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Edelman Trust Barometer takes biggest dip

The 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer, based on 25-minute online interviews with 1,850 respondents drawn from a sampling of more than 33,000 respondents, found the "largest drop ever" in trust in government, business, media and NGOs.

Trust in media fell precipitously to 43 percent and is at all-time lows in 17 countries, while trust levels in government, at 41 percent, dropped in 14 markets and is the least trusted institution in half of the 28 countries surveyed, said Richard Edelman, President and CEO.

The credibility of leaders also is in peril. CEO credibility dropped 12 points globally to an all-time low of 37 percent, falling in every country studied, while government leaders remain least credible at 29 percent.

The Barometer found that 53 percent of respondents believe the current overall system has failed them — it is unfair and offers little hope for the future — while only 15 percent believe it is working, and approximately one-third are uncertain. Even the elites have a lack of faith in the system, with 48 percent of the top quartile in income, 49 percent of the college-educated and a 51% majority of the well-informed saying the system has failed.

The gap between the trust held by the informed public and that of the mass population has widened to 15 points, with the biggest disparities in the U.S. (21 points), U.K. (19 points) and France (18 points). The mass population in 20 countries distrusts their institutions, compared to only six for the informed public.

"The implications of the global trust crisis are deep and wide-ranging," said Edelman. "It began with the Great Recession of 2008, but like the second and third waves of a tsunami, globalization and technological change have further weakened people's trust in global institutions. The consequence is virulent populism and nationalism as the mass population has taken control away from the elites."

Current populist movements are fueled by a lack of trust in the system and economic and societal fears, including corruption (40 percent), immigration (28 percent), globalization (27 percent), eroding social values (25 percent) and the pace of innovation (22 percent). Countries coupling a lack of faith in the system with deep fears, such as the U.S., U.K. and Italy have seen the election of Donald Trump, the Brexit vote and the failed Italian referendum.

The cycle of distrust, said Edelman, is magnified by the emergence of a media echo chamber that reinforces personal beliefs while shutting out opposing points of view. Respondents favor search engines (59 percent) over human editors (41 percent) and are nearly four times more likely to ignore information that supports a position they do not believe in.

Trust in traditional media fell five points to 57 percent, the steepest decline among platforms since 2012. Social media dropped three points to 41 percent while online-only media jumped five points to 51 percent.

There is evidence of even further dispersion of authority. A "person like yourself" (60 percent) is now just as credible a source of information about a company as is a technical (60 percent) or academic (60 percent) expert, and far more credible than a CEO (37 percent) and government official (29 percent).

Of the four institutions, business is viewed as the only one that can make a difference, according to respondents. Three out of four agree a company can take actions to both increase profits and improve economic and social conditions in the community where it operates. Moreover, among those who are uncertain about whether the system is working for them, it is business (58 percent) that they trust most.

Yet business finds itself on the brink of distrust, and perhaps most concerning for business is the perceived role the public sees it playing in stoking their fears. A majority of the global population surveyed worries about losing their jobs due to the impacts of globalization (60 percent), lack of training or skills (60 percent), immigrants who work for less (58 percent), jobs moving to cheaper markets (55 percent) and automation (54 percent).

- Trust in business (52 percent) dropped in 18 countries, while NGOs (53 percent) saw drop-offs as high as 10 points across 21 countries.
- Employees, on average, are trusted 16 points more than CEOs on messaging around employee/customer relations (53 percent), financial earnings (38 percent), crises (37 percent), innovation (33 percent), industry issues (32 percent) or programs addressing societal issues (30 percent).
- Half of the countries surveyed have lost faith in the system, led by France (72 percent) and Italy (72 percent), Mexico (67 percent), South Africa (67 percent) and Spain (67 percent).

The 17th annual survey was conducted by research firm Edelman Intelligence and consisted of 25-minute online interviews from Oct. 13 to Nov. 16, 2016. The survey sampled more than 33,000 respondents consisting of 1,150 general population respondents ages 18 and over and 500 informed public respondents in the U.S. and China and 200 informed public respondents in all other countries across 28 markets.

