challenging issues.

The firm's practice areas include investor relations, corporate communications and media relations, restructuring and bankruptcy, shareholder activism, crisis communications and special situations, transaction communications, IPOs, spin-offs and SPACs, corporate governance/ESG, litigation support, private equity, and design and digital.

Joelle Frank consistently ranks among the top PR firms in announced restructurings, M&A transactions, and defense against activist investors.

KEKST CNC

U.S. Headquarters
437 Madison Avenue, 37th Floor
New York, NY 10022
212/521-4800
www.kekstcnc.com

Jeremy Fielding, Co-Chief
Executive Officer
Bernhard Meising, Co-Chief
Executive Officer

Many companies and institutions around the world will confront unforeseen events that may well alter their future, pose unprecedented challenges, and potentially define their reputation for years to come.

What is required in these circumstances is an expert, experienced strategic communications partner to work with senior management and a Board of Directors to develop and execute the necessary integrated communications strategies to gain the trust and confidence of key stakeholders in this era of accelerated change.

Kekst CNC is ideally equipped to help global business and institutional leaders address these challenges ... as well as their opportunities. For 50 years, our team of more than 250 experienced professionals, located in 14 offices around the

world, has partnered with leading organizations of all sizes to: articulate new business strategies and a vision for success; explain an enterprise transforming event and its significance; help navigate complex business challenges or crises; build support among key stakeholders; and, work to strengthen and protect our clients' credibility, reputation, and brand.

As trusted advisors, Kekst CNC's professionals bring to client engagements high energy, sound judgment and expertise on such high stakes matters as: M&A, shareholder activism and governance, crisis communications, restructurings, regulatory investigations / resolutions, litigation support, complex investor relations, IPO communications, issues and reputation management, leadership transitions, employee engagement, public affairs, as well as digital and social communications—providing exceptional counsel and execution supported by objective insights, based on access to proprietary research, data and analytics capabilities.

LAMBERT

1420 Broadway St., 1st Floor
Detroit, MI 48226
313/309-9500
www.lambert.com
engage@lambert.com

450 Seventh Ave.
20th Floor, Ste. 2002
New York, NY 10123
212/971-9718

Jeff Lambert, Chairman
Michelle Olson, CEO
Don Hunt, President/Partner
Mike Houston, Managing Partner
Kimberly Hoyle, Managing
Director, Sales & Marketing
Karen Keller, Director of Sales

Lambert is a strategic communications firm that specializes in public relations, investor relations and integrated marketing. For 23 years, Lambert has partnered with clients across the globe to build brand awareness, drive sales and scale business—living the tagline The PR Firm that Can Read an Income Statement®. Our portfolio of clients spans a broad spectrum of industries including automotive and mobility (top-5), consumer brands, food and beverage, education and social impact (top-5), healthcare and biotech, and financial and investor relations (top-10).

Lambert is home to 100 of the best and brightest writers, former journalists, strategists, media specialists, creatives, digital marketing aficionados, and operations leaders spanning six ma-

jor talent hubs, including Grand Rapids (HQ), Detroit, New York, St. Louis, Houston, and Phoenix. Lambert's pioneering use of the integrated PR/IR agency model led to the creation of TiCKER, a consumer shareholder application that engages, verifies and rewards retail investors. Lambert is a member of PROI Worldwide, the largest partnership of independent PR firms in the world, extending our team to 83 agencies in more than 165 cities and 60 countries.

We have significant experience raising the profile of publicly traded organizations, private equity and venture capital funds, and emerging growth companies seeking to raise capital. Our capital markets team features individuals with diverse skill sets, including communications professionals formerly of *Fortune* 500 companies; national consumer brands; global agencies; private equity and Wall Street.

We learn and understand the issues and trends you face to align your business objectives with strategy-based counsel that is measurable to your goals and relevant to your audiences. We are proud to be a national leader in financial communications counsel and take pride in delivering bottom-line outcomes for our clients.

THE LEVINSON GROUP (TLG)

200 Park Avenue South
Suite 1218
New York, NY 10003

655 15th Street NW
Suite 501
Washington, D.C. 20005

13 Norfolk Place
London W2 1QJ
c/o The Frontline Club

202/244-1785
www.TLGCommunications.com

The Levinson Group (TLG) is a full-service strategic communications and public relations firm with a global reach and impact, specializing in advising C-Suites, Boards of Directors, influential individuals, law firms, and other leaders in corporations, non-profits, and other organizations in their most mission-critical moments.

Since its founding in 2013, TLG has become well known for serving as a strategic partner and advisor in high stakes matters relating to corporate reputation and governance; government response and sensitive investigations; public af-

fairs and issues management; crisis and risk management; litigation communications; and global financial communications including corporate restructuring, executive transitions, mergers, acquisitions, and other transitions. Headquartered in Washington, D.C. and New York, NY, the firm also has deep expertise advising multiple Am Law 50 law firms.

Many of TLG's team of expert communications advisors come from backgrounds in journalism, politics, government, and the private sector. The team specializes in creating and implementing targeted, always-on communications campaigns crafted to cultivate meaningful engagement with valued stakeholders. TLG's expert team have emerged as industry leaders, securing recognition twice as the "Crisis Manager of the Year" from *PR News*, "Women to Watch" by *PR Week*, and "Top 100 Legal Strategists" by Lawdragon.

Chambers & Partners and *National Law Journal* ranked TLG among the top public relations and communications firms in the U.S., noting the firm's proven track record in Crisis Management and Litigation Communications. TLG has also been recognized for its commitment to leading social impact programs and for its robust pro bono practice.

MONTIETH & COMPANY

155th E 44th St, Suite 1610
New York, NY 10017
718/514-1383
www.montiethco.com

Montieth M. Illingworth, CEO & Global Managing Partner
Perry Goldman, Director, Professional Services, Crisis Management and Litigation PR
Becky Nye, Director, Financial Services and IR
Katarina Matic, Director, Marketing Communications, Issues Management and Public Affairs
Cameron Penny, Director, EMEA
Joyce Lee, APAC Lead/Hong Kong

Montieth & Company is a global communications consultancy that provides a fully integrated set of marketing communications services and solutions to deliver high-value, measurable outcomes for financial services firms. Our clients include fixed income, equities, alternative credit, real estate, and real asset investment managers, from \$2 billion to close to \$1 trillion in AUM. We also work

— Continued on page 34



Prosek Partners Founder and Managing Partner Jennifer Prosek.

MONTIETH & COMPANY

— Continued from page 33

with providers of shareholder and engagement services, financial advisors, global investment research and strategy services, and work with clients offering new asset classes that include fine art funds that provide digital tokenization for greater liquidity.

We help clients expand market share, penetrate new markets, achieve influence, and resolve their most critical problems. We offer full-scale media relations, crisis management, and marketing communication services, including branding, website development, and paid media programs that align closely with our clients' core corporate initiatives.

Our deep media relationships enable us to work with legacy, emerging digital news, and broadcast media outlets to advance and promote our clients' brands, services, and expertise. We convert ideas, analysis, and opinions into clear and engaging content to achieve our clients' marketing communications objectives. Our offerings include multiple channels of engagement including corporate video profiles, podcasts, webinars, and creating a social media presence.

Montieth & Co.'s one-of-a-kind, flexible, integrated, and budget-efficient cross-border business model enables us to reach multiple media markets via our global hubs in New York, London, Hong Kong, and our affiliates around the globe.

PROSEK PARTNERS

105 Madison Ave., 7th flr.
New York, NY 10016
212/279-3115
Fax: 212/279-3117
jprosek@prosek.com
www.prosek.com

Jennifer Prosek, Mark Kollar, Russell Sherman, Andy Merrill, Mickey Mandelbaum, Karen Niovitch Davis, Caroline Gibson, David Wells, Mike Geller, Neil Goklani, Brian Schaffer, Partners

Every brand has a story to tell. And we're experts at telling it.

Prosek Partners is a certified Woman-Owned Business, among the largest integrated, independent communications and marketing firms in the U.S. and one of the few domestic, mid-size firms that offers global capabilities through its London office and international network.

Specializing in providing a full range of communications solutions to financial and professional services companies, the firm delivers an unexpected level of passion, creativity and marketing savvy. Services include digital and traditional media relations, financial communications, public affairs, investor relations, transaction services, crisis communications and issues management, content creation, publishing, media training and more. Its strategic branding offering—Prophecy by Prosek—takes a holistic approach to creative branding and storytelling, with capabilities spanning every

facet of advertising, strategy and design to deliver breakthrough results.

The firm has been named Provoke's "Best Agency to Work For" and "Global and North American Corporate/Financial Agency of the Year," an *Inc.* 5000 Fastest-Growing Company, a Best PR Firm in America by *Observer*, and a "Top Place to Work in PR" by *PR News*.

Clients include: AIG, Bridgewater, Carlyle Group, Citi, Citizens Bank, Edward Jones, Franklin Templeton, Goldman Sachs, Hartford Funds, ICE, Man Group, Munich Re, Prudential, Rockefeller, Silicon Valley Bank, TD Bank, Travelers and Vista.

RFIBINDER

950 3rd Ave., Floor 8
New York, NY 10022

Amy Binder, CEO
Rebecca Binder, President

The RF|Binder Corporate & Financial Services practice has advised and driven integrated communications programs for a broad array of institutions including B2B and B2C efforts for asset management firms, investment funds, financial service firms, banks, FinTech start-ups, lenders, insurance and professional service providers, and more. We build tailored, results-oriented integrated programming that includes managing and repositioning reputations, establishing new thought leaders, developing ESG strategy and corporate social impact programming, and driving impactful communications through narrative and messaging development, media storytelling, stakeholder engagement, service launches, and crisis management. Our team brings a broad understanding of the issues impacting the financial services industry, and has helped some of the world's leading companies navigate market volatility, technological and client transitions, M&A, IPOs, changes to fee structures and expectations, the rise of ESG and sustainable finance, and more. With a dedicated research and insights team, digital marketing and paid media team, and The Grove, our leading-edge creative studio, we develop integrated strategic communications campaigns that elevate and transform brands and drive credibility and trust.

SITRICK AND COMPANY

LOS ANGELES | NEW YORK |
WASHINGTON DC | BOSTON

11999 San Vicente Blvd.
Penthouse
Los Angeles, CA 90049
800/288-8809
mike_sitrick@sitrick.com
www.sitrick.com
Los Angeles 310/788-2850
New York 212/573-6100
Washington, DC 443/977-7215
Boston 508/360-6147

Michael S. Sitrick, Chairman & CEO
Brenda Adrian, Member of the Firm—New York Office
Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, (USA Ret.), Managing Director and Practice Lead, Washington, DC

Sitrick And Company is not a traditional public relations firm. Our practice has a specialized focus. We concentrate in corporate, financial, transactional, reputation, litigation and crisis communication. Although best known for our work in sensitive situations, we have an extensive and successful practice in each of the areas mentioned above.

