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ENVIRONMENTAL PR & PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIAL

Environmental crisis in a digital age

PR's role in sustainability

PR for energy and petrochemical firms

Why cyberattacks put more than data at risk

How to hire a PR firm

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February 2016

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THE
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AWARDS



Public health should be focus of Flint crisis response

The health crisis unfolding in Flint, Michigan, after toxic levels of lead were found in that city's drinking water, is a tale of inept leadership, unfathomable government neglect, and a gross failure on behalf of state and local officials to inform and ultimately protect the public.

Now that professional PR support has been called in to aid leaders' mishandling of the incident, let's hope those involved will do the right thing, and this crisis will be managed with a primary focus on public health and education, coupled with a needed thematic component of accountability and admissions of wrongdoing.

The incident has a complicated back-story. Emergency management hired by the state to aid poverty-ravished Flint in 2013 approved a decision to save money by redirecting Flint's water supply from the Detroit system to a cheaper interim source in the Flint River, while a new pipeline would be constructed to connect Flint to Lake Huron. The river's corrosive waters apparently caused lead to be leached from aging pipes in Flint's delivery system, resulting in murky, foul-smelling water. When residents complained, city officials responded with what can be characterized as polite indifference. State officials similarly dragged their heels before agreeing to test Flint's water supply, though regional EPA officials warned that the methods employed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality could render inaccurate findings. Meanwhile, one EPA official in early 2015 alerted the agency to troubling findings in Flint's water, but his report went virtually ignored, and wasn't made public until the end of the year.

In September, a study conducted by Flint's Hurley Medical Center reported that average lead levels found in blood tests of Flint children had nearly doubled. The MDEQ, which in June had completed its Flint water study and concluded to EPA officials that the water was safe, dismissed those findings. Then, a September investigation conducted by the ACLU in concert with Virginia Tech researchers found Flint's water to be "very corrosive," with lead levels in some areas surpassing more than 10,000 parts per billion. (EPA standards mandate safe lead levels at or below only 15 parts per billion.) Investigators also echoed the EPA's earlier warnings that the MDEQ may have utilized flawed testing that could make it appear as though Flint's water was in compliance with federal EPA standards. Virginia Tech water quality expert Marc Edwards later said authorities' actions reveal "a new level of arrogance and uncaring that I have never encountered."

The inevitable bureaucratic fallout ensued. Resignations were posted across the board: a Flint public works director, a regional EPA administrator, and two MDEQ officials stepped down from their positions. A class action lawsuit was filed against the state, and the U.S. Attorney's Office is now investigating the incident. Meanwhile, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder in October gathered \$12 million to return Flint's water supply to the Detroit system, and Flint Mayor Karen Weaver in December categorized the city a state of emergency, a designation backed by Snyder and President Obama, the latter of whom slated \$5 million in federal funds to aid authorities. More than \$1 million has also been allotted for lead filters to be distributed to Flint residents, and the National Guard has been brought in to disburse bottled water.

Governor Snyder on January 19 publicly apologized to the residents of Flint, and the following day released 274 pages of governor's office emails regarding the incident as a gesture of transparency. That act may have done more harm than good, as the *New York Times* on January 20 reported that those emails offered a damning indictment of the state's baffling indifference on the issue, with government officials discounting Flint residents' concerns, even comparing the city's complaints to games of "political football."

The governor's office has now brought in top-shelf PR counsel to aid with the fallout, in the form of public affairs firm Mercury and Finn Partners executive Bill Nowling, who fielded communications for Detroit during that city's 2014 bankruptcy.

Snyder's recent apology and transparency are steps in the right direction, but the damage has been done, both to Flint's pipes and its citizens' health. And while Flint's water remains undrinkable, state and local leaders have sent equally corrosive messages to the citizens of Flint in their abject neglect: we will slash public services and leave residents to deal with the fallout; our agencies will suppress findings and pass the buck across municipalities when they're discovered; the wellbeing and safety of poor, majority-minority cities are insignificant when compared to residents in our wealthy suburbs.

Now that a PR salvo is underway, let's hope communications strategies ignore officials' professional reputations or messages redirecting blame and instead stress accountability and promises to fix the situation. Own up to the negligence, concede that what the state and the region's health agencies did was wrong, and list the steps being taken to repair this disaster. Answer why officials were slow to respond, admit that they left the city of Flint in incompetent hands and exhibited cavalier disregard for the health and wellbeing of its citizens, and promise to serve, promise to help, promise to do something about it. At this point, the best public relations program will address Michigan's myriad public failures. ○

— Jon Gingerich



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CERTIFICATIONS:



Publicist resigns amid harassment allegations

A known music publicist has stepped down from his agency following numerous claims of sexual misconduct.

By Jon Gingerich

Heathcliff Berru, CEO of Los Angeles-based Life Or Death PR, has stepped down from his agency amid numerous claims of sexual misconduct made by clients and associates.

Berru founded Life Or Death PR in 2008. The agency boasts a wide roster of popular musical talent, including Cloud Nothings, D'Angelo, Earl Sweatshirt, GZA, D.I.I.V., Kelela, Killer Mike, Of Montreal, Health and Odd Future.

The firestorm of accusations began Monday evening, when Amber Coffman, singer and guitarist for Brooklyn-based band Dirty Projectors, posted a series of tweets detailing an inappropriate encounter she'd experienced with Berru. Coffman also revealed that "many women have had scary stories about him for years but are scared to speak up."

Coffman's accusations inspired other women to share similar accounts regarding unwanted advances made by the publicist. Singer-songwriter Chelsea Wolfe, singer Roxy Lange, Best Coast member Bethany

Cosentino, Tearist member Yasmine Kittles, Bonnaroo coordinator Martika Finch, former MTV host Shirley Braha and PR agency Danger Village owner Beth Martinez have since reported harassment by Berru.

After news of Coffman's experiences began circulating, Life Or Death PR clients Wavves, Speedy Ortiz, D.I.I.V., singer-songwriters Kelela and D'Angelo all severed ties with the agency. The band Wavves posted a tweet featuring Donald Trump with a caption that read, "your fired!" (sic).

Life or Death PR on January 19 issued a statement, reporting that Berru has stepped down as CEO of the agency.

"Life or Death has a zero tolerance policy for the type of conduct alleged in today's on-line postings. We take these allegations very seriously," the statement read. "We are taking measures to ensure that the alleged behavior did not, and will not, make its way into company operations or impact our commitment to promoting art and assisting our clients."

Berru later released his own statement, which was posted in full on January 20 by entertainment publisher *Billboard*.

"I am deeply sorry for those who I have offended by my actions and how I have made certain women feel. If I crossed the line of decency or respectfulness in situations when I was drunk and under the influence, there is no excuse of course," Berru stated.

Berru also said that he has struggled with alcohol and drug addiction for some time, and will be checking into a rehabilitation facility.

When asked to clarify whether Berru still maintains company ownership, blogging site Jezebel on January 20 reported that the agency said he is "no longer associated with the company in any way."

Life Or Death PR President Nick Dierl announced on Twitter on January 21 that "There will be a new venture imminently that bears no ties to Heathcliff Berru or the Life or Death name."

Queries to Life Or Death PR's website now result in a bare page featuring the words "This website is under maintenance." ○

Nasdaq launches new IR platform

Nasdaq has unveiled Nasdaq IR Insight, the stock exchange's next generation platform for investor relations pros.

By Jon Gingerich

Nasdaq has launched Nasdaq IR Insight, the stock exchange's next generation platform designed for financial executives and investor relations pros.

According to Nasdaq executives in a statement, IR Insight was built through an extensive collaboration process with IRO clients and is designed to improve data intelligence and enhance decision making in the IR environment, by offering "an integrated, contextualized view of those activities in an intuitive user interface."

Described as a "one-stop hub" for financial executives, IR Insight allows listed companies to communicate quickly and accurately, and enables financial executives to monitor and analyze the markets, as well as companies' and peers' stock.

The platform features a customizable dashboard allowing financial pros to hone in on variables affecting stock, offers sell-side analysis and contact data for buy-side firms, and facilitates investor targeting by offering monitor outreach efforts and insight into factors behind trading decisions.

The platform also allows financial pros to incorporate day-to-day workflow, plan investor meetings and manage company events via tools that are linkable to Microsoft products.

The new platform, which is being offered by Nasdaq subsidiary Nasdaq Corporate Solutions, succeeds former platform Thomson One, which Nasdaq acquired in 2013 when it purchased Thomson Reuters Corp's IR, PR and multimedia divisions in a deal worth a reported \$390 million.

Nasdaq president and COO Adena Friedman said IR Insight would "greatly advance the ability for public companies to manage their investor relations efforts around the globe."

"We have invested a significant amount of financial and intellectual capital to deeply understand what the senior executive suite needs in terms of intelligence and workflows to engage successfully with their investors," Friedman said. "Not only do we think that Nasdaq IR Insight will tremendously improve efficiency in investor inter-

actions, we also believe the platform will allow financial executives to elevate their work by providing actionable intelligence and market insights."

The launch marks Nasdaq's first phase in wider rollout, as the stock exchange later plans to expand the platform's technology and design across its suite of products. ○

Media news brief

Al Jazeera America to cease operations

The U.S. cable news network belonging to Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera on Jan. 13 announced that it would shutter its U.S. newsroom, ceasing all U.S. news and digital operations by April 30.

The announcement was made during a staff meeting. The U.S. network employs approximately 400. Politico reported that severance packages and outplacement services would be prepared for employees.

Al Jazeera, which is owned by the Qatar government and is among the largest news organizations in the world, established its U.S. presence in late 2012 with its \$500 million acquisition of cable news network Current TV, which was co-founded by Al Gore.

Poor ratings and dwindling profits hurt the cable news network, and in 2014 key staff resigned from their posts, and a series of lawsuits by former employees who alleged management engaged in sexual discrimination and anti-Semitism.

Al Jazeera said it has plans to expand its digital presence in the U.S. after its newsroom closes.

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What's the PR practitioner's role in sustainability?

Though it's taken a long time for sustainability efforts to go mainstream, a sizable cultural shift has occurred. Organizations developing integrated communication campaigns should now realize that sustainability has moved past merely being a trend, and is now part of a necessary strategy.

By John Kriisiukenas

I remember reading an article at my first job out of college about the year's biggest trend. The concept was "green" and it was going to be an integral part of how companies and communications professionals would do business in the future.

Remarkably enough, the year was 1990. I'm not sure a trend is supposed to take nearly 30 years to come to fruition. Sustainability efforts have taken a long time to finally make it into the mainstream consciousness, for several reasons.

Many business leaders at the beginning of the 21st Century still subscribed to Milton Friedman's dismissal of any business with a "social conscience" as "unadulterated socialism," and believed that businesses' responsibility is to their shareholders. It is a very different sentiment from President Kennedy's eloquent quote that "Our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future. And we are all mortal."

For decades, sustainability has been seen as a somewhat adversarial forum, with the adage of "doing good while doing well" being just that, an adage. However, when you now look at the corporate landscape you can see a sizable shift has occurred.

As Freya Williams states in her book "Green Giants," some of the most respected billion dollar companies have gotten there from a business plan of sustainability and social good. Companies from all sectors have been integrating an authentic wider purpose into their brand believing it is a source of competitive advantage which, in turn, will lead to long-term profitability.

PR leads the charge

As an industry, sustainability marketing is one of the best things to happen to public relations, as its overall goal is one that is perfectly aligned with public relations as a whole. Sustainability marketing is about delivering greater value to customers and ensuring that your brand remains viable over time—all actions supported and enhanced by vibrant public relations campaigns.

For PR practitioners, focusing on sustainability can launch more substantive roles with companies and clients. It elevates traditional PR functions and puts the communications expert squarely in areas of C-suite-level operational change and long-term risk management.

The line between sustainability marketing

and public relations has blurred with the rise of social media and mobile devices. The first step in building an integrated brand-building campaign is to craft an effective and powerful communications plan, allowing communications professionals to take the lead in developing their client's narrative. By doing this, PR draws a direct line between a targeted audience, a social purpose and their client, creating positive sales traction.

Providing connections to people, issues

From Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudito Si," which asks the world to reconsider how we treat each other and the world as a whole, to the historic COP21 meeting in Paris this past December where world leaders adopted a deal to cut carbon emissions, global issues are enormously becoming locally personal.

This is a climate where focused communications plans have a great effect. By tying into larger national and global issues, brands and organizations can communicate by bringing their message home.