— Jack O'Dwyer

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Americans disagree cause for uncivil political climate

A majority of Americans believe the 2016 presidential election was uncivil, but a clear division exists along partisan lines regarding who Americans think are to blame.

By Jon Gingerich

Everyone seems to agree that the 2016 presidential election was uncivil. The problem is, no one agrees who's to blame.

According to an annual Weber Shandwick/Powell Tate survey conducted by opinion research and strategy firm KRC Research, a vast majority (79 percent) of Americans said they thought the 2016 presidential election was uncivil, and 69 percent said the country now has a major problem with civility.

Americans remain sharply divided, however, regarding why they believe incivility has recently run amok in our political landscape.

For voters who supported Hillary Clinton, 89 percent cited politicians as the group most responsible for America's respectability problem, followed by social media (69 percent) and traditional media (51 percent). On the other hand, only 53 percent of Trump voters saw politicians as the problem, and instead blamed the media and demonstrators/protestors (77 percent and 76 percent, respectively) for America's recent loss of political decorum, followed closely by social media (75 percent).

Three-quarters of those polled (75 percent) now believe incivility has reached crisis proportions in the United States, and more than half (56 percent) of respondents said they expect civility to get worse in the coming years. The latter statement illustrates a division along partisan lines as well, as Clinton supporters were more likely to hold that view (81 percent vs. 72 percent who do not). Trump supporters, on the other hand, were far more likely to believe that the nation will grow more civil in the future (84 percent vs. 27 percent who disagree).

When it comes to the candidates themselves, 80 percent of Clinton voters described the Democratic Party candidate's behavior as civil during the election, compared to only 21 percent of Trump voters. On the other hand, only 9 percent of Clinton voters thought Trump behaved in a civil manner during the election, compared to 46 percent of Trump voters.

The notion that fewer than half of Trump's supporters thought their candidate expressed civility during the election is telling. Indeed, nearly half of Trump voters (48 percent) surveyed agreed with the statement that "there is nothing wrong with a politician saying what is on their mind, no matter how uncivil," compared to only 21 percent of Clinton voters who endorsed this statement.

There were a few silver linings. The vast majority of all Americans surveyed (86 percent) believe political incivility hurts the U.S.'s reputation, that uncivil comments made by political leaders encourage greater overall societal incivility (79 percent) and that incivility leads to less citizen political engagement (75 percent). Indeed, the study reported that incivility was cited as a factor among 59 percent of non-voters in their decision not to vote in the 2016 presidential election.

Nearly everyone polled (97 percent) also said they believe it's important for U.S. presidents to behave in a civil manner, and 83 percent of Trump voters and 88 percent of Clinton voters agreed with the statement that the media is obligated to report when a public official is lying. O

PR news brief

PR bonuses declne, hourly rates up

The Official PR Salary & Bonus Report, 2017 edition, released by Spring Associates, Inc., shows that base compensation nationally for corporate communications and PR agency professionals increased by an average 4.8 percent and 1.2 percent respectively in 2016.

Corporate communications bonuses nationally averaged 19.7 percent of base salaries, a 13.3 percent decrease from the prior year. PR agency bonuses nationally averaged 9.7 percent of base salaries, a 3.1 percent decrease from the prior year.

"Overall, I found last year's agency and corporate compensation figures to be somewhat underwhelming," said Dennis Spring, president of Spring Associates, Inc. and publisher of the report.

Average earnings nationally for corporate communications pros were up 1.6 percent to $136,400. On the agency side, average earnings nationally were basically flat at $104,000 (+0.4 percent).

PR firm hourly billing rates nationally increased approximately 25.6 percent, with the biggest increases coming in the Southeast and West, which had shown the biggest decrease in last year's report.

The report identified the following eight areas which represent the greatest concentration of communications and PR pros: New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Houston, Washington, DC, and San Francisco.

Average corporate communications salary for these areas came in at $140,820, up 1.4 percent. PR agency executives had an average salary of $111,630, up 2.8 percent.