Since our firm's founding 33 years ago, we have been consistently ranked among the top crisis and strategic communications firms in the nation. The *New York Times* called us "The City's Most Prominent Crisis Management Firm."

The majority of the firm's senior executives are former editors and reporters from news organizations that include the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, Bloomberg, *Barron's*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Forbes*, *San Francisco Examiner*, CBS News, ABC News and NBC News. We also have former practicing attorneys and business executives.

Matters with which we have been involved include reputation restoration, litigation support of all kinds; intellectual property matters, allegations of stock manipulation, wrongful termination, contract disputes, allegations of fraud and fraudulent inducement, wrongful death claims, allegations of illegal drug use, SEC matters, and a variety of other white-collar crimes.

We have also handled criminal and civil cases against companies and their executives for such things as price fixing, insurance fraud, options backdating, antitrust violations, race and sex discrimination, sexual harassment, racism and #MeToo matters. We have a significant mergers and acquisitions and corporate governance practice and have done extensive work combatting short sellers and dealing with data breaches. Other issues include sensitive environmental

matters, racketeering cases, family disputes, and high-profile divorces. And, we have helped launch companies both from scratch and through IPOs and SPACs.

SLOANE & COMPANY

One World Trade Center
285 Fulton Street
69th Floor
New York, NY 10007
212/486-9500
Fax: 212/486-9094
info@sloanepr.com
www.sloanepr.com

Darren Brandt, Whit Clay,
Co-CEOs
John Hartz, President of Corporate Communications

Sloane & Company is an industry-leading strategic communications firm that provides a range of crisis-focused services around situations including: shareholder activism; litigation; unforeseen management changes; Board issues; employee issues; cybersecurity; natural disasters; product integrity; regulatory and legislative issues; bankruptcies / restructurings; environmental issues; and corporate governance. More broadly, we provide strategic counsel and support around corporate and financial public relations; transactions; strategic insights; messaging, analytics and measurement; public affairs; and investor relations—to public and private companies as well as investors, associations and individuals.

We are experts at assisting clients when unforeseen events threaten to impact their business or damage their reputation. We are known for our intelligence, intensity, creativity and focus on getting results. Whether the situation calls for developing and delivering the right messages to the audiences that matter or advising on high-stakes deals or crises, our goal is the same—to drive winning outcomes for our clients.

We have become a go-to firm when these crises and special situations occur by listening to our clients, understanding the situation, determining the risks to their business and delivering candid advice to management teams, boards, executives and organizations when they need it most. Clients have the benefit of working with senior executives with decades of experience who offer professional counsel in all phases of crisis planning and response, leading to immediate results.

Beyond specific crisis situations,

we develop effective and actionable contingency plans in close coordination with a client's legal, financial, marketing, communications and government relations/lobbying advisors. Our approach provides best-practices and enhances client procedures and appropriate training of personnel before and during a crisis. When the unexpected happens, we actively manage and support implementing the appropriate communications tactics. After the crisis subsides, we help clients restore their credibility and reputation in the marketplace.

STANTON

909 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022
212/366-5300
astanton@stantonpr.com
www.stantonpr.com

Alex Stanton, CEO
Tom Faust, Charlyn Lusk,
Managing Directors
Liam Collopy, Matthew Conroy,
Michael Goodwin, Scott Lessne,
Katrin Lieberwirth, SVPs

Stanton is a strategic communications partner to global firms, mid-size leaders and entrepreneurial enterprises with a particular strength in financial services including private investment, investment banking, fintech, advisories and insurance. Our expertise in this sector has been recognized with numerous awards including a "Top 10" ranking among firms specializing in financial PR from *O'Dwyer's*. Our combination of smart strategy, innovative thinking and first-class execution produces business-changing results for our clients.

In addition to our deep sector experience, Stanton is preferred partner of financial brands for our practitioner model where our senior professionals spend the majority of their time on client work. Our flexible and collaborative approach and responsive, bureaucracy-free service are the hallmarks of our long-standing client relationships.

With teams in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, Stanton supports clients through strategy, media relations, content development and marketing, design and production, executive visibility, thought leadership, crisis management, analyst relations, social media management and more.

Financial clients include: 3i, Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty, Assurant, Bain Capital, Berdon, Carl Marks Advisors, Conning

Asset Management, CSAA, CVC, Enhanced Capital, First Eagle Alternative Credit, FFL Partners, GP Bullhound, HGGC, HighVista Strategies, Hometap, Kline Hill Partners, Leste Group, Lincoln Road Global Management, Lincolnshire Management, Makena Capital, Mosser Capital, Ocean-Sound Partners, One Equity Partners, One Inc., SaverLife, SFW Capital Partners, Sun Capital Partners, T1D Fund, Toorak Capital Partners, and Victor Capital.

TIER ONE PARTNERS

129 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
617/918-7060

209 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60606
708/421-0083
www.tieronepr.com

Marian Hughes, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner - Chicago
Sue Parente, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner - Boston
Kathy Wilson, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner - Boston

Leaders in financial and professional services turn to Tier One Partners for experience-based and culturally-resonant PR, Content, and Digital Marketing programs that drive measurable results. Our integrated marketing communications programs, with services including strategy, content, communications, creative, and digital, help innovative brands "thrive on change" while remaining true to their purpose and connections with their buyers.

Our unique Agile Communications methodology taps into the collective consciousness of business and consumer audiences and applies fast-acting, creative, and nimble programming to bring a brand's vision and mission to the forefront—and keep it there.

In today's environment of rapidly shifting market dynamics, our programs effectively respond to those shifts while keeping a steady course toward business and marketing goals. Change creates opportunity, so we design our plans in quarterly sprints with weekly and monthly adjustment check-ins. This lets us add new strategies and tactics to drive higher, in-the-moment impact. We integrate modern PR and marketing analytics to measure program effectiveness and continuously iterate to test new strategies and approaches.

Our Agile Insights practice helps us spot trends and insert our cli-

ents' perspectives into the national conversation. We use multiple, cross-agency tools to identify and instantly share potential trends and business issues, so our clients can capitalize on the most relevant thought leadership opportunities.

Co-headquartered in Boston and Chicago, Tier One is a certified women owned business. We're proud to be the 2022 winner of PRovoke's SABRE award in the Corporate Social Responsibility category for our work with Ally Financial.

TREVELINO/KELLER

981 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd., #100
Atlanta, GA 30318
404/214-0722
dtrevelino@trevelinokeller.com
gkeller@trevelinokeller.com
www.trevelinokeller.com
www.groovy-studios.com

Dean Trevelino, Founder and
Principal, 404/214-0722 X106
Genna Keller, Founder and
Principal, 404/214-0722 X105

Coming off of what has become Atlanta's signature financial services event, FinTech South, Trevelino/Keller was selected as agency of record for the fourth year running by the event's lead partner, the Technology Association of Georgia. The firm's financial services practice has benefitted from its well-balanced experience base of B2B and B2C clients, enabling it to serve traditional financial services companies as well as fintech organizations that leverage its technology practice. Utilizing the firm's three core service areas—public relations, integrated marketing and creative services—its mission is to help companies build, launch and scale their businesses with a goal of growth, acquisition or exit.

In the start of 2022, the firm has been successful in the emerging NFT marketplace and NIL space, specifically within the sports industry, working with brands like Icon Source, The Players' Lounge and Crossover Collective.

Also of note is the firm's outcome-driven approach with emerging financial/fintech brands that have leveraged the momentum of public relations campaigns to realize their business goals. In recent years, brands like Paymetric [tokenization], FactorTrust [Underbanked data], Capital Access Network [alternative lending], all realized successful exits following campaigns led by Trevelino/Keller.

—Continued on page 36



FinTech South, in collaboration with Technology Association of Georgia, returns post-COVID for its international fintech conference in Atlanta. Trevelino/Keller once again assumed its public relations and marketing role on behalf of the thriving conference.

TREVELINO/KELLER

Continued from page 35

The firm's continued support of start-ups has been differentiated in the marketplace by its success harnessing an entrepreneurial-led ecosystem of organizations that include Atlanta Tech Village, Atlanta Tech Angels, Tech Alpharetta, Keiretsu Forum, LaunchPadFX, Women in Technology and Raise Forum.

VESTED

31 East 17th Street
New York, NY 10003
917/765-8720

www.fullyvested.com
[Twitter.com/vested](https://twitter.com/vested)
www.linkedin.com/company/vested-llc

Treasure House
19-21 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8BA
United Kingdom
+44.20.3691.7990

232 Scott St.
San Francisco, CA 94117

150 King Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario M5H 1J9 Canada

Dan Simon, Chairman, Group Vested, dan@fullyvested.com
Binna Kim, CEO, Group Vested, binna@fullyvested.com
Ishviene Arora, President & Chief Client Officer, Group Vested, ishviene@fullyvested.com
Elsbeth Rothwell, CEO, Vested EMEA, elsbeth@fullyvested.com
Amber Roberts, CEO, Vested US Professional Services, amber@fullyvested.com
Eric Hazard, Managing Director, CEO of Vested Ventures, eric@

fullyvested.com
Christina Bertinelli, Chief Integration Officer, christina@fullyvested.com
Corey Goldman, Managing Director, Vested Canada CEO, cgoldman@fullyvested.com

Vested is a global, award-winning integrated financial services communications and marketing firm with offices in New York, Toronto and London. Vested delivers results-focused programs for brands big and small including Aon, American Express, Bloomberg, CanadaLife, Grayscale, LinkedIn, Morgan Stanley and more. The firm has been recognized as one of America's Best PR agencies by *Forbes* and Medium PR Agency of

the Year by *PR News* and has won Gold for the Best Industry-Focused Agency by the Bulldog Awards. The Vested UK team was also recognized as the CIPR Specialist Consultancy of the Year.

We attract and retain the industry's best talent through our equity ownership model and entrepreneurial approach—from unlimited vacation days to sabbaticals. Entrepreneurial to the core, Vested launched the industry's first agency-run investment group, Vested Ventures; created a community for senior financial marcomms professionals to network and share best practices called Financial Narrative; acquired business journalism site Talking Biz News, digital mar-

keting and web development agency Red Lab and financial content firm Scribe; and works closely with its sister agency, Caliber.

WATER & WALL

110 East 25th Street
New York, NY 10010
212/625-2363
www.waterandwall.com

Andrew Healy & Matt Kirdahy,
Partners

Water & Wall is an award-winning communications and marketing agency specializing in earned media, content strategy/development, branding, design, and crisis communications.