WaterAid America communicates directly to those who have clean water and proper prenatal care to tell their story. Sarina Prabasi, CEO of WaterAid America says, "Pregnancy is a beautiful time in a women's life and should not yield extreme concerns such as the risk of death. As we work towards providing women and children with access to safe water and sanitation, we invite others to join in our efforts."

Keep America Beautiful has more than 600 community-based affiliates whose collective action champions environmentally healthy, socially connected and economically sound communities. "The 'think globally, act locally' adage is more than a rallying cry for Keep America Beautiful. It's embedded in our DNA," said Mike Rosen SVP, Marketing & Communications. "The mission of Keep America Beautiful is to inspire and educate people to take action every day to improve and beautify their community environment. Over the past 18 months, we've been working with our affiliates on the ongoing evolution of Keep America Beautiful as we roll out updated vision, mission and values and sharpen our message around three key pillars, to end littering in America, improve recycling in America, and beautify America's communities."

Will Millennials save the world?

It is hard to believe Millennials may be the key to saving the planet, because they are ...

well, Millennials. However, they have done more than my beloved Generation X in demanding more environmentally and socially sound products. The millennial consumer has been empowered by new technologies and is now coming of age economically. They are a force to reckon with, as they become a larger part of the economy, estimated at half the global workforce by 2020.

"The commitment of many Millennials towards environmental and social issues has certainly helped fortify our efforts and sharpen our message, while giving us a strong base of peer ambassadors to help reach the next generation of community stewards," said Rosen. "They have also played an important role in social marketing as we have seen purposeful engagement on our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr channels."

Sustainability has moved past merely being a trend — it's becoming a cultural shift. All organizations, therefore, will need to realize that sustainability is not just a desired activity but a necessary strategy specifically when developing integrated communication campaigns.

John Kriisiukenas is Managing Director out of the Marketing Maven New York office. ○



John Kriisiukenas

PR news brief

Weber Shandwick acquires ReviveHealth

Weber Shandwick has acquired Nashville-based ReviveHealth, one of the largest independent healthcare PR and marketing communications agencies in the country. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.

ReviveHealth, which holds additional offices in Minneapolis and Santa Barbara, was founded in 2009 and staffs about 50. It was ranked sixth largest healthcare agency in the country this year by *O'Dwyer's*, reporting 2014 healthcare net fees of \$8.78 million.

ReviveHealth staff will become part of the Weber Shandwick network. A Weber Shandwick spokesperson told *O'Dwyer's* that ReviveHealth CEO Brandon Edwards will remain in his current position. No further staffing changes were reported.

ReviveHealth's Minneapolis staff will move into Weber Shandwick's offices in that city at a later date, according to a Weber Shandwick spokesperson. ReviveHealth's Nashville and Santa Barbara locations will remain.

A woman in a blue and white Scottish kilt and a man wearing a VR headset stand on a wooden deck in front of a rustic wooden house with a shingled roof. The woman is posing with one leg raised and her arm outstretched. The man is standing with his hands in his pockets, looking at the VR headset.

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Tech innovation presents new PR challenges

Wind and solar energy prices have plummeted, algae as biofuel has boomed and demand is up for electric vehicles. Innovations and public support for green tech have reached new highs, but those who position themselves with the right communication strategies will find the most potential amidst this change.

Brandon Andersen

This golden age of green innovation has such breadth that it has become hard to predict which technologies will win out. In actuality, what will create a healthier planet is the adoption of many technologies and lifestyle changes that will individually have a relatively small impact.

Yes, this is an exciting time, but it does present yet another challenge for communicators, especially those in the green energy space: staying informed and building strategies in the face of rapid innovation and changes to consumer preferences.

It's not a challenge that is decidedly unique to just that industry, though. The rate of innovation seems to be accelerating. As for consumer preferences, just ask fast food restaurants and soda companies about the fickleness of consumer tastes.

Does that mean PR professionals are doomed to a future of reactive communication?

Surely, some brands will play a perpetual game of catch-up, but those who position themselves with the right strategies and technology will find enormous potential amidst all this change.

The green energy space is a perfect theoretical laboratory for understanding the keys to the potential of modern public relations and how even amazingly fast innovation presents opportunities for unique communication.

Turn innovation into market research

The great green solution of tomorrow might be only a whisper and seem totally implausible today.

Take, for example, a recent idea coming out of Switzerland that has reimaged kites as a form of renewable energy because winds at higher altitudes tend to have more gusto, according to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

As cool as that sounds, the technology needs to become more efficient before it hits the market, making widespread usage of them years away at the earliest. You don't have to be an investor to find value in the budding technology, though.

A conventional wind power company with media monitoring technology will have a better understanding of public perception around the idea thanks to traditional and social media. As a best practice, the analysis should include low-level looks at individual

comments and high-level looks at the sentiment and tone of the posts as a whole.

A thrilled, enthusiastic audience shouldn't necessarily cause communicators to recommend a business to pivot from its current course. It has a more realistic and immediate benefit: enabling you to better understand the needs and concerns of your audience.

The comments about a relatively theoretical piece of technology won't align directly with a business dealing in more established technology, such as solar energy, and may seem mostly irrelevant to a major oil supplier. However, the data provides a more thorough understanding of the desires and concerns of a niche part of the market that can help you better position your product or service.

In Cision's "Listen" e-book, the authors call on communicators to use social media listening tools to better understand and engage with influencers, prospects, customers, employees and competitors.

In many cases, your competitor won't be the company stealing your lunch with every client it snaps up. Competitors include those competing for portions of your target audience's attention. By understanding competitors' progress and the reaction to it, you can better align your values with the specific audiences you are attempting to reach.

Turn innovation into content

Content creation has become a key communication tactic. It has become so widely adopted that marketing expert Mark Schaefer has had to warn of content shock, the idea that our audience's attention is nearly maxed out and content, as much of it is today, will stop producing results.

That doesn't mean content is doomed. Today's communicators need to do a better job of creating by providing useful, interesting, concise and unique content pieces that will stand out among a sea of flimsy listicles.

Returning to our kite example, a more traditional wind energy producer could use the announcement to create an infographic or multimedia timeline that showcases the evolution of wind technology from thousands of years ago through its promising future. Including compelling data about the number of cars a single turbine could take off the road, for example, would make the piece more relatable to a wider audience.

Remember, the key to content success involves dissemination through paid and owned channels, such as press releases and promoted social posts, as well as earned media, including influencers' channels.

Turn innovation into relationships

Often, it's the usual suspects—industry trade magazines or major outlets—who alert the world to the most promising breakthroughs...or the most unusual.

Whether or not you have luck landing placements from these coveted publications, one of the most overlooked aspects of coverage is identifying under-the-radar influencers.



Brandon Andersen

When news in your industry breaks, who has the most insightful comments? The answer may surprise you. The keynote speaker at last year's major conference may have the most popularity, but a second- or third-tier personality with a quarter of the following may have the best insights.

You can bet that as more see their ideas, they will grow into an industry leader. Why not use your influence and owned channels to give them a boost?

In addition to the usual benefits of influencer marketing, you may find that this lesser-known person will have more enthusiasm than a well-traveled influencer, thus lightening your load. They will also have an appreciation to you for enabling their rise.

The key is finding these industry leaders, but that may be the least difficult part. Modern influencer databases allow users to search by specific topics to find the influencers in a particular space. Additionally, it has a single dashboard that provides access to influencers' social profiles, pitching preferences and a real-time look at what they cover.

The inevitability of change

PR professionals have remained nimble over the past decade, adapting to 24-hour news cycles, democratized voices on blogs and social, and proving the value of a department once evaluated by soft metrics.

Your ability to adapt will be just as important as it has been the past 10 years. Examining challenges for the opportunities they provide and equipping yourself with the right tools and technology to pursue those opportunities will be key to successful public relations today and into our greener, more breathable future.

Brandon Andersen is Director of Marketing at Cision. ○

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A pipeline to communications success

The Marcellus and Utica shale have changed the landscape of the domestic energy and petrochemical industries, providing abundant natural gas, an resurgence of family-sustaining jobs and opportunities, a rebirth of manufacturing and a growing need for pipeline infrastructure. Consequently, a fundamental shift in the communications landscape regarding energy and petrochemical firms, and how they deal with the public, now demands new communications approaches.

By Topper Ray

Traditionally, the energy industry, and to some extent the petrochemical industry, has faced scrutiny from various public and private sectors — the press, politicians, regulatory agencies, environmental groups and the consuming public. And the emergence of the Marcellus and Utica shales has further amplified opposition — giving rise to localized opposition groups, anti-fossil fuel and pipeline non-government organizations and other obstacles that energy firms are facing daily.

The rapid pace of natural gas development exposed an energy industrywide challenge — well production quickly outpaced available pipeline infrastructure. The lack of infrastructure continues to slow production as wells are not fully maximized and hungry markets cannot obtain needed resources. The lack of pipeline infrastructure has sent the industry on a pipeline-building boom: Although Pennsylvania has about 6,800 miles of existing pipelines, it could see construction of up to 25,000 miles of gathering lines and 5,000 miles of midstream and transmission pipelines in the next 10 years. Much of it is in the works as we speak.

That's a significant amount of proposed

pipeline construction. A public that was indifferent at best or demonstrated and directed their opposition solely on drilling and fracking operations suddenly is aware and vehemently opposed to pipeline companies. They don't want their land disturbed. They don't want to rely on fossil fuels. They don't want U.S. energy exported.

The industry is finding that traditional communications tactics are insufficient to move these pipeline projects forward. A more comprehensive communications approach — network advocacy — is key to managing pipeline projects, opposition outreach and messaging, and other project-related needs.

If companies are to successfully build out the pipeline infrastructure needed, they need to adopt a high-touch approach that couples traditional communication techniques with sophisticated research and digital tools — and that does so swiftly.

As Bravo Group works with several of the largest pipeline projects in the eastern U.S., we've learned much about how to get that done.

The construction of a pipeline often traverses multiple communities and along that line each community has a distinct personality and culture. Successful pipeline companies take the time to learn each town's opinions and concerns and build relationships with all the stakeholders in each community.

To accomplish that requires thoughtful research that goes beyond basic focus groups. It needs to plumb the thoughts and feelings of the community on the industry, the specific company and pipelines in general. It's important to know how each community views the oil and gas industry as a whole, the pipeline company specifically and the words they use to describe those views.

Good research serves as a foundational tool that helps to develop messaging that explains the process and benefits of infrastructure investment. This leads to tactical efforts that will resonate with constituents across an entire pipeline. Are local constituents reading newspapers or meeting at coffee shops? Is this community online and, if so, which channels does it use? What messages are the users consuming and at what times?

The answers will drive the strategy, message, tactics and the delivery for each town along the pipeline route. It's certainly different from a top-down, one-message-fits-all approach. It takes a highly capable team, moving quickly, to win.

No matter what tactics are used, it's imperative to have an informed "boots on the ground" operation in every segment of a pipeline project — sitting, construction, restoring the site and actual operations.

It's important to hold frequent face-to-face meetings with community members and not necessarily technical PowerPoint meetings. Always have a team member available to interact with the community. That team member will be the go-to face of the company, so it's imperative he or she be well-versed in the makeup of each community.

Equally as important is transparency in those relationships and in all communications, whether it's in direct mail pieces detailing the pipeline process, a handout on corporate social responsibility, a project update to local officials or a blog about a local charity event involving the pipeline company. Information presented must be consistent. Outreach efficacy, and ultimately success, must meet the expectations of the constituency you are targeting, in the format(s) they prefer.

This is a complex but important issue, where everyone won't agree. However, that doesn't mean that all concerns should go unanswered, even if the answers don't change some minds.

Mindset and approach are important. It takes flexibility to be able to pivot from town to town and platform to platform to address the issues specific to each community on the route, but if a solid network advocacy foundation is in place, the relationships can be built and so can a pipeline, on time and on budget.

Topper Ray is President of Communications at Bravo Group, which has offices in Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Dallas. ○



Topper Ray

PR news brief

Hemsworth bids for Best Western

Travel, hospitality and lifestyle agency Hemsworth Communications has been named the agency of record to handle trade initiatives for hotel giant Best Western Hotels & Resorts.

Hemsworth will manage strategic trade and development PR programs for the hotel chain, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year. Fort Lauderdale, FL-based Hemsworth will help Best Western implement a strategic PR plan to raise awareness for the brand, securing trade media placements that showcase Best Western's recent growth and re-emergence as powerhouse in the hospitality industry.