Working Millennials burdened by debt

Historic levels of student loan debt incurred by members of the Millennial generation are now impacting their financial decisions in post-college life, including their performance in the workforce.

By Jon Gingerich

Millennials are on track to comprise roughly three-fourths of the total U.S. workforce within the next decade, but the unprecedented amount of student loan debt members of this generation have incurred is now impacting their financial decisions in post-college life.

According to a recent survey commissioned by Minneapolis-based PR agency PadillaCRT and conducted by market research firm ORC International, Millennials' financial insolvency may also be affecting their role in the workforce, as college debt could be making it harder for employers to retain quality Millennial staff.

The study found that one in four Millennials now owe more than $30,000 in student loans, and a quarter of respondents now expect it will take at least several decades to pay off that outstanding debt, with the majority now believing they'll still be making student loan repayments at least into their 30s, if not their 40s.

The study's analysis of today's student loan norms also highlights a potential financial debt disparity between the sexes: the study revealed that 42 percent of women possess more than $30,000 in student loans, compared to 27 percent of men. Female respondents were also more than twice as likely than men to think it will take more than 20 years to pay off their college debts.

Such hefty financial burdens have an added economic effect of delaying "traditional" life milestones for Millennials such as buying a house or having children, but the study suggests a correlation may also exist between straddling all this crushing debt and Millennials' present standing in the workplace. As it turns out, being burdened excess debt may also be affecting Millennials' employment flexibility as well as their performance at work, which ultimately bodes poorly for employers as well.

More than a third — 37 percent — of Millennial women polled, as well as a quarter of men, said they're less likely to stay with their current employer due to simply their current financial situation. Less than a third — 29 percent — of Millennials said they consider themselves engaged at work, and only a little more than half — 55 percent — said they feel like they have a good idea of what is going on at their company.

A 2013 Gallup study showed that highly engaged workforces outperform less-engaged companies by 147 percent higher earnings per share over time and also enjoy a 90 percent better growth trend.

The PadillaCRT / ORC International survey polled 1,000 Millennials between the ages of 22-35 that have at least a four-year college degree. O

Media news brief

Social ad spends skyrocketd in '16

Brands spent 65 percent more on social media advertising in 2016 than the year prior, according to a new report by Chicago-based data science and media technology company 4C Insights.

4C's "The State of Social Advertising" report analyzed paid media spend activity over Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Pinterest in the last year, and revealed how advertising at social channels is now taking an increasing share of media budgets.

The report discovered that photo-sharing site Instagram boasted the highest levels of growth in social media advertising last year, revealing total ad spend growth of 138 percent in 2016. Several new features introduced at the Facebook-owned service, including its popular Stories feature, which allows users to post photo, videos and ads that disappear after 24 hours, were cited in the report as reasons why brands have flocked to the social media site. Instagram saw membership total more than 600 million users by the end of the year, according to the report, 100 million of which joined the site within the previous 6 months.

LinkedIn was a close second, revealing ad spend growth of 130 percent in 2016. The professional networking site, which was acquired by Microsoft last year for more than $26 billion, launched its personalized conversation starters tool within its messaging feature last year.

Pinterest experienced 109 percent growth in ad spending in 2016. The site, which unveiled new advertising offerings such as its Promoted Video and Promoted App Pins, as well as targeting enhancements capabilities, grew to more than 150 million monthly users last year.

Advertising at social media mainstay Facebook saw year-over-year growth of 74 percent and 52 percent growth during 2016's fourth quarter alone, led by particularly strong gains in the home and garden and government categories.

Twitter, which also expanded its video features in 2016, came in last, with the micro-blogging site experiencing 13 percent ad spend growth over the year, according to the report.

The report particularly noted digital video advertising's growth over social platforms — with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest and Snapchat all launching new tools that allow marketers to engage with video content — and predicted this format would grow by 140 percent in the coming year.

Shaking the 'bad guy' label

The practice of transforming the perceptions of highly scrutinized industries.