Our team helps build and maintain the reputations of financial and professional services brands and we've worked with some of the most well-known names in the business. Our financial industry experience includes retail/institutional asset managers, hedge funds, ESG/sustainability firms, private equity, VC firms, ETF providers, wealth managers, real estate managers, fintech companies, investment consultants and more. And our professional services experience extends to law and accounting firms, management and regulatory change consultants, and executive compensation specialists.

We're as careful at selecting our clients as they are at selecting us, and if we work together you'll have our undivided attention, creative thinking, and unwavering commitment to your success. ○



From left: Vested CEO & Co-Founder Binna Kim; Chairman & Co-Founder Dan Simon; President, Chief Client Officer & Co-Founder Ishviene Arora

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

TOP FINANCIAL PR & INVESTOR RELATIONS FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2021)	Firm	Net Fees (2021)
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$100,793,000	29. Montieth & Company , New York, NY	\$767,412
2. ICR , New York, NY	97,711,846	30. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	738,565
3. Prosek Partners , New York, NY	70,050,000	31. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	720,966
4. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	17,930,000	32. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	638,050
5. Vested , New York, NY	17,543,000	33. Rally Point Public Relations , New York, NY	498,639
6. Taylor , New York, NY	12,257,000	34. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	431,987
7. Finn Partners , New York, NY	11,750,000	35. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	400,000
8. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	8,800,000	36. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	354,652
9. Dukas Linden PR , New York, NY	8,510,029	37. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	316,000
10. Stanton , New York, NY	8,492,565	38. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	260,207
11. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	7,434,000	39. MP&F Strategic Comms. , Nashville, TN	190,764
12. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	7,014,478	40. Slide Nine Agency , Columbus, OH	174,728
13. MikeWorldWide , New York, NY	6,397,217	41. Beehive Strategic Comm. , St. Paul, MN	151,535
14. Zeno Group , New York, NY	6,042,815	42. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	149,000
15. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	5,213,555	43. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	142,400
16. BackBay Communications , Boston, MA	4,472,387	44. O'Malley Hansen Comms. , Chicago, IL	136,613
17. Caliber Corporate Advisers , New York, NY	4,226,115	45. Berk Communications , New York, NY	135,000
18. Hewes Communications , New York, NY	2,764,285	46. Akrete , Evanston, IL	119,827
19. G&S Business Comms. , New York, NY	2,409,414	47. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	82,270
20. Lansons , New York, NY	2,282,151	48. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	70,930
21. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	2,236,800	49. Novitas Communications , Denver, CO	64,500
22. Peppercomm , New York, NY	2,035,506	50. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	61,035
23. Tier One Partners , Boston, MA	1,817,856	51. Marketing Maven PR , Camarillo, CA	16,671
24. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	1,498,435	52. Judge Public Relations , Tampa, FL	15,750
25. Lowe Group , Wauwatosa, WI	1,359,684	53. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	9,850
26. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,200,000	54. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	7,500
27. Buttonwood Comms. Group , New York, NY	1,109,019	55. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	1,201
28. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	1,020,800		

How to market a new professional services model

The convergence of traditional professional services firms with software-as-a-service capabilities presents new value to clients and has broad implications for the future of the marketing industry.

By Keri Toomey

This summer, an announcement from luxury car brand BMW was met with the following headlines: “doomed to fail,” “welcome to hell” and “subscription nightmare.”

What sparked this visceral backlash? Heated seats costing \$18 per month to unlock. BMW is the latest company to explore the concept of Everything-as-a-Service (or XaaS). While it can generate solid, predictable revenue, many consumers understandably feel that when everything is actually a service, nothing is. Or, put another way, when you suddenly have to pay separately for a feature that was free or included before—in the name of personalization—it’s a pass. It’s giving carry-on bag fee vibes.

While far from a luxury car brand, professional services firms are facing similar business model decisions that have broad marketing implications. Companies whose intellectual property and go-to-market strategy rely on talent that plugs in and out—or walks in and out of the building—every day are dealing with rising costs and a competitive talent market. They’re increasingly looking to shore up and diversify revenue streams through productized offerings that are repeatable and automatable, from process automation to data analytics to remote monitoring.

Enter Professional Services as a Service. As PSaaS begins to take shape, professional services firms are inching closer and closer to becoming true technology companies. Here are a few key considerations to ensure marketing evolves alongside the model.

Product vs. perspective

Professional services firms have been going to market by ideas for decades. It makes for some of the most challenging and creative work for marketers and thought leaders, and the best ideas win. While there’s growing interest in “knowledge as a service,” many as-a-service offerings cannot use longstanding professional services firm differentiators. A “senior-led” approach isn’t going to win against tangible value and outcomes. Professional services companies are going to need to get smarter and clearer on promoting tangible benefits—dollars and time saved, dollar value added—and not only at the end of the sales process but at the beginning as well.

Think about the buyer experience with a new TV. If you search for a 50-inch TV on Amazon and click on one product to see more, Amazon will show you a list of comparable products and which features they do or don’t have to help inform your decision. Professional services buyers, on the other hand, have to dig through long proposals from different firms to compare cost and benefits information.

Going forward, more of that information is going to need to be readily accessible on a site or portal. Transparency and simplicity will be key. It’s one reason professional services firms are hiring more professionals with a product marketing background.

Perspective-driven marketing is far from dead; it just needs to be supplemented with smart product marketing to serve a SaaS model.

Getting closer to the customer

One area of marketing that tech companies tend to do well is getting customer input and feedback in a scientific way. In one typical day, I gave Uber Eats feedback on a customer service response for a missed item, Google learned more about my interests in raku pottery and Peloton noticed me taking my first boxing class. That’s a lot of intel. On the other hand, professional services communications are too often starved for end-customer input.

There’s a clear reason why: It’s easier to engage and get feedback from an audience of consumers than from an overscheduled, executive-level decision maker. However, if the future will include more productized offerings, professional services firms are going to have to solve for this issue. Any investment in a new capability comes with risk, but in a SaaS offering, the feedback loop has to be near constant in order to iterate and ensure ongoing ROI to the customer.

An annual client survey won’t cut it. A strong customer relationship management system is a good start, but it has to go beyond tracking interactions and email opens. Professional services require more qualitative feedback too.

Matrix vs. micro approach

Large scale, matrixed professional services firms with broad services remind me of what we call a “platform” brand in the tech industry. It’s an elegant way to de-

scribe the concept of everything but the kitchen sink—you name it, we do it (or sell it).

Compare this approach to specialist consulting firms or the equivalent of “point solutions” in the tech industry. It’s like the difference between Target (generalist) vs. Total Wine (specialist).

SaaS offerings can help all categories of professional services firms grow, but it’s critical to stay close to your core mission.

Total Wine’s customers might be open to a subscription-based wine selection service but would likely be skeptical about a new subscription-based pet food service, right?

Specialist firms may need to do some early education groundwork to demonstrate their PSaaS offering use cases and value and how they connect to the firm’s overall purpose. Large matrixed firms may need to add in layers of industry customization or bundle SaaS products to deliver the big ticket results their customers have grown to expect.

Whether you’re a large- or small-scale professional services firm, the implications for marketing SaaS offerings are similar: connect the new product to your overarching value proposition, then meet your buyer where they are and educate them as needed. Keep in mind that a sharp demo may be more effective than a desk-side briefing with a reporter, and a paid campaign will likely generate more leads than a flashy podium.

All of this to say, professional services firms’ typical playbook of marketing tactics will need to adapt to meet objectives.

The goal of productizing professional services is not to usher in the era of “microtransaction hell,” but to offer new value to clients in areas of need. That goal is core to professional services firms’ DNA and soon, PSaaS will be too.

Keri Toomey is a Senior Vice President and Head of the Professional Services practice at The Bliss Group. The Bliss Group’s Professional Services practice ranks in the top 10 by O’Dwyers. ●



Keri Toomey

Effective PR for professional services

The art of knowing when to spread the news and knowing when to lie low.

By Frank Tortorici

When a company chooses your PR firm to handle its professional services account, you should take the charge very seriously. The reputation of that corporation becomes a great responsibility because its fate could rest in your hands.

A knowledgeable company will select a marketing or PR firm well-versed in handling professional services accounts for its public and media relations.

The PR executive seasoned in the services industries will intuitively know when the time is right to issue a statement on company events to the media and, conversely, when leadership should lie back for a while and refrain from commenting.

While it's usually the best course of action to be transparent with the public on company matters, internal disagreements or small changes in the health of executives—which have no immediate effect on stakeholders and shareholders—are sometimes best kept private for the moment and there is no legal justification for disclosing such matters immediately.

Professional services firm should look for their PR representatives to judge the nuances involved with taking matters public.

In addition to being a great judge of timing, the expert PR practitioner will also know the types of media to which each company message should be communicated.

Unless your company—whether it be in insurance, wealth management, accounting, etc.—is an industry leader such as Ernst & Young, executive moves, C-Suite hires and announcements of new departments and added disciplines are best conveyed to media that covers that particular industry, a.k.a. trade publications.

But if your staff is truly reinventing the wheel in your field, with new technology or unprecedented leaps in profits or services, then the right publicist will know the names of the leading journalists in your industry with whom to be in contact at such top-tier players as Bloomberg, the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*.

A PR veteran in professional services can best gauge whether the business editor of the *Washington Post*, for example, would be interested in speaking with you about your new technology or development and whether such an exchange would lead to stories that would be beneficial to your company's reputation.

Not all press is good press. If your client's new insurance product doesn't offer substantial added protection from earlier versions, do you really want the spokesperson to be quoted everywhere about its implementation?

The corporation, working with its PR staff, should strategically plan which company departments and/or new service offerings or products should court the media. Which are most effective and innovative, and of which are you most proud?

Another key concern for communications experts to consider when working with professional services companies is: Do you have permission to approve an interview or send out a statement from your client's compliance department?

A compliance department is the division of a financial services company that approves what can or can't be said by individuals employed by that concern. Whether it be for an insurance company, a wealth management firm or a government entity, compliance needs to receive all preliminary communications documents for review.

Compliance will look to ensure that a business conforms with external rules and any internal guidelines that upper management has set forth. Financial services companies, and thus their PR representatives, have to have the rights and needs of investors at top of mind and must make sure that they don't impede the fair and transparent movement of markets with any announcements or releases.

Picture it: As a PR professional, you're chomping at the bit to get your wealth manager client to comment on a new rule set forth for 401Ks. After all, your client has spent decades studying retirement vehicles and he or she pays you to secure media coverage.

But before you send that email or pick up the phone to call a reporter, you must think about what to send to earn clearance from the compliance department. Does your client's analysis include both the pros and cons of the new rule or is it heavily biased for investing in 401Ks in the old manner? Does the statement include outright opinion or is it just a careful examination of the new parameters? Make sure that you don't lobby for investing one way or the other when breaking down the change for the average viewer or reader.