Hemsworth will also execute brand thought leadership initiatives for the company's executive team, which includes support for new hotel launches and a presence at industry conferences. The agency will not handle Best Western's consumer initiatives.

Best Western Hotels & Resorts is the newly christened master brand belonging to Best Western International, Inc. The Phoenix-headquartered company operates more than 4,100 properties worldwide.



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LISTEN. ENGAGE. REPEAT.

When public affairs meets real estate development

Often, issues arise in real estate development that require PR help. Here's how a smart, advanced public affairs campaign can enhance communications efforts in this field.

Ronn Torossian

When real estate companies first consider whether to hire a PR firm, immediate thoughts typically involve getting exposure in business and real estate media. There are several real estate issues that attract the media: the business component, the real estate aspect, the designers, the layouts of the units or space, the spa, pool, concierge and unique offerings, as well as a sundry of story possibilities on the developer and other projects that the person or company has accomplished.

This, of course, is the norm when a developer is well-known and respected, or even operates under the radar with a promising project. However, issues often arise that require PR assistance, such as challenges from a neighborhood or governing body. Perhaps the project contains a controversial bend that media often feel compelled to highlight: for example, a luxury development is going up, displacing two or three smaller buildings where people are currently living. That makes it cross over to an area of public relations known as public affairs.

This can be the difference between a project going smoothly and possibly not even going forward. It certainly affects the ability to push through the various stages of approval. Lest we forget, a land development project in a large city could easily get stuck in issues that have little to do with the actual building, architect or amenities being offered.

Aside from the issues expected, such as zoning, air rights, land use and fair housing

concerns, land development can get mired in community issues, including noise levels, neighborhood "desirables," jobs, contracts and dozens of issues yet unimagined.

Take the project that was put to bid by New York State and New York City in 2014, located in Brooklyn's Cobble Hill neighborhood, referred to as the "Long Island College Hospital project." Land developers were excited to bid on the project that appeared as if it would be a simple boon to any builder. How hard could it be to show the land use, the proper ratio of market rate to affordable units, the commercial and retail spaces and the coveted public spaces?

Publicly, there was no shortage of those seeking to win this project, until the community voiced concerns. Good government groups and local community advocates began to challenge the project before they set their sights on the developers. The ante was upped to include a hospital or some kind of urgent care facility to replace the hospital the community would lose. Never mind that the hospital was nearly bankrupt and was the primary reason the city was closing the facility and selling the land in the first place. A new development now needed to have a hospital or comparable facility, as the community demanded. Politicians acquiesced.

So, now a developer needed to devise a way to incorporate a hospital into its plans, and consider how to maintain the value proposition as well. Could all of the requirements be met while maintaining the ability to turn a profit? Many came forward with seemingly viable plans, but that was not good enough. Local community activists, competitors and a host of outside agitators began to look deeper into the personal and business backgrounds of the developers to find issues that would help their own causes. Some may not have had a history running hospitals, because they were real estate developers, and others were accused of not being kind to the healthcare industry.

In the end, the primary winner of the bid was rejected, as were the second and third bidders. The plan remains in flux in 2016. This opens the road to the benefit of conducting a solid public affairs campaign prior to any project reaching the public's mind. A strong campaign, consisting of select media and online reputation management, can steer what people see when you are ready

for them to see it.

If a client has little to no background, you build an online presence that reflects the work needed to promote the upcoming issue. A good PR team will find the previous work history, development and other real estate projects that may not have received any media coverage or might be in a different state, even country, and re-purpose that content on newly created websites and social media channels. Look for fun hobbies, such as sports, collectables and cooking, and spread the word about charities and philanthropy work in appropriate media vehicles.

Consider the upcoming project and try to find creative ways to infuse the issues that may arise into positive presentation of the client. If the client created a dog park for residents in another state



Ronn Torossian

or country, or has served on a hospital board, a school, an NGO, or a similar outfit, make a big deal about in the advance work. Use blogs and link-backs to get the first few pages of search engines tracking the ideas and concepts that have been planted.

As that occurs, begin pitching the client as a thought leader on the topics that have been circulating, and make sure you ask for links in articles that run. When a client has a history (even one that you just established) it is easier to show media the merits of the individual's expertise.

The idea is to create an image where none had been previously, and to pave the way for positive imagery once the major project is announced. When permits are first pulled in a municipality, there are journalists pulling those too, and that is when the fireworks begin. A public affairs campaign ahead of time might be a good way to begin steering the media.

Be sure that this will not stop anyone from delving deeper, but can control the dialogue at the onset, which is a very important stage to any major project.

There is truth in the idiom: Hope for the best but expect the worst. Media can be harsh, and combined with community outrage and a host of issues that are not even near things you can control, problems and setbacks can and will occur. The worst thing a developer banking on a big project can do is not plan at all. Being prepared with some advanced personal and corporate public affairs can go a long way in making the road to fruition less rocky.

Ronn Torossian is the CEO of 5WPR. ○

PR news brief

Univ of Phoenix parent gets PR help

Apollo Education Group, the for-profit higher education juggernaut behind the University of Phoenix, has engaged Brunswick Group for PR as it pursues "strategic alternatives" that could include a sale of the publicly traded company.

The Phoenix-based company said Jan. 11 that its board is in discussions that could potentially lead to a "change in control of the company." Apollo hired Barclays and Credit Suisse for financial counsel, and Sullivan & Cromwell on the legal front.

Apollo said its exploration of potential deals doesn't affect its continued "business transformation," a nod to the financial difficulties of for-profit institutions after a regulatory crackdown and widespread scrutiny of the sector's practices.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Jan. 11 private equity firm Apollo Global Management is in advanced talks to buy the company for around \$1 billion. Despite the names, the companies are not related.

37%

of people's decisions are
swayed by negative
comments online.

Source: A survey of 1000 adult
social media users from 2014.

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What to look for when hiring a PR firm

It's no secret that legislation can have a massive impact on your business. What happens at the Capitol can make or break you. With so much at risk, it makes sense to hire a PR firm with a seasoned public affairs practice to enhance your communications efforts in regards to legislation and how it impacts your business. But where to start?

By Ryan Banfill

This process raises questions, of course, especially if you already have a lobbying team working on your behalf.

If you go in blind, there's a good chance you'll make costly mistakes that can burden your business for years. Spare yourself those painful mistakes. When it comes to government relations, there are 5 things you should look for when hiring a PR firm.

Knowledge of the process and players

It's absolutely crucial to have a PR team on your side who has a deep knowledge of the intricate process of how laws are made in your state and who understands the players involved in the process. If your firm truly knows "the process" side of lawmaking, you can accomplish big things in the legislature. The flip side is also true. If you think you can hire any marketing firm or handle your own communications, instead of a firm that actually has experience in the public affairs/legislative arena, it's like bringing a knife to a gunfight. You will be at a disadvantage from the beginning. That's a guaranteed recipe for disaster.

If you believe the legislative process begins when the gavel goes down to start a legislative session, you are mistaken. In Florida, where lawmakers technically serve on a "part time" basis, the business of the Legislature can go on throughout the year.

Even without "special sessions," called when a specific issue needs immediate attention, there are crucial interim meetings happening in the run up to a new legislative session. Lawmakers are considering and filing new bills. It's during those times that your firm should be educating people and communicating with people. If your firm tries to start communicating your issue at the beginning of session, it's like a quarterback staying in the locker room until the 3rd quarter of a championship contest. A good part of the game has already been played, and you haven't been on the field.

It would be very difficult for your business to succeed in a country where you didn't understand the rules. Yet, so often, without understanding the rules and the players, businesses think they can make progress in the Capitol simply because the facts are on their side.

That's a mistake you can't afford to make.

This is why a communications firm is a key

part of your team. It is critical to have the facts on your side. But presentation counts. You also must present the facts in a way that is easy to understand — no jargon and no acronyms. Keep your story simple and keep it consistent.

Adaptable and nimble

It is good to have a plan going into session. But, like former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson brilliantly said, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

The sands of the legislative process can quickly shift under your feet. Unexpected twists and turns are common. Opinions can quickly change direction. People can change their minds. Information not favorable to your position can come out. This can happen at any moment in our always connected social media era. This means that the firm you hire must be able to pivot on a dime, adjust its approach, immediately address threats and tweak messaging accordingly.

If your firm can't confidently handle change, they can't play and win in the legislative process. Your team must be able to change the game plan at a minute's notice or you will need to choose a different firm.

Brilliant framers

It's not enough to simply talk about a political issue. The issue must be framed so that lawmakers and the public at large understand what's really at stake. The best PR firms can strategically frame an issue so that the true impact is felt, both by voters and by lawmakers.

The firm you hire should be able to take complex political issues and brilliantly frame them in ways that move hearts and minds. The firm should understand what truly matters to your target audience and then be able to frame your issue so that it connects with your target audience.

Masters of messaging

You have a message that must be heard, and the firm you hire should be able to deliver your message in a way that is clear, compelling, and cuts through the noise. They should understand your target audience inside and out, and should be able to creatively speak in a way that truly resonates with your ultimate target audience. In the case of passing legislation, it must be a compelling argument to carry a majority in every committee that considers the issue. It must pass both houses

of the Legislature and be signed by the governor.

Every day, legislators have their attention pulled in a thousand different directions by a thousand different messages. Your firm should be able to craft a message that is easy to understand and simple to act upon. They should also know how to get your message heard by those inside the legislative process. They should know which mediums are most effective for communicating with various parties and individuals. They should be able to cut through the noise.

The firm you hire should have a knowledge of how key members of the Legislature receive their news and information. They should research to find out what particular programming key members enjoy — if they watch SportsCenter every night or never miss an episode of Scandal. If you know that information, you can target advertising appropriately. They should know which social media sites lawmakers are using and should be able to craft a message that stands out on those sites.

No matter what the medium, your firm should be able to craft a clear and compelling message that perfectly fits the medium and deeply connects with your target audience.

Digital experts

Communication has become so much more than newspapers, televisions, and radios. The explosion of social media means that important conversations are happening at speeds unheard of back in the days when you had to wait a full 24-hour news cycle. Opinions are literally being shared while important events are unfolding. You must be ready to shape the story in real time as it is happening.

Additionally, many people don't consume news and information from traditional sources. They get their news primarily from social media networks. Video ads that would never be viewed by some on television have a much higher chance of being seen on social media



Ryan Banfill

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Why cyberattacks put more than data at risk

The potential impact caused by a cyberattack should be considered in every organization's communications program.

By Thomas Graham and Reg Harnish

Cyberattacks present media with the type of drama they crave for good headlines. They also present an interesting psychological phenomena: on one hand, they've become part of the world in which we live; on the other, each headline can set the public into cyclic worrying. Is my financial information safe? Will I wake up in the morning with an empty bank account? Has my identity been stolen? To your business, it's an organizational crisis. To your customers, it's personal.

The affected company scrambles into action. It soon declares the problem "fixed," perhaps offers assistance to any stakeholders dealing with the aftermath, and the public moves on, some believing in the "new" level of promised security and some moving their business — and their data — to the competition.

And then the next attack happens.

A cyberattack is also a PR crisis; its potential impact must be considered in your communications program. Many customers and stakeholders equate cybersecurity with the best software program, government-standard data encryption, or lax human resources and physical location policies. In their minds, a cyberattack is you breaking your promise; it has become a violation of their trust in you. You risk a breach not only to your data, but your reputation.

There are three key rules in the cybersecurity realm. Rule #1: you will experience a breach; rule #2: cybersecurity is less of a hardware or software issue, and more of a human, psychological issue; rule #3: the most effective response for protecting your reputation and your business is proactive planning for both cybersecurity and crisis communications.

You will experience a breach

Like any crisis, cyberattacks occur with varying levels of severity, from a virus causing various degrees of harm, to major enterprise breaches and stolen data. According to CRN, data breaches were particularly big in 2015. In 2013 we had the infamous Target retail data breach that still commandeered 2014 headlines, while in 2015 government office breaches appeared to be a particular target.

How can these breaches happen? After all, our government and major U.S. businesses spend millions on cybersecurity. (Target had just completed its mandated cyberse-

curity attestation a few months before that major hack.) Collectively, organizations of all forms invest billions of dollars in cybersecurity and work hard to remain compliant with mandated cybersecurity measures. But the harsh truth is, the investment can't just be in dollars, and compliance doesn't equal security. The state of cybersecurity today is not if, but how often and what impact each attack will have on your organization.