By Tina Charpentier

Eat this, not that. Love it or leave it. Swipe right. Every day, we're besieged with messages telling us how to discern the good from the bad.

When it comes to natural resources, the categorization falls along clear and sharp lines. In the fight of good against evil, who wins? Wind power vs. fossil fuels? Organics vs. chemicals? Environmental organizations vs. private corporations? The answers would seem pretty clear.

According to Harris Poll's annual Reputation Quotient Summary Report ranking the general public's perception of corporate reputations of the most visible companies in the U.S., the two highest-rated companies in sectors related to clean tech/environmental sciences were not near the top of the list. General Electric came in at #52, Chevron ranked #71.

The problem is, separating the good from the bad isn't that clear. There are fewer bad guys out there than media and the public might realize. Most energy companies are exploring renewables alongside traditional energy sources. Many mining companies are restoring lands and investing in conservation programs. So why are industries like these still stuck with the bad guy label?

Transforming perceptions and conversations is one of the toughest communication challenges out there. Expectations from companies and industries wanting to achieve change aren't always realistic. As communications pros, our role requires us to be promoters, coaches, cheerleaders, futurists and teachers. And that's where it gets interesting.

Put on your patience pants

Over time, good and bad messages become seared in our brains, and trying to get people to think and act differently can be tough — even once they know better.

Growing up in the '80s, I learned that fats were bad. I gobbled up truckloads of SnackWell's®, a brand touting an array of ultra-low-fat snacking options (while downplaying the jacked-up sugar content needed to maintain their tasty appeal). Turns out, fats aren't really all that bad. It's a more complex story that requires a little education to learn how some fats are actually good for you. But despite the fact that I now completely understand the awesomeness of avocados and other good fats, my eyes still dart first to the fat content on nutrition labels. I know better — and I still fall back on old perceptions.

Companies wanting to shift public opinion about their industries or operations need to put on their patience pants. Even once the needle of public perception has started to move, it might not be immediately obvious. It can take a long time to discernably shift mindsets. I've had clients abandon thought leadership programs after a year because they didn't feel like opinions had shifted quickly enough. They missed the point.

For companies with multifaceted stories, especially when some facets are more or less popular, it can't be about a single campaign. Educating people and opening minds has to be a longer-term commitment — something that becomes part of the communications DNA rather than a single page on a website or a few earned media stories.

Don't act like you're all that

Authenticity. Transparency. While these are among some of the most overused words in PR and branding, their importance can't be overstated. But splattering messages about your commitment to sustainability or your progressive exploration of alternatives all over your annual report and website will not automatically earn you an authenticity badge.

Not all clients or companies are comfortable baring it all. In fact, most aren't. But part of being authentic and transparent is representing who you are — the good parts and the not-so-good parts. Acknowledging and embracing that you're on a journey to a greater goal can help frame the bigger picture.

Another part of the challenge is self-awareness. Clients and companies often misjudge where they are on the transparency and authenticity maturity scale. I've worked with companies that have made huge advances in these areas. Compared against their own pasts, they made tremendous strides and felt like they had it figured out. But compared against peers, competitors or other industries, not so much.

This is where communications can help shed light on reality through measurement. Benchmarking. Share of voice monitoring. Industry association reports. It's our job to help present the most realistic snapshot possible for them, with big doses of honesty and objectivity.

Measurement can also keep companies from getting too comfortable and sitting on their heels. A watchful eye on competitors, trends, the evolution of policies, regulatory issues and trends can be a strong motivator for keeping companies committed to long-term, reputation-transforming strategies.

Rely on friends and frenemies alike

Remember that kid in high school who tried to tell you how cool he was by blabbing on about ironic T-shirts and the latest obscure bands? Trying so hard to prove his cool-ness is exactly what made him uncool. The kids who were genuinely cool earned their reputations because other kids talked about them.

Tina Charpentier

The lesson here is, get the other kids to talk about you. If you're trying too hard to impress others with your great story and nobody else is talking about it — not cool.