These are just some of the issues that

compliance will consider when deciding whether you are free to issue the statement or set up a corresponding interview.

Common compliance risks categories include antitrust, trade sanctions, government contracting, securities, ESG concerns, sexual harassment parameters including LGBTQ+ matters, cybersecurity laws and general ethics.

It's crucial for the compliance department to work in conjunction with the board of directors and C-Suite of any company to make sure the corporation moves ahead with a united front. But many of the risk categories that come under compliance department consideration are external, as described above.

The seasoned corporate communications executive must follow the lead of the compliance department. But the successful corporate PR person will learn to make executive commentary interesting and topical without violating any code of conduct prescribed by compliance.

Frank Tortorici is Director of Media Relations at Marketing Maven and leads the financial/IR and professional services PR from their NY office. He can be reached at frank@marketingmaven.com. ◉



Frank Tortorici

PR news brief

ICR Inc. takes Falcon's Beyond public

ICR Inc. is handling the merger of Falcon's Beyond, an entertainment development company, with Fast Acquisition Corp. in a SPAC deal valued in the \$1 billion range.

Falcon's Beyond specializes in intellectual property creation and expansion and has executed more than \$100 billion worth of story-development projects during its 22-year history.

It has worked with Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, Marvel, NASA, Lego, Microsoft and Cartoon Network.

Falcon's Beyond is currently developing Saudi Arabia's first water theme park.

It plans to receive about \$280 million in cash proceeds following completion of the SPAC transaction.

CEO Cecil Magpuri said Falcon's Beyond will earmark the funds to "scale globally, build out the brick-and-mortar experiential entertainment operations and enhance proprietary content."

ICR's Brett Milotte works the investment community while Keil Decker and Eric Becker handle the media for Falcon's Beyond merger deal.

O'Dwyer's guide to PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

BACKBAY COMMUNICATIONS

20 Park Plaza, Suite 1409
Boston, MA 02116
617/391-0790
www.backbaycommunications.com

14-16 Great Chapel Street
London, W1F 8FL
+44 (0) 203 475 7552

Bill Haynes, Founder & CEO

BackBay Communications is an integrated public relations, thought leadership content development, and digital marketing agency focused on the financial services sector, with special expertise in private equity, asset management, fintech, and impact investing.

BackBay is known for helping companies develop strong brands and drive new business through thought leadership, media relations, research and message development and integrated marketing campaigns. BackBay has very close relationships with the business and trade media. With 30 employees and offices in Boston and London, BackBay serves companies across the United States, Europe and elsewhere, leveraging global partners.

BackBay takes a brand-centric, content-driven approach to developing and executing market positioning and integrated communications programs for financial services firms including marketing strategy, content development, creative design, and multi-channel distribution of company news and perspectives to build brand awareness, credibility and drive new business for our clients.

Our services include strategic integrated marketing plans, media relations, content creation, branding, website development, marketing materials, videos, advertising and social media.

Our industry work and experience includes: Accounting, Advisory, Asset Management, Banks, Consulting, Financial Technology, Hedge Funds, Impact Investing, Insurance, Legal, Private Equity, Venture Capital and Wealth Management.

THE BLISS GROUP

Member of The Next Practice and
The Worldcom Public Relations
Group

500 5th Ave., Suite 1640
New York, NY 10110
212/840-1661
Fax: 212/840-1663
www.theblissgrp.com

Bob Pearson, CEO
Cortney Stapleton and **Michael Roth**, Managing Partners
Keri Toomey, SVP and Leader
of the Business & Professional
Services

Miles Hill, SVP of Professional
Services

Alana Gold, VP of Professional
Services

Liz DeForest, **Reed Handley**,
Alexis Odesser, **Sally Slater**,
Bill Smith, **Megan Tuck**, **Judy Welage**, SVPs
Meghan Busch, **Marisha Chinsky**, **Erin Harrison**, **Courtland Long**, **Quintin Maidment**, **Janice Miller**, **Meghan Powers**, VPs

The Bliss Group is a next-generation marketing communications firm that has been providing strategic counsel and communication services for over 45 years. We work with leading and growing accounting, consulting, B2B tech, SaaS, human capital, legal, risk and nonprofit organizations to define a niche, establish a leading presence, and punch above competitors through differentiated insight and a more innovative approach.

Because there is no "one-size-fits-all" in professional services, our talented team develops specialized marketing communications strategies to ensure that products and perspectives get attention from the desired audiences. The old marketing playbook won't cut it anymore—that's where The Bliss Group steps in.

BOSPAR

Serving 15 locations, including San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Austin.
415/913-7528
success@bospar.com
@BosparPR
vimeo.com/571954519

Chris Boehlke, **Curtis Sparrer**,
Tom Carpenter, Principals
Tricia Heinrich, Chief Content
Officer
Joseph Krasinski, Chief Financial
Officer

Hey! Yeah, you, the person reading this.



Henry Feintuch, president, **Feintuch Communications** and treasurer, **PR World Alliance**.

Is it us, or do all these agency descriptions sound alike?

"We're an integrated global communication and marketing agency that BLAH, BLAH, BLAH."

That's not the thinking that's going to get you noticed.

Yet, the PR industry and business world have noticed Bospar for our work in tech, social media, content marketing and PR:

- *Financial Times*: America's 500 Fastest-Growing Companies list in 2022

- *O'Dwyer's*: 50 Top PR Agencies in 2022

- *O'Dwyer's*: Top 5 San Francisco PR firms in 2022

- *Fast Company's* Best Workplaces for Innovators in 2022

- *Forbes* named us one of the best PR agencies of 2021

Bospar is a team of pushy yet polite tech PR and communications professionals with purpose and relentless joy for what we do. We are comprised of former journalists from social and traditional media and marketing, influencer, financial, SEO, and public affairs experts. As a team, we get smart on contact, build relationships and launch PR campaigns grounded in strategy and infused with creativity.

If you want to get known fast, accelerate adoption, or drive impact, Bospar exceeds all expectations.

With breakthrough coverage and visibility, our clients speed ahead—no "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" about it!

EDELMAN

250 Hudson St., 16th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212/768-0550
Fax: 212/704-0117
www.edelman.com

Edelman is a global communications firm that partners with businesses and organizations to evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Our 6,000 people in more than 60 offices deliver communications strategies that give our clients the confidence to lead and act with certainty, earning the trust of their stakeholders. Our honors include the Cannes Lions Grand Prix for PR; *Advertising Age's* 2019 A-List; the *Holmes Report's* 2018 Global Digital Agency of the Year; and, five times, Glassdoor's Best Places to Work. Since our founding in 1952, we have remained an independent, family-run business. Edelman owns specialty companies Edelman Intelligence (research) and United Entertainment Group (entertainment, sports, lifestyle).

FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS

11 East 44th St., Suite 1201
New York, NY 10017
212/808-4900
henry@feintuchpr.com
www.feintuchcommunications.com
www.PRWorldAlliance.com

Henry Feintuch, President
Doug Wright, Vice President

Seeking external PR support for your professional services organization?

Feintuch Communications, an award-winning PR firm, has extensive experience in working with professional services organizations. Market segments we've supported include legal, accounting, real estate, market research, advertising, branding, digital media and media buying.

We collaborate with our clients to help differentiate and position them; and then package the core essence of their offerings and what makes them a standout in their field. Then, we develop a strategy and smart PR campaign to help build their brand, burnish their thought leadership and generate leads/revenue. Tactics typically include strategic media relations (business, financial, trade), speaking platforms, special events, social media, association marketing and awards/honors programs.

Need support overseas? Our firm is an active and founding member of PR World Alliance (PRWA), an international alliance of premier independent communications consultancies. Clients can leverage our network to implement projects throughout Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our principal is treasurer of PRWA and a past president of PRSA-NY.

**FINANCIAL
PROFILES, INC.**

11601 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1920
Los Angeles, CA 90025
310/622-8220
mconlon@finprofiles.com
www.finprofiles.com

Chicago, IL
San Francisco, CA
New York, NY

Maira Conlon, President

Financial Profiles is a national strategic communications firm that helps companies enhance their profiles, manage their reputations, and build credibility and support among key stakeholder groups. The firm has a demonstrated track record of leveraging best-in-class communications to create value for its clients.

Financial Profiles partners with public and private companies as well as professional services firms to provide expert counsel, value-based positioning and messag-

ing, and access to investors, analysts, and the press. The firm works across industry sectors and has practices dedicated to investor relations, corporate communications, and ESG. Our senior team has deep expertise across a range of communications services, including IPO preparation, M&A support, crisis and issues management, corporate positioning and messaging, ESG benchmarking and program development, media relations, spokesperson training, content creation and design, and more.

Financial Profiles is a WBENC-certified woman owned business.

**FRENCH/WEST/
VAUGHAN**

112 East Hargett St.
Raleigh, NC 27601
919/832-6300
www.fvw-us.com

Rick French, Chairman & CEO
David Gwyn, President / Principal
Natalie Best, Chief Operating Officer / Principal

Founded in 1997, French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency, a distinction it has held since 2001. Its professional services practice area is ranked 13th in the country.

FWV's extensive legal and professional services marketing experience includes work done on behalf of: Edwards Kirby LLP; Smith Anderson; Perkins & Will; HR Florida; NCSHRM; Lynch Mykings; Coats & Bennett, PLLC; Lisa Smithson & Company; Marshall & Taylor, P.C.; Poyner Spruill LLP; Smith Moore LLP; Vickie Milazzo Legal Nursing Services; Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice; and Yates, McLamb & Weyer.

In addition to its diverse range of legal and professional services clients, FWV's passionate team of expert storytellers works with many of the world's leading companies and brands, including Wrangler, ABB, Proximo, Melitta, Volvo Trucks North America, Teen Cancer America and the N.C. Department of Transportation, just to name a few.

Among its partners and affiliates are: FWV Fetching, a pet and animal health PR and marketing agency; AMP3 PR, a fashion, beauty, luxury and lifestyle PR firm (New York City); CGPR, an active lifestyle, outdoor, ski, fashion, technology and travel PR and

consumer brand marketing agency (Greater Boston) and Prix Productions, the company's longform content feature and documentary film division, with offices in Raleigh and L.A. FWV employs more than 130 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and offices around the country.

**GREENTARGET
GLOBAL GROUP**

141 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 3100
Chicago, IL 60604
312/252-4100
www.greentarget.com

Aaron Schoenherr, Founding Partner
John Corey, President & Founding Partner
Laura Miller, Executive VP

Greentarget is a strategic public relations firm that helps professional and financial services organizations create unique positions of authority by helping them to participate skillfully in the conversations that matter most to their key stakeholders. Our multi-channel communications approach empowers professional services firms to increase market share, attract leading talent and achieve a higher purpose.