The truth is, compliance, whether voluntary or mandated, can be a distraction, giving organizations and their stakeholders a false sense of security. The best security programs guarantee compliance, not vice versa. The reality is that compliance makes you feel secure when you're not.

A human issue, not a technology issue

The best cybersecurity program is a process, not a piece of software. Seven out of 10 cyberattacks will get by any software, and none of them adequately compensate for human error. Your CIOs likely know this. Investment in hardware and software is important, but the greatest risk to your organization is the people within it. You must move people to the top of the cybersecurity assessment and management list.

But then what? How do you protect against your own people?

You should consider your security vendor to be nothing short of bodyguards for your organization. And in order to adequately protect you, they have to perform an assessment.

It may require more automation for your organization, or more external control. The fact is, you have to know what's important in your organization in order to know what to protect. And a good security program never protects you against just one thing.

The goal is not 100% security; the goal is minimizing the impact of a cyberattack so that you don't become the next headline. Either scenario — headline-making or caught and kept internally — requires a cohesive response scenario for all of your assets.

Crisis communications preparedness

Like most PR firms that offer crisis communications counseling, our agency preaches proactive crisis preparedness.

While protecting data is paramount, organizations can't overlook the threat an attack can pose to its reputation. A proactive and continuous approach to cybersecurity works in concert with a proactive and con-

tinuous crisis communications plan.

We take a four-phase approach to crisis communications, using a continuous process called CPR-PLUS that works in concert with a cybersecurity process.

Phase I: planning

We conduct a risk assessment that includes the potential crisis scenario of a cyberattack. With your cybersecurity team, we are able to more accurately pinpoint the likelihood of a high-or low-impact scenario and the speed at which it could escalate.

This is also where we identify the appropriate key messages and crisis team for a cyberattack scenario, including a spokesperson. For cybersecurity, external crisis response teams can better neutralize an internal issue that may have led to the breach, while your spokesperson informs stakeholders, whether internally or publicly.

Phase II: practice

This is like your family's fire-drill: the more you practice, the more time and assets you can save if and when a fire occurs. Conducting these "drills" with your cybersecurity team is critical to an appropriate communications response. It allows you to see how quickly you can assemble your response teams, and how long an appropriate "fix" can take. Practicing your response interjects authority into your response. It signifies preparedness, which engenders trust. People want a solution, regardless of the problem.

Phase III: response

Then the cyberattack happens. This is where your cooperative plan must work seamlessly. The cybersecurity team is being dispatched to perform "incident triage," including securing the crime scene. Your response has to allow this and other steps to occur prior to making any statement. Fix the problem, then talk about it.

Other response steps include forensics, investigations, reporting the breach to the proper authorities, preparing management for legal issues and managing the IT staff.



Thomas Graham



Reg Harnish

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Public affairs and environmental crisis in a digital age

“The more things change, the more they stay the same.” In the PR world, this adage rings especially true, especially in regard to a lack of good crisis planning in the energy and environmental arena.

By Hal Dash, Brandon Stephenson and Chris Gilbride

Even today, too many companies do not have instantly deployable crisis communications plans, as well as a skilled implementation team, in case of an incident that could significantly hurt the company's brand, reputation, image and earnings.

The energy and environment sector is particularly vulnerable to crisis situations because of the various kinds of projects they deal with: exploration, processing, distribution, transportation, etc. Accidents involving fires, explosions, leaks, discharges, emissions and construction glitches are often handled poorly, instantly leading to intense coverage across all platforms – television, radio, newspapers, online publications, social media, blogs plus on activist and community websites.

It's amazing that in our current digital age, and with the sophistication of community and environmental activists, many businesses do not have crisis communication plans.

We've heard several explanations for this general lack of preparedness:

- Even though the economy has rebounded robustly in many sectors, the recession forced many businesses to down size, reorganize or merge, pushing communications planning aside.
- The ongoing transition from more senior practitioners that have left the sector to younger professionals that lack the real world experience with crisis communications.
- Many companies don't see communications activities as a worthwhile investment, as it doesn't contribute to the bottom line.
- Some believe that they can handle crises with whatever communications staff they have as a situation comes up, or worse ... that high-profile incidents will never happen to them.

Regardless of the excuse, these corporations have been left vulnerable to PR catastrophes.

The digital age demands that companies have plans in place to rapidly assess crises as they unfold, and actively engage in the type of real-time dialogue that they aren't accustomed to.

The convenience and prevalence of social media has made traditional media deadlines irrelevant. “Citizen reporters” are able to instantly share uncensored information, including photos and videos of breaking news

events, with an enormous audience. Established news organizations are often quick to follow, covering events breaking on social media and filling airtime with talking heads and speculation while they wait for an official response.

This atmosphere can make it challenging for companies to frame the story or manage the public narrative during the early stages of an emergency, but it doesn't have to.

Social media tools like Twitter and Instagram can provide decision makers with invaluable situational awareness about unfolding events that they may have waited hours for in years gone by. The next time you hear about a breaking news event, try searching for it on Twitter. In seconds, you will likely find photos, videos, and a host of comments and opinions about the situation. That is the exact information that can help companies assess a situation and craft preliminary messages to engage their stakeholders.

The bottom line is that companies responding to crisis situations risk having their story be told by someone else if an emphasis is not placed on providing timely, frequent and accurate updates during emergencies.

This is especially true as tech-savvy activists who live, eat and breathe environmental justice, weigh in on any industrial accident. Many of these activists are also subject-matter experts with technical knowledge who can jump into a crisis instantly, grab the headlines and direct the conversation.

Over the years, our firm has seen an incredible growth in the sophistication and knowledge of established advocacy groups, who have also become strong advocates with the media, elected officials and regulators. This expertise has now filtered down to community groups and neighborhood councils all over our state and across the country.

The focus and effectiveness of today's advocacy tools — websites, e-newsletters, social media, blogs and other digital platforms — is truly amazing. These groups can now use digital tools to immediately rally, organize and mobilize a community when a crisis situation occurs.

Corporations in the energy and environment sector are so often slow to respond to a crisis just because of their size and inability to move quickly. Many management levels at a company often have to weigh in on appro-

priate responses, as well as outside counsel, with an eye not only toward the crisis but also shareholders' reactions and the bottom line.

This is just one reason why energy and environment businesses are often beaten to the punch by more nimble environmental organizations, activists and community groups.

Just recently, there have been numerous examples of multinational corporations fumbling crisis situations: BP, Pacific Gas and Electric in the energy space, as well as Facebook, FIFA, Malaysia Airlines, NFL, Sony, Lufthansa, General Motors, VW and Chipotle in other sectors of the economy. The list is long, but is in no way complete.

What these organizations have in common is that they were slow to respond, muddled their messages, did not take responsibility, and/or failed to drive the conversation or the direction of the issue(s). As a result, they ended up behind the curve and, in some cases, still have not fully recovered.

We've seen this trend consistently over the decades and we are constantly amazed at how little has changed in the lack of crisis management preparedness and training both here and abroad. And companies in the environmental sector seem to lag behind in having robust crisis plans and teams ready to go when an incident occurs, even though catastrophic events can have more lasting impacts than incidents in non-energy spaces.

Just as these negative traits run rampant among corporations that have botched crisis situations, there are trends that are consistent in companies that understand how to plan for a crisis and manage it.

Companies that respond well uniformly have a dedicated person or persons who own crisis communications activities; they have an up-to-date plan with messaging, scenarios and an identified spokesperson(s); and



Hal Dash



Brandon Stephenson



Chris Gilbride

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CRISIS IN A DIGITAL AGE

Continued from previous page

either internal or external digital expertise that can be turned on instantly.

To further protect their brand, these successful companies have an engaged CEO who is media savvy and can engage with their communities, elected officials, regulators and the media. Finally, they have established relationships within their communities, established by their community relations team that can quickly be deployed when an incident occurs.

Even though we shouldn't be, we're still surprised that most clients don't have a crisis management plan. This is unacceptable in this evolving digital communications age.

As public affairs and public relations counselors, it is our responsibility to immediately begin exploring potential crisis issues and how best to manage them from a PR perspective. Ask all of your clients, but especially those in this sector, the following questions to determine if a plan must be created or refreshed, why your client must have one and what the price tag will be:

What could go wrong in your business?

PR news brief

ICR Forms Advisory Board

ICR New York-headquartered corporate communications and investor relations firm ICR yesterday announced the creation of a newly formed advisory board, and has appointed Rob Sharp and Joseph B. Kennedy as its founding members.

ICR CEO Tom Ryan told O'Dwyer's that the board would provide ongoing counsel and insight to help guide the agency's business decisions, which could range from the development of new service offerings and practice areas, to staff hires and strategic investments.

"ICR has always maintained a deep network of capital markets experts and communications industry veterans who we engage with to provide intelligence and counsel. As we've grown, we saw value in creating a formal advisory board dedicated to broadening our network and ensuring that ICR remains at the cutting edge with respect to the critical issues facing our client base," Ryan told O'Dwyer's. "The establishment of this advisory board along with these two initial appointments, demonstrates our commitment to being the go-to firm for companies looking for a partner to develop communications programs and transaction advisory services tailored to achieving business goals and building enterprise value."

Sharp is co-CEO and owner of contemporary women's fashion brand Ramy Brook. Prior to that he was senior partner of private equity firm MidOcean Partners. He also previously served as partner at Investcorp International, was an investment banker at Bankers Trust and worked in Drexel Burnham Lambert's mergers and acquisitions division.

Ryan said the agency plans to introduce additional members to the board in the future, though a total number of members has yet to be determined.

Do you have a crisis plan?

If you don't, why not?

If you do, when was it refreshed, rehearsed, etc.?

Who is in charge of managing each crisis scenario?

Have you practiced rapidly responding to a crisis?

What is your level of digital expertise and does it have a place in an existing plan?

Crisis communications plans need to have all these elements: strong and focused messaging that can evolve as a situation changes; a high-level spokesperson and other company contacts with expertise in the specific crisis situation; scenarios of what could go wrong and a team assigned to specific roles.

If you or your client does not have current digital communications skills, you must find that resource ASAP! Your adversaries communicate digitally 24/7 and so do your supporters and stakeholders. Yet, many firms are so far behind in their digital capabilities and knowledge that they would enter a crisis situation with two strikes already against them.

Both agency and client staff must also be

up-to-speed on environmental rules, regulations, relevant agencies, information, local community groups, and elected officials who represent a facility. Are your lists up to date so you can get out a message instantly from your company through digital portals? All of these entities will invariably jump on an incident, and generally take the side of the community versus the industry, which makes getting out in front of a crisis situation mandatory. And they use every platform social media has to offer. So should you and your client!

At the end of the day, good crisis planning, preparation and execution is an incredibly valuable and priceless service that public affairs firms can provide their clients. Don't hesitate to discuss this issue with them and guide them toward constructing a plan. The digital age and their very survival demands it. And there is no time like the present, because the clock is ticking.

Hal Dash is Chairman and CEO of Cerrell Associates. Brandon Stephenson is Chief Strategic Officer and Chris Gilbride is a Senior Public Affairs Director at Cerrell Associates. ●

HIRING A PR FIRM

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networks like Facebook and Instagram.

This means at least two things. First, the firm you hire should understand how to track important conversations happening on social media. They should know who matters, why they matter, and what they're saying.

Second, the firm you hire should know the rules of communicating on social media. Social media communication is very different from other mediums, and the firm you hire should have a firm grasp of the nuances required for social media communication.

Make sure the firm you hire to assist your government relations team knows its way

around the legislative process. Make sure they know how to create a message that is compelling, clear and cuts through the clutter and that they know the right channels to use in communicating to target audiences. And make sure they know how to successfully navigate social/digital media.

Don't play fast and loose when it comes to hiring a PR firm for your critical public affairs work. You can't afford to make mistakes when it comes to navigating the legislative process. The passing or killing of legislation can literally be the difference between massive success and your business dying a slow, painful death.

Ryan Banfill is Partner and Senior Vice President of Sachs Media Group. ●

CYBERSECURITY IS MORE THAN DATA

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Someone on your communication crisis team needs to understand these steps without getting in the way, incorporating activities and findings into appropriate back-grounders and FAQs as appropriate. You must be transparent and honest with your stakeholders without revealing information that can potentially contaminate the cybersecurity investigation.