Customers. Business partners. Media. These are the individuals and groups who can authenticate and validate the positive, progressive stories about a company. With time and frequency, these positive stories, told through channels such social media, video testimonials and earned media, stack up and begin replacing bad with good.

Industry associations can also be powerful allies. When there is a position that needs to be asserted, or industry accusations defended, professional associations can be effective mouthpieces. If you're working within an industry where the professional associations have earned reputations for complacency or are mired in politics, it's worth the effort to try to unite the membership and repair the dysfunction. You might not always have a united front, but working to improve an association on the backend can pay off when you need the group's members to pull through down the road.

This is not to say that you should leave it up to others entirely. Keep pushing out content and telling your own stories. Empower employees to have everyday conversations with friends and family. Activate channels, from the inside out, and outside in, to talk about the breadth of what your company or client is doing.

Nobody's perfect

No matter how noble the mission or righteous the messaging, every company

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How influence will shape health policy in the new D.C.

Congressional leaders and the Trump Administration have made it clear that they hope to move quickly on efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act. While the specifics of this repeal remain unclear — not to mention the many lingering questions around what, if anything, replaces the current healthcare law — it's evident that the next months will see significant changes across the board to health policy.

By Nick Horowitz

For insurance providers, healthcare companies and employers throughout the United States, a new health policy regime brings with it numerous questions and challenges. However, with a Congressional majority that has yet to come to a conclusion as to the exact mechanisms and policies they would put in place to help ensure health coverage in the absence of the ACA, these organizations can find significant opportunities to help shape the next generation of healthcare policy — if they approach the debate with the right tools and intelligence.

As Congress gets into gear, we expect to see vigorous debate around the "repeal and replace" issue with an untold number of organizations, interests and political forces vying to find their seat at the table. How, then, can organizations make sure their communications and government affairs strategy is best positioned to ensure their voice is heard and not drowned out in what is sure to be a policy feeding frenzy?

In order to meet this challenge, these groups must be prepared to use public sentiment to their benefit. Any legislative effort to significantly change how healthcare is provided in the United States will surely be met with public outcry. On one side, there are the long-standing opponents of Obamacare who expect to see Congress make good on their promise to vacate the ACA. On the other, there are those who will claim this move jeopardizes health coverage for Americans. Smart companies will find ways to piggyback on public sentiment and use these forces to help push their policy agendas.

As policies and the debates around them crystalize, organizations will need to be prepared to seed messages through owned, earned and paid channels—social media, grassroots outreach and media placements, among other channels—that let Americans know how they stand to benefit or be hurt by specific aspects of health policy. Coupled with a strong echo chamber to build momentum, organizations will be able to use public pressure to nudge members of Congress in the right direction.

To this end, effective organizations will be prepared with messaging that resonates not just with policymakers but with the voters the policymakers look towards to keep them in office.

If "Repeal and Replace" becomes a reality, and the "replace" side of that equation remains an open question, we can expect some uncertainty across the healthcare industry. However, for organizations looking to become strong voices in the healthcare policy space, this could offer a new opportunity to claim a seat at the table. By effectively demonstrating that a set of policies will be good for the economy, good for key industries and popular with voters, even previously quiet voices can stake a claim in the debate.

One of the key lessons of the 2016 campaign is that those looking to advance a political message must play to voters' immediate interests, constantly reinforcing how a particular promise or policy will improve individuals' lives. This means organizations will not only need to convince policymakers that their agenda represents smart policy, they must also be prepared to equip them with a narrative that they can bring home to their voters.

Washington, DC may seem like a different place these days, but it holds true that the primary drive of any politician is to keep his or her job secure. With a GOP Congress that wants to move forward with ACA repeal without jeopardizing its majority in the 2020 midterms, and a White House that rode populist support to victory, the policymakers tasked with designing the new healthcare regime will be looking for policies that keep voters and businesses on their side. For organizations and companies, this means they must be ready to sell their healthcare vision to influencers with a set of messages, proof points and third-party validators that demonstrate it will not only be good policy, but popular policy.