Founded in Chicago, Greentarget has grown into a world-class team spread across five offices and infused with the same entrepreneurial spirit that led to the firm's creation. Our culture reflects Greentarget's core values: hard work, risk-taking, authenticity, creative thinking and individual and team growth.

We deliver a mix of earned media, content, research, digital and special situations counsel to help clients communicate and influence through normal business cycles and in times of crisis. This powerful combination positions our firm to elevate the brands and reputations of clients across earned, owned, shared and paid media channels.

ICR

685 Third Ave., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10017
646/277-1200
www.icrinc.com

Thomas Ryan, CEO
(tom.ryan@icrinc.com)
Don Duffy, President
(don.duffy@icrinc.com)
Phil Denning, Partner
(phil.denning@icrinc.com)

Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to execute strategic communications and advisory programs that achieve business goals, build awareness and credibility, and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm's highly-differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 1000 clients in approximately 20 industries. ICR's health-care practice operates under the Westwicke brand. Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and advisory firms in North America, maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, San Diego and Beijing. ICR also advises on capital markets transactions through ICR Capital, LLC.

Learn more at icrinc.com. Follow us on Twitter at @ICRPR.

**JOELE FRANK,
WILKINSON
BRIMMER KATCHER**

622 Third Avenue, 36th Floor
New York, NY 10017
212/355-4449
www.joelefrank.com

One California Street, Suite 2275
San Francisco, CA 94111
415/869-3950

Joelle Frank, Managing Partner
Matthew Sherman, President

Joelle Frank provides effective and disciplined communications counsel and support to help our clients take control in advancing their business and strategic objectives.

Our clients range from large, global public companies to smaller, private enterprises across virtually all industries. Our professionals have been recognized by our peers, the financial community and journalists for their quality work, strategic acumen and creative approach to challenging issues.

The firm's practice areas include investor relations, corporate communications and media relations, restructuring and bankruptcy, shareholder activism, crisis communications and special situations, transaction communications, IPOs, spin-offs and SPACs, corporate governance/ESG, litigation support, private equity, and design and digital.

— Continued on page 42

JOELE FRANK

Continued from page 41

Joel Frank consistently ranks among the top PR firms in announced restructurings, M&A transactions, and defense against activist investors.

THE LEVINSON GROUP (TLG)

200 Park Avenue South, Suite 1218
New York, NY 10003

655 15th Street NW, Suite 501
Washington, D.C. 20005

13 Norfolk Place
London W2 1QJ
c/o The Frontline Club
202/244-1785
www.TLGCommunications.com

The Levinson Group (TLG) is a full-service strategic communications and public relations firm with a global reach and impact, specializing in advising C-Suites, Boards of Directors, influential individuals, law firms, and other leaders in corporations, non-profits, and other organizations in their most mission-critical moments.

Since its founding in 2013, TLG has become well known for serving as a strategic partner and advisor in high stakes matters relating to corporate reputation and governance; government response and sensitive investigations; public affairs and issues management; crisis and risk management; litigation communications; and global financial communications including corporate restructuring, executive transitions, mergers, acquisitions, and other transitions. Headquartered in Washington, DC and New York, NY, the firm also has deep expertise advising multiple Am Law 50 law firms.

Many of TLG's team of expert communications advisors come from backgrounds in journalism, politics, government, and the private sector. The team specializes in creating and implementing targeted, always-on communications campaigns crafted to cultivate meaningful engagement with valued stakeholders. TLG's expert team have emerged as industry leaders, securing recognition twice as the "Crisis Manager of the Year" from *PR News*, "Women to Watch" by *PR Week*, and "Top 100 Legal Strategists" by Lawdragon.

Chambers & Partners and *National Law Journal* ranked TLG among the top public relations and

communications firms in the U.S., noting the firm's proven track record in Crisis Management and Litigation Communications. TLG has also been recognized for its commitment to leading social impact programs and for its robust pro bono practice.

MONTIETH & COMPANY

155th E 44th St., Suite 1610
New York, NY 10017
718/514-1383
www.montiethco.com

Montieth M. Illingworth, CEO & Global Managing Partner
Perry Goldman, Director, Professional Services, Crisis Management and Litigation PR
Becky Nye, Director, Financial Services and IR
Katarina Matic, Director, Marketing Communications, Issues Management and Public Affairs
Cameron Penny, Director, EMEA
Joyce Lee, APAC Lead/Hong Kong

Montieth & Company is a global communications consultancy that provides a fully integrated set of communications services and solutions that deliver high-value, measurable outcomes for professional services companies. Our clients include companies in data and analytics, cyber and physical security, compliance, law, corporate shareholder services, renewable energy, proptech, insurtech, the art market, blockchain, AI, and other emerging technologies.

We help our clients achieve influence, realize their ambitions, and solve their most critical problems. Central to our value-add is supporting key client corporate initiatives. These range from seeking private equity investments, making strategic acquisitions, moving into new markets globally, and expanding profitable market share. The firm's expertise in financial services enables us to bring both realms of expertise to assisting our professional services clients on these initiatives.

Montieth & Company's one-of-a-kind, flexible, integrated, and budget-efficient cross-border business model enables us to reach multiple media markets via our global hubs in New York, London, Hong Kong, and our affiliates around the globe.

RFIBINDER

950 3rd Ave., Floor 8
New York, NY 10022

Amy Binder, CEO

Rebecca Binder, President

The RF|Binder Corporate & Financial Services practice has advised and driven integrated communications programs for a broad array of institutions including B2B and B2C efforts for asset management firms, investment funds, financial service firms, banks, FinTech start-ups, lenders, insurance and professional service providers, and more. We build tailored, results-oriented integrated programming that includes managing and repositioning reputations, establishing new thought leaders, developing ESG strategy and corporate social impact programming, and driving impactful communications through narrative and messaging development, media storytelling, stakeholder engagement, service launches, and crisis management. Our team brings a broad understanding of the issues impacting the financial services industry, and has helped some of the world's leading companies navigate market volatility, technological and client transitions, M&A, IPOs, changes to fee structures and expectations, the rise of ESG and sustainable finance, and more. With a dedicated research and insights team, digital marketing and paid media team, and The Grove, our leading-edge creative studio, we develop integrated strategic communications campaigns that elevate and transform brands and drive credibility and trust.

SITRICK AND COMPANY

LOS ANGELES | NEW YORK |
WASHINGTON DC | BOSTON

11999 San Vicente Blvd.
Penthouse
Los Angeles, CA 90049
800/288-8809
mike_sitrick@sitrick.com
www.sitrick.com

Los Angeles 310/788-2850
New York 212/573-6100
Washington, DC 443/977-7215
Boston 508/360-6147

Michael S. Sitrick, Chairman & CEO
Brenda Adrian, Member of the Firm - New York Office
Lt. Gen. H. Steven Blum, (USA Ret.), Managing Director and Practice Lead, Washington, DC

Sitrick And Company is not a traditional public relations firm. Our practice has a specialized focus. We concentrate in corporate, financial, transactional, reputation, litigation and crisis communica-

tion. Although best known for our work in sensitive situations, we have an extensive and successful practice in each of the areas mentioned above.

Since our firm's founding 33 years ago, we have been consistently ranked among the top crisis and strategic communications firms in the nation. The *New York Times* called us "The City's Most Prominent Crisis Management Firm."

The majority of the firm's senior executives are former editors and reporters from news organizations that include the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, Bloomberg, *Barron's*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Forbes*, *San Francisco Examiner*, CBS News, ABC News and NBC News. We also have former practicing attorneys and business executives.

Matters with which we have been involved include reputation restoration, litigation support of all kinds; intellectual property matters, allegations of stock manipulation, wrongful termination, contract disputes, allegations of fraud and fraudulent inducement, wrongful death claims, allegations of illegal drug use, SEC matters, and a variety of other white-collar crimes.

We have also handled criminal and civil cases against companies and their executives for such things as price fixing, insurance fraud, options backdating, antitrust violations, race and sex discrimination, sexual harassment, racism and #MeToo matters. We have a significant mergers and acquisitions and corporate governance practice and have done extensive work combatting short sellers and dealing with data breaches. Other issues include sensitive environmental matters, racketeering cases, family disputes, and high-profile divorces. And, we have helped launch companies both from scratch and through IPOs and SPACs.

STANTON

909 Third Ave.
New York, NY 10022
212/366-5300
astanton@stantonprm.com
www.stantonprm.com

Alex Stanton, CEO
Tom Faust, **Charlyn Lusk**, Managing Directors
Liam Collopy, **Matthew Conroy**, **Michael Goodwin**, **Scott Lessne**, **Katrin Lieberwirth**, SVPs

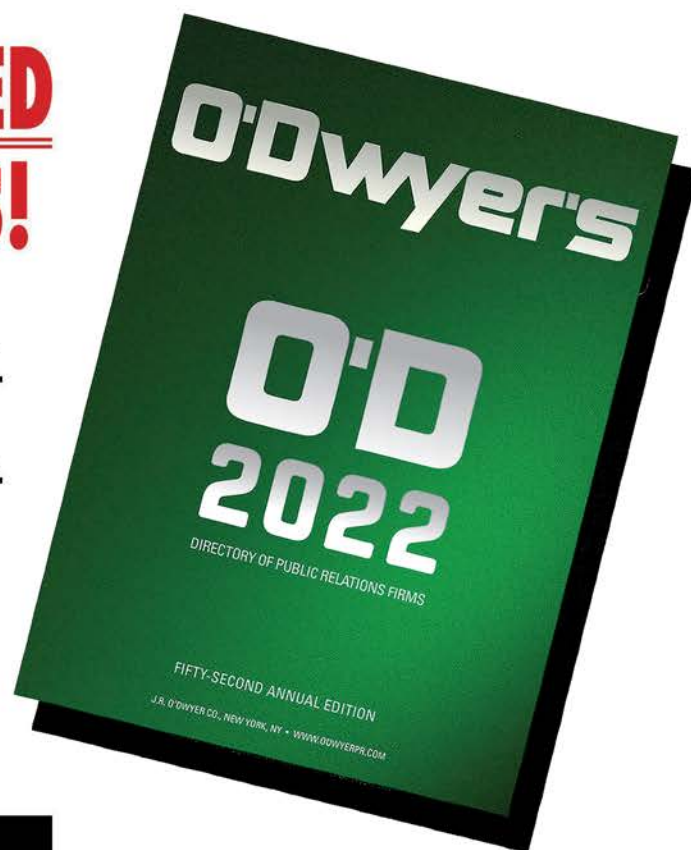
Stanton is a strategic commu-

Continued on page 44

ORDER THE ONLY PRINTED DIRECTORY OF PR FIRMS!

O'Dwyer's is the #1 source for researching public relations firms and outside PR counsel. We've been connecting clients and PR firms for 50 years through our Directory of PR Firms.