Phase IV: recovery

Your recovery is as important as your response; the PLUS in CPR-PLUS represents Public Leadership Under Stress. Your communications with whatever stakeholder level has been affected must continue, while simultaneously performing an internal re-

view of your crisis action response. Conduct this from a communications standpoint, but also with recommendations from your cybersecurity team and make the necessary adjustments to both components.

When it comes to cyberattacks, there are two types of companies: those that survive in the current environment, and those that don't. Joint preparations between your communications and cybersecurity teams, and maintaining cybersecurity as a continuous process, can minimize the impact an inevitable attack might have on your organization.

It can keep you out of the headlines, and protect your reputation.

Thomas Graham is CEO of Crosswind Media & Public Relations. Reg Harnish is CEO of GreyCastle Security. ●

Johnson succeeds Jim Abernathy

Tom Johnson, who leads Abernathy MacGregor's M&A practice and serves as Co-President, has been named CEO of the firm, succeeding Co-Founder Jim Abernathy.



Tom Johnson

Abernathy had led the firm since co-founding AbMac with James MacGregor in 1984. He called building the firm "one of my life's greatest accomplishments." He said Johnson "embodies our culture and collective drive," adding that 2015 was the firm's most successful year.

Johnson called the appointment "humbling." He handled the Cigna-Anthem merger, Coty's acquisition of P&G's beauty business and the Office Depot-Staples tie-up among other recent deals.

Johnson is a former Editor-in-Charge of the North American investment banking and finance desk at Reuters. He also ran its M&A and IPO units after stints at CNN Financial News and Baltimore's Daily Record.

Upper management remains in place at the firm, include President Chuck Burgess, COO Carina Davidson, and Vice Chairs Ian Campbell and MacGregor. ○

Catalyst, Taylor vet Werner named MWW Client Chief

MWW has brought in Bret Werner, a Co-Founder and Managing Director at Catalyst, for the new role of Chief Client Officer.



Bret Werner

Werner, who takes an Executive VP title for MWW, is charged with heading strategy and growth, and overseeing client relationships across the firm.

He is a former Managing Partner at Taylor during that firm's overhaul and repositioning. MWW Chief Michael Kempner called him an "exceptional client strategist, consumer visionary and proven innovator." He expects Werner to play a key role in helping the firm refine its offerings and operations.

Werner co-founded Catalyst as a Managing Partner in 2006 and worked through its 2012 sale to IMG Worldwide. He stepped down with Co-Founder Bill Holtz in October. ○

Hollywood publicist Murray Weissman dies at 90

Murray Weissman, a Partner in Weissman/Markovitz Communications, Los Angeles, a leading publicist for many years, died Dec. 28 at his home in Los Angeles. He was 90.

Variety called him "a trailblazer in the field of awards campaigning" whose clients included Frank Sinatra, the Television Academy, Miramax, Judy Garland, Danny Kaye, Red Skelton, Dick Van Dyke, the Smothers Brothers and hit series including "The Twilight Zone," "Gunsmoke," "Route 66," "Wyatt Earp" and "Hogan's Heroes."

More recently, he worked as a publicist for the "Mad Men" TV series. Matt Weiner, creator of the series, called him an essential part of the "Mad Men" team, praising his cleverness and patience.

He is survived by his wife, Kay Friedman, children Benjamin and Julie, and three grandchildren. ○



Murray Weissman

NBC casts Rawlings for PR

Allison Rawlings, who led PR for DreamWorks Animation, has plugged into NBC Entertainment as Senior VP, Corporate Communications.

She reports to EVP Chip Sullivan who calls her a "top-notch communications strategist... extremely intelligent, is quick on her feet and is an exceptional team player."

Rawlings led communications efforts for the DWA, including branding, corporate communications and film publicity.

She was previously Director of Communications at the Geffen Playhouse and led account teams at Cohn & Wolfe on clients



Allison Rawlings

like Hilton Hotels, Air New Zealand, Corner Bakery and the Actors Fund. ○

Serrano is Publicis New York CEO

The New York office of Publicis Worldwide has named Carla Serrano CEO. Serrano, who formerly served as Chief Strategy Officer and oversaw brand, digital, social strategy initiatives for the multinational PR powerhouse's New York hub, assumes the new role immediately.

Serrano, who joined Publicis in 2014, was previously CEO of creative agency Naked Communications. Prior to that she was Chief Strategy Officer of advertising agency TBWA Chiat/Day NY, and also served as President of WPP unit Berlin Cameron and Partners.

Serrano succeeds Publicis Worldwide's North America CEO Andrew Bruce, who has held the New York CEO position in tandem with his current title since 2013. ○



Carla Serrano

Coca-Cola toasts Kuo for communications

Kimberly Kuo, a veteran communicator of AOL, CTIA and Baker & Taylor, has moved to the Coca-Cola Bottling Co. in Charlotte as Senior VP of Public Affairs, Communications and Communities.

Kuo takes the post vacated by the retiring Lauren Steele, who logged 34 years within the Coca-Cola system and departs as SVP of Corporate Affairs. The post covers internal and external communications, federal and state government affairs, and community engagement.

Publicly traded CCB primarily serves the southeast U.S. as the top marketer, producer and distributor of Coca-Cola products. Third quarter revenue was \$618.8 million with net income of \$12.1 million.

Kuo was formerly Chief Marketing Officer at Charlotte-based publishing giant Baker & Taylor. She was VP of comms. and advocacy for CTIA, the wireless industry trade group, and spokeswoman for AOL. ○



Kimberly Kuo



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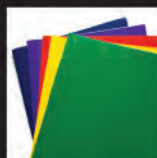
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GUARDS battles WiFi from space

The Global Union Against Radiation Deployment from Space (GUARDS) is battling plans by Google, Facebook and SpaceX to launch and replace thousands of satellites to provide worldwide Internet service.

By Jack O'Dwyer

The group says the “harmful pulsed microwave radiation” violates human rights conventions due to the “serious biological effects and involuntary nature of the exposure.”

Microwave radiation is the invisible platform that allows wireless devices including cellphones and WiFi to communicate. It is part of the radio frequency, part of the electromagnetic spectrum.

GUARDS says blanketing the earth with “harmful pulsed microwave radiation will destroy ozone and worsen climate change due to the emission of black soot from so many rockets. Combined with the detrimental effects RF radiation has on both flora and fauna, including bees, these global wireless projects are predicted to lead to environmental devastation and even widespread starvation.”

Singled out for criticism is Google's “Project Loon.” It would be a network of balloons traveling on the edge of space that would connect rural and remote areas to the Internet.

GUARDS claims that the Federal Communications Commission, which sets radiation limits, uses standards set nearly 30 years ago. It quotes a recent study labeled “Captured Agency: How the FCC is Dominated by the Industry it Presumably Regulates.” It was written by Norm Alston for Harvard University's Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics.

NYC project worries anti-WiFi forces

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio has made a deal with Google and Qualcomm that will replace about 7,500 pay phones with WiFi capable kiosks starting in July, according to a column in the *New York Post* Jan. 11 by Nicole Gelinas.

The \$200 million cost is being borne

by the two companies. It involves placing hundreds of miles of new physical cable under sidewalks and streets. Pedestrians throughout New York will be able to have “free Wi-Fi,” says Gelinas.

Websites such as Electric Sense urge computer users to replace WiFi with hard-wired Ethernet connections.

Recommended is “going fully wired” by using a wired mouse and a wired keyboard. Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs) generated by a laptop's keyboard are to be avoided. Users should also stay at least three feet away from the screen.

Users are advised to take a break from computers every 20 minutes and to wash their faces after a computer session. “Particles of radiation attach themselves to your face,” says Electric Sense.

Cellphone warnings abound on web

Websites including the one hosted by Dr. Joseph Mercola abound in warnings about cellphone use.

Children are advised only to use cellphones in “dire emergencies.” When not in use, the phones should be placed in airplane mode or turned completely off.

The cellphone stand should be unplugged at night and kept several rooms away from where most activities take place during the day. “Never bring a cellphone into the bedroom,” is one piece of advice. The base and phones transmit signals 24/7, it is said.

Electric Sense says cellphones should never be used in a moving vehicle such as a bus or car since the device will work extra hard to bring in a signal. Use of a cellphone in a car is advised against because RF radiation “is magnified by the metallic structure — the Faraday Cage effect,” says Electric Sense.

The Mercola website urges cellphone users to be considerate of others by not using them in public places such as a doctor's office, courtroom or public transportation. “Don't use cellphones near children,” it also advises.

Other advice is that cellphones should only be used where there is a strong signal because otherwise the device has to work extra hard to bring in a signal. ○



Jack O'Dwyer



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Ronn D. Torossian, *President & CEO*

5W's public affairs services run the gamut: From managing high-profile local issues to handling major public affairs projects in the U.S. and abroad to hosting foreign dignitaries on U.S. visits, the New York-based agency, with offices in Denver and Los Angeles, is expert at influencing public opinion and advocating for change. 5W's campaigns are customized to address every facet of public affairs: polling, message development, coalition building, media relations, media training, issues and crisis management, and digital media. The various campaigns, which encompass international, federal, state and regional efforts, have included both sides of the political aisle. But the agency is less concerned with partisanship and more focused on doing great PR work and communications for brands and organizations that deal with public-affairs issues. Clients include government allies of the U.S., political leaders, Congressional candidates, religious leaders, one of the largest taxi associations in the country and a variety of public affairs organizations.

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Thomas P. Butler, *President*

Winner of multiple International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) best national P.R. campaign awards. Ranked among top agencies in the New York market for its environmental and public affairs

practice.

Butler Associates campaigns range from victorious *Fortune* 50 shareholder proxy battles, directing public affairs, legal and public safety awareness campaigns, to visibility for top business and financial firms and their CEO's. The Butler group includes seasoned media and communication pros, committed to their clients, who deliver consistent results. Its Litical Solutions division delivers consumer engagement and award-winning advertising for broadcast, online and print.

Clients: Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.; Astoria Cove Developers; Empire Strategies; Grandparents.com; Hooks for Heroes; Hostelworld Group; Hunts Point Cooperative Market; Kerry Rose Foundation; Mechanical Contractors Association of New York; New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance; Patriot Bank, NA; Plumbing Foundation of New York; ProtectSeniors.Org; Siebert Brandford Shank & Co., L.L.C.; Stamford (CT) Police Association; Stamford Professional Fire Fighters Association; Steamfitters Local 638, New York; Telebeam Telecommunications; Uniformed Firefighters Association (NYCity).

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Julie Adrian, *US Managing Director*
Heather Gartman, *Managing Director, DC*
Jo Wunder, *Group Director of Operations, EU*

Chandler Chicco Agency (CCA), as part of the inVentiv Health Public Relations Group, is a global team of healthcare communications specialists dedicated to helping clients solve their most complex challenges. Integrating an unmatched breadth of resources that enables a comprehensive, 360-degree approach, CCA serves clients that span the spectrum of healthcare from blockbusters to niche products; large pharma to emerging specialty companies; biotech to devices and diagnostics; healthcare technology, hospitals,

non-profits and academic centers.

CCA sets the standard in delivering best-in-class communications in a collaborative, flexible environment where creativity reigns and clients come first. Highly valued as a natural extension of clients and winner of *PRWeek's* 2014 Healthcare Campaign of the Year, the CCA team is passionate about the work and proud to be making a real difference in people's lives.

Our communications programs are driven by the need to motivate behavioral change among stakeholders. We achieve this by bringing the right people to the table — healthcare professionals, thought leaders, advocates, patients and loved ones — and then building alliances, communities, and champions motivated to act.

CCA is fully integrated globally with operations in New York, Washington, Los Angeles, London, and Paris, and is supported by inVentiv Health, Inc., a pure-play global network spanning 45 markets. The network is truly best-in-class and, through ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing, stays one step ahead of the local and regional social, economic and policy trends to ensure the delivery of integrated communications solutions for clients who seek global reach while demanding local relevance.

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Hal Dash, *hal@cerrell.com, Chairman and CEO*
Lisa Gritzner, *lisa@cerrell.com, President*
Brandon Stephenson, *brandon@cerrell.com, Chief Strategic Officer*

As one of the nation's most respected and successful public affairs and public relations firms, Cerrell combines the power of our legacy with an elite team of forward-thinking communicators to develop winning strategies for a diverse range of clients.