Of course, your message only matters if you can ensure it gets heard by the right people. Thus, smart organizations must be prepared to embrace a tactical approach to influence — looking at the most important players around each issue and pinpointing who they listen to and what moves the needle for them.

With a slew of new faces and interests in Washington, DC, message targeting will become a harder and more important task as the healthcare debate ramps up. No longer is it enough to rely on an old network of former colleagues and business associates, especially as the new administration places a number of political outsiders in key positions. Instead, detailed intelligence can give you deep insights into exactly what factors matter to the individual decision makers who will set the agenda for healthcare reform.

Nick Horowitz

Equipped with this data, you can then take targeted actions that allow you to saturate the channels these influencer care about most with the messages you wish to get across — the TV they watch, the papers they read, and the networks they operate within. By doing this you can efficiently create an environment in which your message is pushed from a number of angles directly towards the individuals you most wish to influence.

Whatever shape healthcare policy takes, organizations that seek to make their voices heard will need to commit to a robust plan guided by intelligence and designed to meet the politics of our time. By approaching this vibrant and messy debate with a strong message, a deep understanding of the political climate and detailed insights into the players who matter most, organizations can ensure they are well positioned to shape healthcare policy in 2017 and beyond.

Nick Horowitz is an Account Director at Racepoint Global.

PR news brief

PadillCRT becomes Bordeaux U.S. AOR

The Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux, the French association that represents and markets more than 6,000 wine growers and 300 wine merchants in France's storied Bordeaux wine region, has named Midwest agency PadillaCRT its U.S. PR agency of record.

The Minneapolis-headquartered Worldcom unit will now handle all of CIVB's consumer, trade and influencer PR activities in the U.S

PadillaCRT's work will for CIVB be done primarily out of the agency›s New York office.

How demographics will dictate the market

America is growing more diverse every day, and companies must embrace the evolution of the American consumer and communicate with audiences in ways that demonstrates a sincere understanding of its many different cultures.

By Ronald W. Wong

There have always been "Two Americas." More than 30 years ago, Governor Mario Cuomo described a "Tale of Two Cities" during his keynote address at the Democratic National Committee. Cuomo's speech was in response of President Ronald Reagan's characterization of America as a, "shining city on a hill."

"But there's another city; there's another part to the shining city; the part where some people can't pay their mortgages, and most young people can't afford one; where students can't afford the education they need, and middle-class parents watch the dreams they hold for their children evaporate," Cuomo declared in his keynote address.

The inequities and poverty which Cuomo spoke of in 1984 are even more dramatic today. Sadly, indeed, the rich have gotten richer, and the poor poorer.

Nothing has brought the divisions within America more to light than the recent election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and leader of the free world. America has never been more divided: divided by race; divided by class; divided by gender; and divided by most every attribute which defines human existence.

America is not only more divided, but it is more diverse and growing more diverse by the day. In the United States today, more than 21 of the top 25 most populated counties are more than 50% multicultural. In California, a majority of the population (57 percent) is Latino, Asian Pacific Islander or African American — 22.2 million out of California's total population of 38.8 million are people of color. Latinos alone outnumber Caucasians in California (14.99 million vs. 14.92 million, respectively).

Other states with more than 50 percent multicultural populations include Hawaii, New Mexico, Texas and the District of Columbia. Emerging majority-minority states include Nevada, Maryland, Georgia, Arizona, Florida and New York.

Immigration is fueling America's increasing diversity. Asian Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing ethnic group in America, followed by Latinos. In California, Latinos and APIs will provide virtually all of the growth in California's population over the next 45 years.

The U.S. Latino population topped 54 million (17 percent) as of July 2013, an increase of 2.1 percent over 2012. Meanwhile the Asian Pacific Islander population grew to 19.4 million (6 percent), with a growth rate of 2.9 percent.

America's diversity is inevitable, but are divisions as well? In our country's brief history, we have embraced diversity; in fact, our country was built upon it. Immigration has always fueled our country's growth and success.