You get quick access to large, medium-sized, and small PR firms and even experienced freelancers who work out of their homes. Whether you seek a long-term, worldwide relationship or need extra help on a project, **O'Dwyer's is the place to shop.**



Why O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is so popular:

- ✓ **Has brought billions of dollars in business to PR firms.**
- ✓ *Authoritative industry rankings, based on CPA statements & tax returns.*
- ✓ *Firms ranked by 13 geographical regions in the U.S.*
- ✓ *Easy-to-use. PR firms sorted geographically and by 25 types of PR specialties. Firms listed alphabetically.*
- ✓ *Cross-Client Index: O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is the only place you can look up a company & determine its outside counsel.*
- ✓ *Articles on how to find outside PR counsel, tips for owners on understanding agency valuation & the myths of being acquired, retirement planning, & the industry's renewed call for diversity.*
- ✓ *Leaders ranked in 19 specialized categories: agriculture, automotive/transportation, beauty/fashion/lifestyle, education, energy, entertainment/cultural, environmental/sustainability/greentech/PA, financial PR/IR, food & beverage, healthcare, home furnishings, industrial, non-profits, professional services, purpose/CSR, real estate finance & development, sports, technology, travel & economic development.*

"One of a kind resource for anyone involved in public relations—from clients to potential clients, from recent graduates to experienced practitioners—this is the directory to have close at hand."

—Fraser Seitel, PR consultant, author & New York University adjunct professor

"The O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is the most trusted resource for PR firm profiles and a platform for their brands. I have been a very satisfied user for my 33 years in PR."

—Rick Gould, Gould+Partners

"Up-to-date, indispensable resource. Saves time and money. Every PR pro should have one."

—Robert L. Dilenschneider, The Dilenschneider Group

"A phenomenal job-seeking aid."

—Marie Raperto, CIMSearch

"The most comprehensive PR industry reference tool for clients and agencies. The gold standard in PR industry reference materials."

—Henry P. Feintuch, Feintuch Communications

STANTON

Continued from page 42

nications partner to global firms, mid-size leaders and entrepreneurial enterprises in sectors including financial services/insurance, healthcare, professional services, and technology. We are best known for our work in financial and corporate communications where our combination of smart strategy, innovative thinking and first-class execution produces business-changing results.

Stanton is defined by a practitioner model where our senior professionals spend the majority of their time on client work. Our flexible and collaborative approach and responsive, bureaucracy-free service are the hallmarks of our long-standing client relationships.

With teams in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, Stanton supports clients through strategy, media relations, content development and marketing, design and production, executive visibility, thought leadership, crisis management, analyst relations, social media management and more.

Clients include: 3i, Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty, AavantiBio, AM Best, Assurant, Bain Capital, Berding Weil, Berdon, Carl Marks Advisors, CityMD, Conning Asset Management, CSAA, CVC, EIS, EngageLi, Enhanced Capital, First Eagle Alternative Credit, FFL Partners, GP Bullhound, HGGC, HighVista Strategies, Hometap, Hudl, Immediation, Kline Hill Partners, Leste Group, Lincoln Road Global Management, Lincolnshire Management, Makena Capital, Marin Health, MD7, Mosser Living, OceanSound Partners, One Equity Partners, One Inc., Partners in Performance, Rackspace Technology, SaverLife, Schulte Roth & Zabel, SFW Capital Partners, Summit Health, Sun Capital Partners, T1D Fund, Toorak Capital Partners, Vertical Bridge, Victor Capital, and Winston & Strawn.

TIER ONE PARTNERS

129 South Street
Boston, MA 02111
617/918-7060

209 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60606
708/421-0083
www.tieronepr.com

Marian Hughes, Co-Founder,



From left: Vested CEO & Co-Founder Binna Kim; Chairman & Co-Founder Dan Simon; President, Chief Client Officer & Co-Founder Ishviene Arora

Managing Partner, Chicago
Sue Parente, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner - Boston
Kathy Wilson, Co-Founder,
Managing Partner - Boston

Leaders in financial and professional services turn to Tier One Partners for experience-based and culturally-resonant PR, Content, and Digital Marketing programs that drive measurable results. Our integrated marketing communications programs, with services including strategy, content, communications, creative, and digital, help innovative brands “thrive on change” while remaining true to their purpose and connections with their buyers.

Our unique Agile Communications methodology taps into the collective consciousness of business and consumer audiences and applies fast-acting, creative, and nimble programming to bring a brand’s vision and mission to the forefront—and keep it there.

In today’s environment of rapidly shifting market dynamics, our programs effectively respond to those shifts while keeping a steady course toward business and marketing goals. Change creates opportunity, so we design our plans in quarterly sprints with weekly and monthly adjustment check-ins. This lets us add new strategies and tactics to drive higher, in-the-moment impact. We integrate modern PR and marketing analytics to measure program effectiveness and continuously iterate to test new strategies and approaches.

Our Agile Insights practice helps us spot trends and insert our clients’ perspectives into the nation-

al conversation. We use multiple, cross-agency tools to identify and instantly share potential trends and business issues, so our clients can capitalize on the most relevant thought leadership opportunities.

Co-headquartered in Boston and Chicago, Tier One is a certified women owned business. We’re proud to be the 2022 winner of PProvoke’s SABRE award in the Corporate Social Responsibility category for our work with Ally Financial.

VESTED

31 East 17th Street
New York, NY 10003
917/765-8720

www.fullyvested.com
www.twitter.com/vested
www.linkedin.com/company/fullyvested-llc

Treasure House
19-21 Hatton Garden
London EC1N 8BA
United Kingdom
+44.20.3691.7990

232 Scott St.
San Francisco, CA 94117

150 King Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, Ontario M5H 1J9 Canada

Dan Simon, Chairman, Group Vested, dan@fullyvested.com
Binna Kim, CEO, Group Vested, binna@fullyvested.com
Ishviene Arora, President & Chief Client Officer, Group Vested, ishviene@fullyvested.com
Elspeth Rothwell, CEO, Vested EMEA, elspeth@fullyvested.com
Amber Roberts, CEO, Vested US Professional Services, amber@fullyvested.com

Eric Hazard, Managing Director, CEO of Vested Ventures, eric@fullyvested.com

Christina Bertinelli, Chief Integration Officer, christina@fullyvested.com

Corey Goldman, Managing Director, Vested Canada CEO, cgoldman@fullyvested.com

Vested is a global, award-winning integrated financial services communications and marketing firm with offices in New York, Toronto and London. Vested delivers results-focused programs for brands big and small including Aon, American Express, Bloomberg, CanadaLife, Grayscale, LinkedIn, Morgan Stanley and more. The firm has been recognized as one of America’s Best PR agencies by *Forbes* and Medium PR Agency of the Year by *PR News* and has won Gold for the Best Industry-Focused Agency by the Bulldog Awards. The Vested UK team was also recognized as the CIPR Specialist Consultancy of the Year.

We attract and retain the industry’s best talent through our equity ownership model and entrepreneurial approach—from unlimited vacation days to sabbaticals. Entrepreneurial to the core, Vested launched the industry’s first agency-run investment group, Vested Ventures; created a community for senior financial marcomms professionals to network and share best practices called Financial Narrative; acquired business journalism site Talking Biz News, digital marketing and web development agency Red Lab and financial content firm Scribe; and works closely with its sister agency, Caliber. ○

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

TOP PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2021)	Firm	Net Fees (2021)
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$79,437,000	29. Berk Communications, New York, NY	\$494,500
2. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	11,490,000	30. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	483,500
3. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	10,000,000	31. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	450,590
4. Zeno Group, New York, NY	9,426,768	32. Lansons, New York, NY	440,353
5. Infinite Global, New York, NY	7,325,323	33. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	427,242
6. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	7,128,500	34. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	426,391
7. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	6,986,966	35. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	415,083
8. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	6,738,677	36. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	362,955
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	5,700,000	37. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	354,652
10. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	5,610,790	38. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	304,163
11. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	3,145,292	39. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	286,469
12. Finn Partners, New York, NY	2,500,000	40. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	220,217
13. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,170,881	41. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	189,800
14. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc., New York, NY	2,000,000	42. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	133,500
15. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	1,934,326	43. Franco, Detroit, MI	124,625
16. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,913,000	44. Slide Nine Agency, Columbus, OH	117,895
17. Montith & Company, New York, NY	1,794,304	45. Gold PR & Social Media, Irvine, CA	105,625
18. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	1,172,817	46. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	94,019
19. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	1,169,728	47. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	85,650
20. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	1,130,831	48. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	77,980
21. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	969,556	49. Judge Public Relations, Tampa, FL	70,482
22. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	934,244	50. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	44,000
23. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	812,422	51. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	39,000
24. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	736,631	52. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	30,657
25. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	645,740	53. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	23,087
26. Peppercomm, New York, NY	557,093	54. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	15,100
27. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	526,795	55. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	8,000
28. Virgo PR, New York, NY	500,000	56. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	4,696

The Rodney King doctrine of communications

By Fraser Seitel

In March of 1991, the country was riveted by a video of an unarmed Black man in Los Angeles being pummeled by eight LAPD officers. Rodney King suffered a fractured facial bone, a broken right ankle and multiple lacerations. And in the aftermath of the beating, race riots erupted in major cities across the U.S.



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 riots subsided only after King went on television, pleading for peace. “Why can’t we all just get along,” he famously implored. Thirty years later, in a nation torn by division and polarization, where people jump ugly at the bat of an eye,

Rodney King’s simple declaration has never been more relevant.

“Why can’t we just get along?”

The practice of public relations has always been about moderation—about first listening to opposing views and then responding in a logical and dispassionate manner with the position of your client.

The job of a public relations professional is unique in an organization. The public relations executive is the only one who represents both the best interests of the client, and also the best interests of the client’s publics. That’s why in a crisis, smart officials turn to public relations counselors rather than lawyers, so the views of all sides—not just the client—are considered before taking action.

Today, of course, with more people dug in on one side or the other, it’s much more difficult to be objective, counsel moderation, “just get along” with your adversaries. If you work for a client like Donald Trump or Bernie Sanders or Chik-fil-A or Ben & Jerry’s, neutrality and even-handedness are probably the last qualities your employer will tolerate.

Nonetheless, public relations ought to be about, well, “relations.” That is, building rapport and trust even with those who hold opposing views. This is particularly the case today when dealing with the media.

In 2022, media relations remains a foun-

dational skill for successful public relations people. While knowledge of social media is also obligatory for today’s public relations professional, major clients still care deeply about how they’re treated by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, TV networks, cable news, TMZ and all the rest of the so-called mainstream media.

For public relations people, dealing effectively with these traditional media has become another polarized minefield. Journalists—who once prided themselves on being “objective”—are today, by and large, just as biased and one-sided as the rest of society. And they make no bones about it.