Since our founding in 1966, Cerrell has consistently developed the type of multifaceted, multilingual strategic programs that are needed in today's complex and rapidly-changing public policy environment.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, Cerrell continues to evolve and expand.

Under the firm's three-person ownership team of Chairman & CEO Hal Dash, President Lisa Gritzner and CFO Steve Bullock, Cerrell's strength is illustrated by our 20% revenue growth for two consecutive years.

To enhance the firm's capabilities and ensure sustained success, Cerrell has developed the next generation of leaders shaping the firm's future.

Brandon Stephenson was recently promoted to the newly-created position of Chief Strategic Officer to work with Cerrell's ownership team to determine the firm's future vision and manage our various practice areas.

Senior Public Affairs Director Chris Gilbride was hired to co-manage Cerrell's Media Relations & Crisis Communication practice area. Prior to joining Cerrell, Chris spent more than a decade managing communications for several departments in the City of New York under Mayors Michael R. Bloomberg and Bill de Blasio.

Public Affairs Director Katherine Hennigan, a long-time Los Angeles City Hall planning and land use veteran, was hired to bring a keen understanding of the local entitlement process and political landscape to our developer clients. She will join the Land Use practice area led by development attorney Nicole Kuklok-Waldman, who also recently joined Cerrell after working at several prestigious Los Angeles-based law firms.

What makes Cerrell truly unique among our competitors is that we have specialists in all of our core practice areas. Our Media Relations & Crisis Communication team understands what it takes to cut through the clutter and communicate our clients' stories strategically. Cerrell's Energy & Environment practice area provides strategic counsel and outreach services to manage California's challenging public policy and regulatory environment. Our Local Government practice helps our clients successfully navigate local and state government, engage decision-makers and, ultimately, achieve their desired results. Cerrell's skilled Campaigns & Issues Management team manages every aspect of a political or issue-based

campaign in a strategic manner to attain our clients' goals – whether it's achieving success on Election Day or winning a vote before a governing body. Cerrell's Land Use practice experts effectively manage the complex, and often political, entitlement process to build support for the approval of our clients' projects.

Twenty seven elite professionals and a strong support staff bring diverse experience to our clients under one roof. With Cerrell's comprehensive slate of services and expert staff, we continue to provide our clients with unmatched public affairs and public relations expertise.

Beyond Cerrell's own capabilities, our firm is also a longtime member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, the largest network of independent public relations firms in the world. Through Worldcom's global network, Cerrell has helped clients deploy both local and global strategies that have succeeded in some of the most challenging circumstances around the world.

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Ralph Katz, Principal
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CooperKatz has significant experience helping clients respond to complex business, public policy or environmental issues with integrated communications solutions that deliver results. Our expertise enables organizations to strategize issues, articulate key perspectives and leverage opportunities.

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CooperKatz has developed public affairs and/or environmental campaigns for diverse clients, including American Cleaning Institute (ACI), American Society of Composers, Authors and Pub-

lishers (ASCAP), Association of National Advertisers (ANA), Digital Advertising Alliance, MSN, Northern Arizona University, Otis Worldwide, Philadelphia Eagles, Piaggio Group Americas, The Physicians Foundation and US Preventive Medicine.

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Coyne PR is uniquely positioned to address public policy and sustainability issues that impact clients' short and long-term business interests. Working in collaboration with the firm's team leaders, we develop public affairs campaigns to educate government officials, thought leaders and other stakeholders. The agency has represented prominent organizations such as Express Scripts, Atlantic Health and Seventh Generation. Coyne also counseled clients such as UPS and the Sealed Air Corporation, as they formalize their sustainability strategies and obtain recognition for achievements that have, and will continue to be, fundamental elements of their core business operations. From thought leadership positioning to relationship building (government, NGOs, associations, general and LOHAS consumer groups) to grassroots initiatives, our experts leverage and build upon every existing asset to develop the most creative and meaningful sustainability initiatives. Companies that integrate sustainability into their business strategies recognize the importance of communicating their practices, programs and approaches with stakeholders. Informed, responsible and knowledgeable consumers can increase the market share of a sustainability-minded company and be instrumental in achieving business goals. The members of our team are GRI knowledgeable and certified to help clients achieve this industry standard.



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For more than 40 years, Crosby has helped clients Inspire Actions That Matter™ — actions that positively impact people's lives and contribute to the greater good. From helping to save energy and reduce greenhouse gases to stopping the spread of invasive species, from fighting for Veterans' rights to promoting innovation in education, Crosby partners with clients to raise awareness of today's most important issues and call people to action.

The firm serves a wide range of nonprofits, foundations, government agencies and companies focused on the environment, public health, education, and advocacy. Crosby develops integrated marketing campaigns for clients including EPA's ENERGY STAR program, USDA, DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Catholic Relief Services and The Wallace Foundation.

Services include marketing research and planning, brand development, public relations, community and multicultural outreach, digital marketing and web development, PSAs, and social marketing and behavior-change campaigns that deploy a mix of paid, earned, owned and shared media.

Crosby is #35 on O'Dwyer's ranking of public relations firms

and has offices in Annapolis, Md., and Washington, D.C. To see case studies, visit www.crosbymarketing.com.

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Working throughout North America on the most complex and challenging projects, Davies Public Affairs ensures clients successfully navigate the court of public opinion by engaging the public with thoughtful strategies and messages based upon innovative qualitative research, state-of-the-art data mining, and along with inspiring graphics and media.

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Continued on page 28

DAVIES

Continued from page 27

position resulting in timely public approvals.

Davies has been consistently recognized among the top strategic communications firms in North America, being chosen as the Public Affairs Firm of the Year or Public Affairs Campaign of the Year dozens of times over just the past few years and winning design, media and branding recognition normally reserved for products.

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Finn Partners is a leader in Public Affairs and Environmental PR with proven and award-winning expertise. Our team in Washington DC and New York has an extensive understanding of today's key issues and insight into tomorrow's considerations. We specialize in raising awareness with key audiences and influencers, as well as driving public understanding of key industries, complex legislative and regulatory issues and important causes. Our clients include industry leaders, established private sector companies, innovative start-ups, trade and industry associations and non-profit organizations.

We manage many national and multi-state public affairs campaigns, execute high-profile media relations programs, plan news-making

events and initiate broad-based grassroots advocacy efforts. We direct successful issues management campaigns inside the Beltway, in key states and across the globe.

Our Environmental PR work is extensive and spans many areas including: sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, climate change, clean technology, energy efficiency, water pollution and scarcity, smart grid and green buildings.

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Jeff Altheide, *Executive VP*
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G&S Business Communications partners with clients seeking a strategic approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) that improves relationships with stakeholders and realizes greater business value from sustainability efforts.

With headquarters in New York, offices in Chicago, Raleigh and Basel, Switzerland, and affiliates in 50+ countries, we advise on sustainability reporting, strategic messaging and stakeholder engagement, materiality analysis, green technology marketing, supply chain monitoring, and cause marketing. Our portfolio encompasses a broad array of services to implement brand strategy, content strategy, creative, digital and social, employee engagement, insights and analytics, media relations, and sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Annual editions of our Sense & Sustainability® Study continue to be an authoritative source for research into consumer opinions on the corporate commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) responsibilities. G&S also advances thought leadership via programs that feature journalists from leading news organizations, among them *Businessweek*, *Newsweek* and *Time* magazine.

We achieve business results by precisely aligning sustainability communications with corporate strategies.

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Jeanine O'Kane, *U.S. Managing Director*

The global public relations group of inVentiv Health helps launch brands and build the reputations of companies working to improve human health. With an integrated approach to communications, inVentiv Health Public Relations Group includes four agencies that offer best-in-class capabilities spanning public relations, digital and social media, medical and scientific education, and analytics and measurement.

Our teams create communications that drive corporate value, enhance brand perception, and deliver on the bottom line. Agencies within inVentiv Health Public Relations Group include: Allidura Consumer, Biosector 2, Chamberlain Healthcare PR, and Chandler Chicco Agency.

The broad scope of inVentiv Health Public Relations Group is powered by inVentiv Health, a global, top-tier, clinical and commercial professional services company.

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Marketing Maven's sophisticated share of voice and sentiment analysis tools help to shape campaign strategy for public affairs and environmental clients. Aligning with key influencers and utilizing grassroots social media tactics, paired with traditional media



Aljolynn Sperber is Marketing Maven's Director of Social Media, educating the public, monitoring sentiment, analyzing share of voice and identifying key influencers.

relations, this generates significant impact for clients.

From high profile litigation, emergency announcements, public affairs issues with utilities companies and law enforcement associations to reputation management surrounding tech companies with data breaches, our strategic execution is core to the success of our campaigns for environmental and public affairs clients. Marketing Maven executes these campaigns in both English and Spanish.

Marketing Maven is 8(a) certified by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), has WOSB status with the government and DBE, CUCP and CPUC certification.

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Michael Layne, *Managing Partner*

For more than 25 years, Detroit-based Marx Layne & Company has provided outstanding, results-oriented communications counsel to a broad range of clients in the business, government and nonprofit sectors.

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The March issue of *O'Dwyer's* will feature a company profiles section of food & beverage PR. If you would like to be listed, contact editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or jon@odwyerpr.com

cations, utilizing media relations, social media, content marketing, community relations and crisis communications.

Our account professionals customize high impact strategies to deliver clients' messages and influence opinion on legislation, regulation and appropriations at the state and local levels.

We're routinely engaged by lobbyists to reinforce their efforts by generating constituent messages, news coverage appearances, editorial commentaries, expert testimony and research studies. Our clients include publicly traded multinational corporations, mid-sized companies and small private practices.

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Moore Communications Group is a nationally-ranked integrated communications firm headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida. Blending smart strategy with creative collaboration, we use integrated communications campaigns to build brands. Our tailored marketing solutions are custom curated from a mix of more than 12 services and specialties including advocacy, digital, social and Latino communications that shape opinions, shift behaviors and incite action, connecting our clients to success.

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MWWPR, one of the world's top independent public relations agencies, is a leading expert in the public affairs and government relations fields. Having worked at the highest levels of the executive branch, Congress and state and local governments, we understand how to help our clients Matter More™ in Washington, D.C. and in the communities where decision-makers operate.

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PADILLACRT

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PadillaCRT.com

Matt Kucharski, Executive Vice President
Tina Charpentier, Vice President

PadillaCRT is a top 15 independent public relations and communications company. Its 200 employee owners use insightful strategies to help clients develop deep connections with the people who are important to their success. Its 360-degree approach uses research,

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PadillaCRT is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 111 independently owned partner offices in 140 cities on six continents.

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Peppercomm is an independently owned 20-year-old integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York with offices in San Francisco, Boulder and London. Helping clients see around the corner and determine what's next sets Peppercomm apart from other integrated communications and marketing firms. It enables us to push boundaries while mitigating risk for clients in financial services, consumer, B-to-B and multi-industry sectors.

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Perry Communications Group is an award-winning, full service strategic communications firm. Led by Kassy Perry, PCG shapes ideas, galvanizes opinions and influences decisions ultimately leading to social change. The PCG team helps clients positively impact public policy issues not only in Sacramento, but throughout California and the U.S. PCG tackles high-profile issues such as health care, energy and environment, finance and water.

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PCG provides public affairs services for an array of clients including:

California Automotive Wholesaler's Association, California

Continued on page 30



Ron Sachs, President/CEO and Michelle Ubben, Partner, COO & Director of Campaigns & Branding.

PERRY COMMUNICATIONS

— Continued from page 29

Craft Brewers Association, DBA International, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease and the Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America

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Jill Allread, APR, CEO
Pamela Oettel, CFO & COO
Craig Pugh, President

Experience distinguishes PCI as a go-to agency on green issues. We serve a diversity of environmental clients, from advocacy organizations and professional associations, to nationally ranked zoos and aquariums, conservation groups and regulatory agencies. It is an agency priority to use sustainable business practices daily at PCI because we share the belief with our environmentally conscious clients that it's important to live sustainably.

Several PCI senior counselors have significant experience working in and for environmental organizations. This first-hand experience brings extraordinary insight and benefits to our clients — from PCI's creative strategies to knowing what words resonate and prompt public engagement on green issues.

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has represented clients in the conservation and environmental fields. Today a growing segment of our business consists of clients who seek national and regional counsel on issues, including land use, water quality, wildlife conservation, marine life protection and living sustainably.