So, if you’re on the wrong side of a Paul Krugman, or Maggie Haberman at the *New York Times*, or a Sean Hannity or Laura Ingraham at Fox News, or a Rachel Maddow, or Joy Reid at MSNBC, or a Jim Acosta or Don Lemon at CNN—forget about it.

You’re wasting your time. They’re simply not interested in listening to your side of an argument. In the old days, responsible publications strictly forbade their reporters from double-dipping as “contributors” to broadcast competitors.

Today, the practice is commonplace, with reporters primarily concerned about cultivating their own, individual “brand.” And if a reporter for the *Times* or the *Post* or another major outlet is also employed at right-leaning Fox or left-leaning MSNBC or CNN, they’re unlikely to approach their reporting with much neutrality.

The sad fact is that the default position for most mainstream “journalists” today is to dismiss out-of-hand any argument that doesn’t agree with their own predetermined bias. A dwindling number of reporters or editors are willing even to listen to an opposing argument.

But there are still a few independent stalwarts left, even among the deeply-partisan cable news anchors. These three, in particular, stand above all others.

Brett Baier, Fox News

Before Brett Baier, there was Chris Wallace. Wallace, the son of “60 Minutes” Mike, prided himself on being a lone voice of objectivity on right-wing Fox. But as his star ascended, Wallace, like others around him—see Tucker Carlson—got a bit full of himself. And when he finally abandoned ship earlier this year to grab the brass ring at CNN’s ill-fated streaming service, Baier slid right in to replace him at Fox.

As host of Fox’s nightly “Special Report,” Baier plays most things right down the middle, distinguishing himself by featur-

ing guests who denounce Donald Trump for January 6 and others who denounce Joe Biden for incoherent energy policy. And unlike his predecessor, Wallace, and most of his Fox News colleagues, Baier never flashes arrogance or makes the proceedings about himself.

Erin Burnett, CNN

CNN, which cashed in for four years on a format of “anti-Trump all-the-time,” is shifting emphasis. In February, the network brought in buttoned-up TV executive Chris Licht to replace glitzy, headline-grabbing Jeff Zucker as President. Licht described his challenge as one of restoring more hard news and offering a less sensationalistic focus at CNN.

Burnett represents that hard news focus. She spent her formative years reporting financial news at both Bloomberg and CNBC, interviewing and being friendly with business and financial leaders, most of whom resided firmly in conservative territory. Accordingly, Burnett’s nightly “Out Front” program discusses the news of the day in a generally straightforward manner.

While Burnett and her fellow anchors continue to exhibit little on-air love for Donald Trump—and who can blame them?—it’s likely that under Licht’s leadership, other CNN veterans like Anderson Cooper and Wolf Blitzer will also become increasingly more dispassionate in their commentary.

Ari Melber, MSNBC

In the vast left-wing wasteland that is MSNBC, Ari Melber is a beacon of sanity.

How Melber sneaked through the cracks to land his own show is anybody’s guess. But there he is every night, surrounded by the likes of GOP turncoat Nicole Wallace and the right Rev. Al Sharpton, hosting “The Beat,” a refreshingly-apolitical examination of the issues of the day.

It’s a credit to Melber that he’s just about the only MSNBC anchor who attracts Republicans as well as Democrats as guests. A former courtroom lawyer, Melber disdains the faux outrage that fuels his colleagues and instead politely pushes and probes, forcing interviewees to abandon their talking points and expose their true beliefs.

Baier, Burnett and Melber are three cable journalists who will give public relations clients a fair hearing because they accept the time-honored proposition that one can be skeptical and challenging without being hostile and rude.

In other words, a successful professional communicator can also “just get along.” ○

Driving better operational efficiency at your agency

By Dominic Rovano

How smoothly is your business operating? Do you find it challenging to manage client information or track the status of projects? Has it become more difficult to collaborate with colleagues in a remote environment? Before you can produce quality work for your clients, your internal processes should be mapped out, standardized and refined.



Dominic Rovano, CPA, is a Co-Partner in Charge of Janover LLC's New York City office. He leads the Professional Services group, and helps its clients satisfy their financial-reporting requirements successfully by providing assurance, tax and other advisory services.

Efficient internal processes help you stay nimble, prepared and focused on your clients while allowing you to make better business decisions. Teams that spend less time dwelling

on operational details tend to have more time to focus on producing higher-quality work. When your business is running smoothly, it also enables you to think more strategically and grow your business. This is especially important when you are operating in a strong labor market. The war for talent has forced firms to find new ways to serve their clients or create capacity on the operations side by outsourcing.

In our July article, we discussed areas to consider outsourcing such as HR and payroll, IT and accounting, but there are other areas more closely tied to the operations of your core business and client management that, when refined, can optimize your efficiency and allow you to focus on delivering the best work to clients. Here are six different areas of your day-to-day business to consider evaluating and refining:

Establish your proposal process

Your relationship with clients often begins at the proposal stage, and responding to a potential client's RFP in a timely and professional manner is essential. Instead of scrambling to put together a proposal, which can disrupt work, prepare your proposal process and tools for putting it together ahead of time. This includes segmenting and preparing case studies and work examples that align specifically with different clients' business type and vision. Map out the

workflow that identifies who on the team is responsible for gathering input and putting the proposal together. Ensure you have an established pricing model that can be used as a starting point for putting together the proposed fees for the engagement.

Implement CRM

If you're still manually aggregating all client information in a spreadsheet and communicating with clients via untracked, one-off emails, consider incorporating a Customer Relationship Management tool to manage your client relationships. By implementing a CRM, you can centralize and categorize all client data and improve and track your client and prospect communications. CRMs allow for a more robust database of all client information, saving you time spent collecting client information across various platforms and applications. Having access to this information across your team, no matter where they're working, will cause less disruptions throughout the workday. It will also save you time if an employee leaves; all client information is stored directly in the CRM, eliminating the process of combing through a prior employee's email and notes to assemble all client information.

Understand your process

As your firm grows, understanding where work is distributed among employees is crucial, especially as remote work continues to grow. Even small agencies, with limited resources and employees, should have a firm grasp of how their project management process operates. Whether you hire a designated project manager or implement a project management tool, refining your project workflow and logically mapping out your creative steps can help you save time and money, prevent internal tension and eliminate on-the-spot guesswork. Be sure to include key elements, including project briefing, first draft, revisions and feedback, project launch and performance analysis. This can also be an important tool to present to clients: it allows you to set an expectation for your work timeline and update them on your current projects.

Introduce productive collaboration tools

Effective collaboration is key in a creative agency. It fosters an environment of innovation, artistry and out-of-the-box thinking. However, as many employers are hiring remote workers or allowing their employees to work from home, collaboration can be stifled and subdued. Introducing collaboration tools, such as a chat and video function or live editing features, allows you to mimic an environment of in-person creativity. If you're encouraging employees to return

to the office, consider using that time for brainstorming or strategy planning sessions. Collaboration tools can also be an effective means of managing client communications, rather than calling or emailing to get a quick answer.

Improve your time tracking process

Tracking your time spent on a project or client is important from a billing aspect, but it's important to understand how you're spending your time from a measuring profitability standpoint as well. Understanding and identifying which type of work brings in the most profit—for less work—by implementing an effective time tracking tool can help you make better business decisions in the future. You can't manage what you can't measure.

Stop overservicing your accounts!

This one might seem like an obvious comment, but it is worth mentioning. Overservicing an account not only leads to inefficiency, but it lowers profitability and can negatively impact the morale of your team. Whether you like it or not, your team knows when you're giving away work by overservicing an account. Don't be afraid to have these tough conversations with your clients. They are most likely feeling the same pressures, and they understand you are running a business as well. Your teams have spent years building their knowledge about the industries you serve. Don't create inefficiencies by giving it away for free.

Understanding and refining your internal processes is crucial in running a productive, collaborative and efficient organization. Implementing these changes on the back end can help improve your internal operational efficiency and free you up to focus on quality work for your clients. ○

Media brief

Nonprofit news sector is growing

The Institute for Nonprofit News reports that 135 nonprofit news outlets launched between 2017 and 2021, up from 69 between 2012 and 2016.

The 2022 INN Index Report finds that smaller, local news organizations are driving a lot of that growth. While two out of 10 nonprofit news organizations were local in 2017, that percentage rose to four out of 10 by 2021.

The Report estimates that by 2024, local outlets will make up the majority of nonprofit news organizations. In addition, two-thirds of nonprofit news organizations reported that their revenue increased from 2017 to 2021, with a median growth rate of 25 percent.

INN says that the major challenges facing nonprofit news platforms in the near future include attracting and retaining diverse staffs, access to philanthropic support for smaller and emerging newsrooms, and the cultivation of market-based revenue.

Teneo ups ex House speaker Ryan to vice chair

Teneo promotes former Speaker of the House Paul Ryan to Vice Chairman. Ryan joined Teneo as a Senior Advisor in October 2020. He is also a Partner at private equity firm Solamere Capital, President of the American Idea Foundation and Visiting Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

In his new role, Ryan will work closely with the firm's senior leadership team to advise clients around the world and support its ongoing growth. "Paul has unparalleled insights and experience across a wide range of key business, economic, policy and geopolitical issues," said Teneo CEO Paul Keary. "He will add significant value to Teneo clients around the world." ○



Paul Ryan

Uber's ex-European lobbyist spills the beans

Mark MacGann, who was Uber's chief European lobbyist from 2014 to 2016, outed himself as the whistleblower who leaked 124,000 documents to the Guardian that documented the ridesharing company's aggressive tactics in Europe.

The British paper shared the so-called "Uber Files" with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and top newspapers such as the *Washington Post*.

In a video interview with the *Guardian* released July 11, MacGann took responsibility for "telling people that they should change the rules because drivers were going to benefit and people were going to get so much economic opportunity."

He said Uber "actually sold people a lie," and Uber was willing "to break all the rules and use its money and its power, to impact, to destroy."

Jill Hazelbaker, Uber's Senior VP for public affairs, admitted the company made plenty of mistakes prior to 2017.

"These mistakes culminated in one of the most infamous reckonings in the history of corporate America," she said in a statement, leading to an "enormous amount of public scrutiny, a number of high-profile lawsuits, multiple government investigations and the terminations of several senior executives."

Prior to Uber, MacGann was Senior VP and Head of Government Relations and Advocacy at the New York Stock Exchange, head of public affairs for the EMEA region at Weber Shandwick, Associate Partner at Brunswick Group and consultant at Havas.

He launched Moonshot Ventures in Ireland in 2016. ○

Grubhub establishes D.C. outpost

Grubhub Holdings has opened its first D.C. lobbying office, which will initially handle labor issues pertaining to the food delivery service.

Ashley De Smeth, who served in the Obama White House as an inter-agency liaison, heads the post as Director of Federal Affairs.

Prior to Grubhub, De Smeth was head of PA & policy communications at Postmates, communications director for the American



Mark MacGann



Federation of Government Employees and Director of Strategic Communications & PA at the National League of Cities.

Dominic Sanchez, a one-time staffer to Democratic Senators Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) and Chris Van Hollen (MD), backstops De Smeth.

Grubhub is part of Amsterdam-based Just Eat Takeaway. The Dutch company acquired Grubhub in 2020 via an all-stock deal worth \$7.3 billion, creating the world's largest food delivery service operation. ○

Kimberly-Clark signs Prime Policy Group

Kimberly-Clark has signed on Prime Policy Group as its first outside Washington lobbyist.

The Irving, TX-based consumer giant is celebrating its 150th anniversary and is celebrating by doubling down on its "Better Care for a Better World" purpose.

Its Huggies, Kleenex, Scott, Kotex, Cottonelle, Poise, Depend, Andrex, Pull-Ups, GoodNites, Intimus, Neve, Plenitud, Sweetie and Softex brands hold the No. 1 or No. 2 market positions in the 80 countries where they are sold.

The \$19.4 billion company uses PPG for input on environmental, climate change, plastics regulations, sanctions, tariffs and immigration issues.

PPG's lobbying team includes international head Karen Antebi, who was Chief of Staff to Mexico's Deputy Secretary of Commerce; Trade Lead Casie Daugherty; Andrew Terp, ex-Aide to Indiana Republican Senator Todd Young; and Ann Adler, Chief of Staff to the late Democratic Senator Robert Byrd. ○

Ex-Clinton spokesperson joins Levinson Group

Matt McKenna, who was spokesperson for President Bill Clinton, has joined The Levinson Group as a Senior Advisor.

From 2007 to 2015, McKenna handled communications, media, PR and reputation management for the Clinton family, Clinton Foundation and Clinton Global Initiative.

He also got involved in the preparation of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign.

McKenna exited the Clinton job for the head of North American communications for Uber.

He went on to co-found the Greenbrier boutique PR firm that is part of the Messina Group.

Molly Levinson launched TLG in 2013. ○



Matt McKenna

Edelman pitches Saudi AI Summit

Edelman has been hired to promote the Global AI Summit that is slated for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from Sept. 13 to Sept. 15. Hosted by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the Summit's theme is to "reimagine how AI can be a force for good—one that elevates humanity."

Edelman's job is to provide communications and media relations support in the U.S. for the Summit.

It will design overall communications strategy, create messaging and provide on-site support.

The firm's three-month contract went into effect June 26 and is worth \$210,000.

The pact is with Veyron Co., a Riyadh-based advertising agency that counts the Saudi Data Artificial Intelligence Agency as a client.

Edelman's Summit team includes Daniel Workman (Senior VP), Christopher Hedquist (VP-Health PA), Aaron Guiterman (Managing Director/Chief Innovation Officer), Adam Ontiveros Oberg (Senior Analyst) and Saveri Nandigama (Analyst). ○

Kobre + Kim reps Russian oligarch

Kobre & Kim has agreed to advise Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich on judicial and administrative proceedings.

Abramovich has been sanctioned by the UK and European Union for his cozy ties with Russia's strongman Vladimir Putin.

At the request of Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky, the US did not sanction the billionaire.

American officials did issue a warrant in June to seize Abramovich's Boeing 787 Dreamliner and Gulfstream jet because they flew to Russia.

In its federal filing, K&K notes that Abramovich is acting as a

mediator in the peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. Both countries approved of his role as mediator.

Abramovich "has been heavily involved in advocating for, and coordinating the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other humanitarian rescue missions," the filing notes.

K+K's registration statement says Abramovich is a citizen of Russia, Israel and Portugal.

He chairs the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia and serves as a trustee of the Moscow Jewish Museum.

During the past 15 years, Abramovich has donated more than \$500 million to Jewish causes throughout the world. ○

Brunswick Group boosts Abu Dhabi culture dept.

Brunswick Group has signed a \$313,000 one-year pact to provide PR services to Abu Dhabi's Department of Culture and Tourism.

The work entails "horizon scanning" (e.g., monitoring relevant international and local news related to DCT), strategic planning, crisis and issues management and leadership positioning, according to the agreement.

Brunswick will conduct an ongoing review of the overarching integrated communications strategy for leadership, including the corporate narrative, key messages, themes, content calendar and distribution channels based on business intelligence from DCT.

It will analyze up to six presentations prepared for DCT's chairman, undersecretary and strategic communications advisor and review a maximum of 24 press releases prepared by the Department.

The firm will check out DCT's crisis manual, draft recommendations for improvement and provide counsel around issues and crises for the initial 48 hours. ○

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.

KRL International, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered July 8, 2022 for Liberia Maritime Authority**, Monrovia, Liberia, regarding assisting the client with receiving full certification with the International Maritime Organization, assisting in building training facilities and maritime security.

Luxcore, Ltd., New York, N.Y., **registered July 8, 2022 for Consulate General of Luxembourg** in New York, New York, N.Y., concerning supporting trade missions to the United States and Canada by members of the Luxembourg government.

Polish Institute of International Affairs, Washington, D.C. Office LLC, **registered July 7, 2022 for Polish Institute of International Affairs**, Warsaw, Poland, regarding providing counsel and guidance on relations with the U.S. government and policy and academic communities in the United States.

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.

Capitol Tax Partners, LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered July 18, 2022 for Intel Corp.**, Santa Clara, Calif. about issues related to international tax policy and research and development incentives.

The Duberstein Group Inc., Washington, D.C., **registered July 19, 2022 for Samsung Semiconductor, Inc.**, San Jose, Calif., concerning CHIPS for America Act and facilitating American-built semiconductors.

High Street Strategies LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered July 20, 2022 for Cleanwater Wind LLC**, Boston, Mass., with regard to offshore wind issues and clean energy tax issues.

List your firm in PR's No.1 online database

O'Dwyer's has been linking clients and PR firms for 53 years. This will be the best money you'll ever spend for marketing.



j public relations

J Public Relations

530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018
212/924-3600
letstalk@jpublicrelations.com
www.jpublicrelations.com
Employees: 56. Founded: 2005.

Agency Statement:

A global communications agency with a specialization in public relations, social media, content creation and digital marketing. With 55+ team members across four U.S. offices including New York City, San Diego, Los Angeles and Nashville, two international offices in London and Toronto, plus a presence in Denver and Arizona, JPR is a trusted leader in integrated media relations, social media and brand strategy, trend forecasting, guest programming, brand partnerships, experiential activations, influencer engagement and crisis communications.

Established in 2005, JPR has consistently risen as a leader in the travel and hospitality spaces. Today, the agency's growing portfolio spans many markets outside of travel and hospitality, with clients in lifestyle, culinary, real estate, and wellness. JPR's global roster includes more than 120+ hotels in the U.S., U.K. and throughout Europe, Mexico, Caribbean, Africa and more. JPR represents destinations such as North Carolina and Utah as well as flagship hospitality brands including Hilton Luxury Brands, Virgin Limited Edition, Relais & Châteaux, Vail Hospitality and Iconic Luxury Hotels.

JPR is continuously listed on the Observer's annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms and Crain's "Best Places to Work in New York City." The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by PR News and received a Five Star rating in Forbes inaugural list of "America's Best PR Agencies," in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success. An industry innovator, JPR became the first travel PR agency to launch a podcast in 2018, Priority Status.

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

Office Locations:

New York

530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018
212/924-3600

San Diego

2341 Fifth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101
619/255-7069

Los Angeles

429 Santa Monica Blvd., #280
Santa Monica, CA 90401
310/722-7066

London

123 Buckingham Palace Rd.
Victoria, London SW1W 9SH, UK
+44 (020) 3890 5838

Clients Include:

Adare Manor - Co. Limerick, Ireland
Africa Adventure Consultants
Andronis Exclusive (multiple properties) - Santorini, Greece
Château du Grand-Luce - Loire Valley, France
Condado Vanderbilt - San Juan, PR



Jamie Sigler O'Grady,
Sarah Evans, partners

\$350 enhanced listing includes your logo and up to 75 words describing your unique background and services.

Plus, you can add **pictures of execs, work done for clients** and **embed a video greeting** for those viewing your page on odwyerpr.com, visited 60,000 times per month.

Our data base is **broken down geographically** (including branch offices) and by 25 specialties such as healthcare, social media, food, technology, travel and finance.

For \$350 you get	Value
Logo and agency statement in the "Find the Right PR Firm" section of odwyerpr.com . Check out some of the current entries as a guide to preparing your own.	\$350
One year of access to odwyerpr.com . Stay on top of the latest industry news, professional developments and commentary from our editors as well as many outside contributors. Get a leg up on the competition by consulting our exclusive listing of new RFPs.	\$295
One-year subscription to O'Dwyer's magazine, now in its 35th year. Each issue covers not only current topics and stories, but focuses on one of the PR specialties, such as healthcare, food, technology or finance. PR firms are invited to profile their special practices in each issue.	\$60

Total/Value **\$715**

Submit online at odwpr.us/list-your-firm

or contact Melissa Werbel, Director of Research, 646/843-2082, melissa@odwyerpr.com

O'Dwyer's **CAREER CENTER** at
jobs.odwyerpr.com



**JOB SEEKERS,
YOUR NEXT
PUBLIC RELATIONS
CAREER OPPORTUNITY
COULD BE CLOSER
THAN YOU THINK.**

JOB SEEKER BENEFITS

- ▶ **Access** to high quality, relevant job postings. No more wading through postings that aren't applicable to your expertise.
- ▶ **Personalized job alerts** notify you of relevant job opportunities.
- ▶ **Career management**—you have complete control over your passive or active job search. Upload multiple resumes and cover letters, add notes on employers or communicate anonymously with employers.
- ▶ **Anonymous resume bank** protects your confidential information. Your resume will be displayed for employers to view EXCEPT your identity and contact information, which will remain confidential until you are ready to reveal it.
- ▶ **Value-added benefits** of career coaching, resume services, education/training, articles and advice, resume critique, resume writing and career assessment test services.

O'Dwyer's

jobs.odwyerpr.com

jobs.odwyerpr.com



Communications that pay dividends

FINN Partners is proud to have one of the world's top PR and marketing financial services practices.

We work with game changers, risk takers, policy makers and status quo breakers, fusing strategy, creativity and vast media connections to fuel successful business outcomes. Serving B2B, B2C, public, and private clients alike, across a range of sectors that include retail and commercial banking, investment banking and trading, insurance, real estate, private equity, fintech and more, it's all in a day's work at FINN Partners.

Find out more at finnpartners.com

FINN
PARTNERS