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Ron Sachs, President & CEO

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Joan Schneider, Chief Executive Officer & Founder
Phil Pennellatore, President

At Schneider Associates, we define public affairs as anything that impacts public opinion and drives behavior. Whether you're facing a media crisis, securing town permitting approvals, advancing social or environmental causes, or trying to influence decision-makers at all levels of government, Schneider Associates can help.

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Weber Shandwick is a leading global communications and engagement firm in 78 cities across 34 countries and operations extending to 126 cities in 81 countries. Through our Social Impact and Energy offerings, we bring clients a full-range of strategic, integrated communications services along with in-depth subject matter expertise needed to navigate the complexities of the social responsibility, sustainability and energy-related arenas.

Weber Shandwick's global Social Impact team works at the intersection of corporate social responsibility, sustainability and social issues. The team creates best-in-class, award-winning engagement campaigns, partnering with leading corporate, foundation, and nonprofit clients to advance shared value and positive change on business and social issues with consumers, thought leaders, media and other key stakeholders. Our professionals bring long-standing expertise working with corporations to distinguish sustainability progress and leadership, often through multi-stakeholder engagement. Our global Energy team provides tailored communications and engagement services designed to meet the continually evolving climate change, energy efficiency, renewables, energy innovation, utilities, oil & gas and chemical arena.

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O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2014)
1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$29,604,799
2. Edelman, New York, NY	17,064,414
3. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	9,992,391
4. Finn Partners, New York, NY	6,000,645
5. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	5,015,110
6. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	3,336,240
7. Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications, Boston, MA	3,281,242
8. MWWPR, New York, NY	3,075,000
9. Fiona Hutton & Associates, Los Angeles, CA	3,070,243
10. LEVICK, Washington, DC	2,202,002
11. Sachs Media Group, Tallahassee, FL	2,179,867
12. SevenTwenty Strategies, Washington, DC	2,006,379
13. Lambert, Edwards + Associates, Grand Rapids, MI	1,987,000
14. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,415,987
15. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	1,041,331
16. Peppercomm, New York, NY	995,882
17. PadillaCRT, Minneapolis, MN	994,850
18. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	928,908
19. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	769,798
20. Butler Associates LLC, New York, NY	712,457
21. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	690,377
22. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	432,844
23. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	300,000
24. Seigenthaler PR, part of Finn Partners, Nashville, TN	291,091
25. Moore Communications Group, Tallahassee, FL	277,104
26. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	261,776
27. Zeno Group, New York, NY	158,331
28. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	150,000
29. IW Group, West Hollywood, CA	142,000
30. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	134,800
31. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	58,000
32. Beehive PR, St. Paul, MN	49,910
33. Didit Communications, LLC, New York, NY	25,050
34. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	25,000
35. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	2,000

The fall of the Columbia Journalism School

By Fraser Seitel

Full disclosure: After graduating from the University of Missouri School of Journalism many, many years ago, I was rejected for admission to the nation's foremost graduate school for budding reporters, the Columbia University School of Journalism.



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*.

So I went into public relations.

In the spirit of Groucho Marx's disdain for any club that would have allowed him to be a member, however, I ultimately admired Columbia for refusing to lower its standards and accept the likes of me.

Columbia, after all, was the crème

de la crème of journalism schools, and it had a reputation to protect.

But these days, I'm not so sure.

Under its current dean, former *Washington Post* reporter Steve Coll, the once mighty bastion of fairness and objectivity has increasingly become a willing spear-carrier for liberal political causes.

Today, what passes for "journalism" is more often the kind of one-sided rabble that Fox News spews on the right and MSNBC spouts on the left. Alas, the Columbia Journalism School seems to have forsaken its 100 years of teaching the principles of unbiased, indifferent reporting and has fallen down that same subjective rat hole.

Case-in-point: Columbia J School's campaign to rid the world of fossil fuels and that most villainous deliverer of such fuels, Exx-

onMobil.

Headlining the school's website is an invitation to read the three-part series that Columbia students, in association with the *Los Angeles Times*, produced its *Energy and Environmental Reporting Project*, which accuses ExxonMobil of hiding early knowledge about global warming and deceiving the public for years while it continued to pump out the filthy fuel.

The *L.A. Times* stories and earlier ones in *InsideClimate News*, a newsletter focused on the dangers of climate change, sparked investigations from state attorneys general, like New York's eager beaver Eric Schneiderman, and provoked outrage from liberal politicians, notably Democrat presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

ExxonMobil immediately cried foul, pointing out that the basis of the reporting came from Exxon's own publicly-available data, that the data was "cherry-picked" and didn't at all reflect Exxon's public statements over time about the evolving causes and risks associated with climate change.

In other words, Exxon accused *InsideClimate News* and the *Los Angeles Times* of publishing hatchet jobs, aided and abetted by a supposedly impartial, distinguished academic institution.

Now, there's nothing wrong with good, solid investigative reporting pursued in the cause of finding the truth. But the reporting in this case raises troubling ethical questions, not only about the integrity of Columbia University's "research," but also the kind of scholarship the Columbia Journalism School now advocates.

Three of the more perplexing issues concerning the Columbia J School Exxon onslaught are the following:

Funders are outspoken climate advocates

Columbia's *Energy and Environmental Reporting Project* is funded in part by philanthropic organizations devoted to climate change issues and the end of fossil fuels. The alignment of the thesis of the articles and the goals of the funders is clear. Less clear was the identity of said funders, which the *L.A. Times* conveniently failed to list in its articles.

Clearly, journalism schools like Columbia, where it costs a full-time graduate student upwards of \$90,000 a year, are suffering severe money woes. Last year, Columbia J School class sizes were reduced and teachers were fired. So the school needs donations desperately.

Still, there's a real question as to whether this compelling need for donations should lead to research dictated by funders' desires.

Columbia honors go to friendly allies

For nearly 100 years, the Columbia Journalism School has awarded the Pulitzer Prize for achievements in journalism. There is no more coveted honor in this field. When a journalistic entity earns a Pulitzer, it gains instant respect, recognition and support.

In 2013, the year Steve Coll became J School Dean, the Pulitzer was awarded to *InsideClimate News*, at that time an obscure online news organization devoted to climate change issues and the end of fossil fuels. The news service was funded by the same philanthropic organizations that funded Columbia's *Energy and Environmental Reporting Project*.

Two years after its Pulitzer, *InsideClimate News* led the attack on ExxonMobil with its mammoth five-part series, authored by three reporters, assisted by five associates and based almost entirely on Exxon's own archival records housed at the University of Texas in Austin.

The series' breathless premise — that Exxon purposely hid lethal facts about global warming — was seized upon by reporters and politicians as nothing less than the second coming of the cigarette industry's attempt to hide its products' connection to cancer.

Columbia's dean is virulently anti-Exxon.

Perhaps most incriminating about the Columbia Journalism School's targeting of ExxonMobil involves the status of its Dean.

Steve Coll, the Dean of the Columbia School of Journalism has, for years, been an unabashed Exxon critic. In 2012, a year before he came to Columbia, Coll wrote a 683-page expose, *Private Empire: Exxon-Mobil and American Power*. Needless to say, it wasn't a love letter. When describing the book, Coll's former employer the *Washington Post* said, "ExxonMobil has met its match in Coll."

Again, there's nothing wrong with an investigative reporter focusing his bazooka on Big Oil. But what is curious is that with all of today's societal targets ripe for investigative research — from income inequality to gun politics, from lobbyist control of legislators to Steven Cohen and the SEC — the one company the Columbia School of Journalism chooses to go after was the same one its Dean hammered in his best-selling book.

Advocacy journalism in the 21st century — whether an "independent news service" attacking climate change deniers or an "actor journalist" protecting a murdering drug lord — has become an accepted fact of life.

But advocacy journalism in a university wrapper is another kettle of oil. ○

PR news brief

FH sweetens PR for Russell Stover

Confectioner Russell Stover has brought in FleishmanHillard to mold its PR as AOR.

The work covers social media, digital and PR for the Kansas City-based company, purchased by chocolatier Lindt in 2014.

FH's Chicago outpost will lead the work with assistants from Kansas City and St. Louis. FH edged a single finalist after a competitive pitch process.

Russell Stover traces its roots to Clara Stover's Denver candy shop in the 1920s. It did not have previously have an AOR for PR.

Tax highlights for 2016

By Richard Goldstein

For 2016 we have some new tax legislation that was passed. This month's column reviews some of the recently passed tax legislation as well as some tax opportunities when filing your 2015 tax return.



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

Building write-offs

Many PR firms that are located outside of major cities may own the structure they conduct business in. Unfortunately, it takes 39 years to completely recoup the cost of a commercial building through depreciation deductions. Your business or you may not even

be around by the time 39 years rolls around.

A good tax strategy is to conduct a cost-segregation study. If you qualify, you can use the study as a basis to write off certain building components in five or seven years without having to get approval from the IRS.

The purpose of the study is to bifurcate the part of the building subject to 39 years depreciation (real property) from those components considered tangible personal property. Recent court cases have held that parts of a commercial building can be treated as personal property used in a business located in the building instead of maintenance or operation of the building. These can include specialized electrical systems, certain plumbing and removable carpeting.

It's important to get a professional to help prepare the study. The IRS recently issued a 115-page Audit Techniques Guide to help IRS agents better determine when a cost segregation study is up to standards.

The S corporation election

Believe it or not, I have come across many PR firms that conduct their business as a C (Regular Corporation). In addition to paying a corporate level tax, C corporations are subject to a double tax on amounts distributed to shareholders.

Many of these corporations distribute all earnings to the owners as compensation. Unfortunately, if the compensation is not "reasonable," the IRS will attempt to argue that the so called compensation consists of compensation and a dividend, the dividend part being subject to double taxation.

A good strategy is to elect S corporation status. Because there is no tax at the corporate level, you pay tax only once on business profits. The deadline for making this change is two-and-a-half months after the end of the firm's tax year — in most cases March 15, 2016 for calendar year corporations.

With an S corporation, corporate income items, losses (subject to certain rules), deductions and credits pass through to the shareholders. The shareholders report these items on their personal income tax returns and pay tax at individual income tax rates. Thus, you avoid double taxation issues. To make the election file Form 2553, do speak to you tax CPA or attorney before doing anything! (see subsequent discussion.)

New tax legislation

Most PR firms are aware that Congress passed new tax legislation in 2015. A summary of some of the passed provisions impact your business.

S corporations

One of the tax strategies discussed in this column is the conversion to an S corporation from a C corporation. The new tax law (known as the "PATH Act") made some important changes for S corporations.

When a C corporation converts to S corporation status, a corporate level tax known as the "built-in gains tax" may have to be paid in addition to the tax paid by shareholders on the income earned by the S corporation.

This tax is only payable by S corporations that switched from C corporation status to S corporation status. Thus, it will not apply to any corporation that elected S corporation status for the inception of business. The tax is only assessed on built-in gains, the excess of the fair market value of assets over their tax basis at the date of the conversion to S status. For example, when receivables of a cash basis PR firm at conversion are collected or other assets sold, the built-in gains tax may apply. A more likely scenario is the sale of the company assets to an unrelated party.

You may ask: what assets does a PR firm have? Well, sure there is tangible personal property such as furniture, computers, etc. These assets do not tend to appreciate over time but depreciate. What you have is "Goodwill!" Assume the goodwill on the conversion to S status was \$500,000 and you now sold the agency assets for \$5.0 million. \$4.5 million is going to be subject to the built-in gains tax in addition to the capital gains tax to be paid by the selling shareholders.

Prior to the PATH Act the period of time that the built-in gains tax could apply was

normally the 10-year period that begins on the conversion date. However, for S corporation tax years beginning in 2012 through 2014, the recognition period was five years.

The PATH Act makes the five-year recognition period retroactive to tax years beginning in 2015. This means, for gains recognized in 2015 and beyond, the built-in gains tax won't apply if the five years of the recognition period have gone by before the start of the year. Therefore, if an election was made in 2010, the recognition period will run to 2019. If the election is made in 2015, the recognition period will not be ten years but five years. Under the new tax law, for gains recognized in 2015 and beyond, the built-in gains tax won't apply if the fifth year of the recognition period has gone by before the start of the year.

Enhanced Section 179 deductions

The new tax law retroactively restores and makes permanent (1) Section 179 deduction of \$500,000, (2) enhanced Section 179 phase-out threshold of \$2 million, and (3) allowing the Section 179 deduction for qualified real property, up to \$250,000.

Without these changes, the maximum Section 179 deduction cap that previously applied was scheduled to be only \$25,000, the phase-out threshold was scheduled to fall to \$200,000, and there was no Section 179 deduction for qualified real estate. For tax year beginning after 2015 the Section 179 limits will be indexed for inflation and the deduction cap for qualified real estate will be eliminated. Therefore, air conditioning and heating units will be eligible for expensing.

Meet with your own tax advisor to determine how these and other changes impact you and your business. ●

PR news brief

Marketing Maven, DNA eye e-commerce push

Los Angeles-based Marketing Maven has aligned with e-commerce marketing shop DNA Response to handle social media marketing and PR for direct-to-consumer brands using marketplaces like eBay and Amazon.

MM chief Lindsey Carnett said her firm will collect analytics from DNA to build a PR attribution model on the impact of editorial and social coverage on e-commerce sales. She said MM staff will pitch national media and disseminate social coverage in a bid to drive traffic to e-commerce marketplaces.

DNA manages "channel presence," essentially listings, for large consumer brands in spaces like toys, pet supplies, or consumer tech. CEO and president Ranjit Mulgaonkar said both firms know the direct marketing industry well and will be able to work together to "improve e-commerce marketing practices and help other companies maximize sales."

PR pros must know SPAM, fax regulations

By Mark Sableman

The CAN-SPAM law, which regulates commercial emails, and the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, which prohibits unsolicited fax ads, must be considered anytime a commercial message is sent out by email or fax.

Technically, the CAN-SPAM act only regulates emails designed to promote a commercial product or service. Mere informational emails aren't covered. Nor are transactional and relationship emails, such as emails to confirm purchases or notify about recalls, upgrades and account information.

But many regulators take a critical view of informational

communications that fall outside of typical editorial channels. Some courts and regulators unfairly brand every communication made with a commercial purpose which could include PR communications as "advertising" and thus non-informational.

The CAN-SPAM Act permits marketing emails as long as they meet certain requirements. The email header must not be false or misleading, the subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message, the message must be identified as an ad (usually in a footer), and the sender's physical address must be included. Additionally, specific rules for disclosing, allowing and implementing opt-outs must be followed.

Opt-out notices required

The Federal Communications Commission insists that opt-out notices and procedures be provided even for solicited communications and not just unsolicited ads. That position is currently being challenged, but prudent mass emailers will include fully compliant opt-out notices and procedures for all of their commercial emails.

CAN-SPAM essentially sets up an opt-out system for emails. You can send the first one,

but the recipient can opt out of receiving further emails from you or your client or both. Canadian email law, known as CASL, follows an opt-in system. U.S. law means maintaining company-wide opt-out lists, and scrubbing all email-send lists against those opt-outs.

Fax law is stricter

The law that regulates faxes, the TCPA, is full of pitfalls, dangers, and liability risks. It originated in the days when fax machines and paper were expensive, and it seemed improper for someone to send an unsolicited and unwanted ad by fax. So the law prohibits the sending of unsolicited ads by fax, and severely penalizes violations.

You might think PR communications are safe because they aren't ads. But the FCC and some courts have construed ads broadly to include any communication, even informational, that is intended to promote the company and its products or services. While the act exempts faxes to a party with whom the sender has an "established business relationship," that exemption is narrower than the words suggest.

Yes, you probably have an EBR with news outlets that you regularly deal with. But you might not have an EBR if you fax your release to a long list of recipients, and you or your client didn't get those fax numbers from direct past voluntary dealings with the recipients.

Each improper fax, to each recipient, carries a minimum \$500 civil penalty. The TCPA is enforceable by private attorneys, who usually file their claims as class actions. A single mistaken fax to thousands of recipients can lead to millions in liability.

For these reasons, most marketers avoid faxes these days except when they can prove the faxes concern active transactions (like purchase confirmations), or where they can clearly prove an EBR.

Unlike the TCPA, CAN-SPAM prohibitions are not enforceable by private attorneys, and the statutory penalties are far more modest.

CAN-SPAM is fairly friendly to commercial users. Though its title — the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003 — suggests an intent to restrict email marketing, the marketing industry actually advocated for the bill, to create a uniform federal standard in lieu of more restrictive California rules that would have otherwise set the de facto national standard.

PR pros may think that subjecting their communications to laws designed for unsolicited advertising is like fitting square pegs into a round hole, but it is worth keeping these laws in mind to avoid any legal snake pits, whether square or round. ○



Mark Sableman is a media, Internet law partner with Thompson Coburn LLP. He has taught Internet Law, and Censorship and Free Expression, at Washington University School of Law.



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USDA, HHS Unveil New Dietary Guidelines

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans report was released in January, the latest government policy statement outlining proposed recommendations for a healthy diet.

Jointly administered by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and Secretary of the USDA, the report, issued every five years, influences nutrition policy for everything from federal assistance programs, to school lunches and prison meals, to national food labels.

For the first time in its history, the DGA now sets limits on sugar, suggesting sugar should comprise only 10 percent of daily caloric intake. On the other hand, previous recommendations on dietary cholesterol — a target of no more than 300 milligrams a day — have been scaled back; foods such as eggs and shellfish are now recognized as part of a healthy diet. The report also emphasized protein — specifically, proteins from seafood, poultry and lean meats — and suggested that Americans eat more whole fruits, vegetables and grains.

According to Bill Layden, partner and co-founder of food, nutrition, and wellness agency FoodMinds, the most significant change this year involves a shift in the DGAs overall focus, from listing the foods that Americans should avoid or eat more of, to an increased focus on an individual's eating patterns.

"It's an important differentiation. In the early days, the DGAs were mostly focused on specific nutrients. Now they've begun talking about not just foods, but suggesting their patterns in an overall context, and the synergy those healthy eating patterns have on an individual over the course of a day, or a week, or a lifespan," Layden told O'Dwyer's. "As it turns out, one size does not fit all, and this shift recognizes a need to tailor and apply an individual's needs in order to achieve overall healthy eating patterns."

"In my opinion, this provides a rich and fantastic blueprint for manufacturers, retailers and even software producers. The DGA document offers a great opportunity for nutrition marketers to help support consumers in adopting healthier eating patterns," Layden said. ○

Solomon McCown Unveils Government Relations Practice

Boston-based agency Solomon McCown & Company today announced that it has launched a government relations practice. That newly unveiled operation will be headed by government relations veteran Daniel Cence, who will wear the title as Senior VP.

The agency said the newly minted government relations practice serves as a natural extension of its public affairs expertise.

"Our sweet spot as an agency is at the intersection of business and policy, so we have always had a depth of expertise in public affairs," Solomon McCown President Ashley McCown told O'Dwyer's. "More and more clients and prospective clients are looking for government relations services, so now is the time to meet that demand."

Cence will head Solomon McCown's government relations practice, and will also supply strategic PR counsel for clients in the agency's real estate, health care, corporate, education and mission-based sectors. He will contribute to Solomon McCown's



Daniel Cence



integrated digital social media and marketing services, and will also be a member of the agency's crisis management team. ○

Obama Alum to Head Policy for Google

Caroline Atkinson, former White House Deputy National Security Adviser for President Obama, has joined Google to head public policy.

She takes a role vacated last year by Rachel Whetstone, who moved to Uber.

Atkinson was NSA for International Economic Affairs and Special Assistant to the President. She earlier directed the International Monetary Fund's external relations department and served in the US Treasury Dept., as well.

Google general counsel Kent Walker called her an "internationally respected diplomat and adviser."

Atkinson's global pedigree will be useful as the search giant faces antitrust scrutiny in the European Union. ○



Caroline Atkinson

Kozakos Flies to A4A

Penny Kozakos, Managing Director and 16-year alum of Burson-Marsteller in Washington, is flying to airline trade group Airlines for America as VP of Communications in January.

Kozakos is a former journalist who served as a news assistant for *USA Today* and NBC News before moving to Burson.

She starts Jan. 4 at A4A under SVP/Comms. Jean Medina.

A4A claims to rep an industry with a \$1.4 trillion domestic impact and 11M US jobs. ○



Penny Kozakos

Mann Directs Ketchum PA in DC

Nicole Mann, Senior Director of Global Public Affairs at Teva Pharmaceuticals, has moved to Ketchum as SVP and Director of Corporate and Public Affairs in D.C.

Mann, is a former Senior Director for Qorvis MSL and Account Manager for Waggener Edstrom with deep experience in health-care and pharma PA.

Kathy Keavons left the corporate and PA slot at Ketchum in the fall. ○

C&W makes major Brazil deal

Cohn & Wolfe has acquired Brazil's Grupo Maquina, creating a 240-staff powerhouse.

The 20-year-old agency gives C&W a footprint that includes operations in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia.

C&W CEO Donna Imperato said Brazil is a "critical" market for the firm, adding that Latin America has become a key region for clients. "They have an impressive client base and an equally impressive leadership team," she said of GM.

GM founder Maristela Mafei stands as director-general of Maquina Cohn & Wolfe under Imperato. Co-CEOs Marcelo Diego and Daniella Camargos remain in those roles as partners.

Clients of GM include Credit Suisse, EY, Xerox, L'Oréal, as well as the entrepreneur Jorge Paulo Lemann and his Brazilian operations of Kraft Heinz, 3G Capital, and AmBev, among others. ○

FH taps Carter as Global COO

FleishmanHillard has elevated J.J. Carter to the new role of global COO and Americas president as newly installed CEO John Saunders organizes top management of the firm.

Saunders, who called the new post "crucial" to the firm's future growth, noted Carter has run numerous global accounts, including Visa, and become one of the firm's most decorated client relationship managers.

Current FH Americas chief Jack Modzelewski, a 30-year FH alum, was named global president of business development and partnerships, another new post for the firm.

Saunders joined FH in 2005 and has led its US East, West, Canada and Mexico operations. He also launched its sports marketing

unit out of his previous PR career stops with the International Association of Tennis Professionals and NBA's Dallas Mavericks and Detroit Pistons.

Added Saunders: "J.J. is a champion of the FH culture and he is known for his integrity, his creativity and his ability to attract and develop great talent. I am thrilled to see his impact on the firm at the highest level." ○



J.J. Carter

Edelman finds China Chief

Jeffrey Yu, former Publicis Worldwide CEO for China, has joined Edelman in that role.

He takes a post vacated by Steven Cao in 2014 amid his reported cooperation with a China corruption probe.

Yu is based in Shanghai and leads the largest PR firm's Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou operations.

The firm, which said its China operations have grown significantly in the past year to 320 staffers, said a key part of his role is developing Edelman China's creative, planning and analytics capabilities, reporting to Bob Grove, CEO of Edelman North Asia.

Yu most recently led social marketing start-up RMConnect. He led Publicis Worldwide in China for two-plus years, consolidating its advertising, digital and marketing service offerings in a restructuring scheme.

He spent 25 years at the Bates ad agency, now WPP's Bates CHI & Partners, including 10 years as CEO. ○



Jeffrey Yu

FARA News



NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATIONS 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.

Cloakroom Advisors, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 14, 2016 for Organization for Peace and Justice, Staten Island, NY**, to raise awareness about human rights violations in Bangladesh and the lack of fairness and due process in the proceedings of the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) Bangladesh. Work is being performed as a subcontractor under a blanket agreement with Cassidy & Associates.

Daschle Group, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 7, 2016 for VMRO DPMNE Political Party, Skopje, Macedonia**, to provide strategic consulting in connection with political and public policy issues before the U.S. government impacting the VMRO DPMNE Political Party's interests.

Ben Barnes Group, Rio Grande, TX, **registered Jan. 5, 2016 for Asoupir Limited, Victoria, Mahe, Seychelles**, to promote its interests in the international investment community, including the economic and geopolitical interests of Ukraine.

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 Counsel LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 20, 2016 for Blackhawk Network, Inc., Pleasanton, CA**, for monitoring general issues related to financial services and cyber security.

Keystone Strategic Advisers, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 21, 2016 for Iroko Pharmaceuticals, LLC, Philadelphia, PA**, regarding responsible pain management.

American Continental Group, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 20, 2016 for Raytheon Company, Arlington, VA**, regarding weather satellites (NASA) appropriations.

Liebman & Associates, Inc., Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 21, 2016 for Solar Roof Dynamics LLC, Davis, CA**, regarding solar research, development, deployment and training.

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