Regardless of the current political climate and the views of our President, immigration has been and will always be an essential part of the American story — all of our stories; whether we are recent immigrants or have been here for generations.

Diversity is part of the American fabric. Companies which embrace and celebrate it are being richly rewarded. Here in California, most companies market and reach out to ethnic communities as a matter of course.

As the buying power and social influence of ethnic groups continues to expand, it becomes indispensable for marketers and advertisers to understand their expectations and preferences. The buying power of U.S. Latinos now exceeds $1.2 trillion annually, according to Nielsen's 2015 Share of Wallet Study. Latinos Consumer Spending is expected to grow by 85 percent over the next 10 years, compared to 50 percent of non-Latinos.

Asian Pacific Islander buying power was $770 billion in 2014 and is expected to increase to $1 trillion by 2018. APIs are the most affluent of the multicultural segments.

In reaching the Latino and Asian Pacific Islander communities it's important to remember that these are immigrant communities and reaching them isn't as easy as advertising in the mainstream English-language media. 90.4 percent of APIs speak a language other than English at home. Of that, 57.5 percent report speaking English less than "very well." 74 percent of APIs and about half of Latino adults are foreign-born, so their preferred language may not be English.

Nearly half of people of color prefer watching ethnic television. 45 percent of all African American, Latino, Asian Pacific Islander, Native American and Arab Americans prefer ethnic television, radio or newspapers to their mainstream counterparts. These "primary consumers" also indicated that they access ethnic media frequently. In addition to the 29 million "primary consumers," ethnic media also reaches another 22 million ethnic adults on a regular basis. The overwhelming majority (80 percent) of the ethnic population is reached by ethnic media on a regular basis.

Communicating to ethnic audiences in their language of preference is only the first step. It's not as easy as simple translation. To truly motive behavioral change, sell a product, change an opinion, or create brand loyalty you have to meet the people where they are and talk to them in ways that demonstrate a sincere understanding of their hopes, their fears, their dreams and aspirations.

Ronald W. Wong

This is why we created Imprenta Communications Group, which specializes in reaching diverse audiences. Imprenta's mission is to empower communities of color by giving them a voice and communicating to them in ways which respects their diversity and understands their culture.

This respect of diversity and deep understanding of communities of color has fueled Imprenta's radical growth and success. For two years in a row, *Inc*. magazine has recognized Imprenta as one of the fastest growing companies in America. The company is also one of the most decorated public relations agencies in the country, including being recognized as the 2016 Boutique Agency of the Year, among many other awards and recognitions.

By embracing and celebrating diversity, Imprenta is helping its clients succeed and win in the market place. Inclusion and tolerance has always made America a winner on the world stage; companies that are in tune to the changing dynamics and implications of a truly multi-ethnic global market will continue to thrive.

America has the most talented workforce and the strongest economy in the world. We can't deny that our diversity as a nation has been a big part of that success; it's a unique strength given added importance as our nation's population becomes ever more diverse.

Whatever your political leanings or social views, the market will speak and determine our fate. Companies that ignore or dismiss this evolution of the American consumer do so at their own peril.

Ronald W. Wong is President and CEO of Imprenta Communications Group.

How Trump is transforming the public affairs industry

Donald Trump's regulatory agenda and longstanding promises to free Washington of special interests may present opportunities and foreseeable challenges to lobbyists and the public affairs industry.

By Jon Gingerich

It could be argued that Donald Trump is continuing to campaign after the election is over. His polarizing presidency so far can be characterized by a delirious ambition to ensure his plans are promptly put into action without adopting the due diligence to surpass the checks and balances that prevent mere campaign promises from being codified into law.

Already Trump has issued a dizzying barrage of executive orders that have sent even the most rabid political buffs racing to catch up. In the two weeks since taking office, he's signed executive actions to build a wall along the US-Mexico border, enacted a temporary ban on refugees and travelers from seven majority-Muslim nations, revived the Keystone XL pipeline, withdrawn the U.S. from Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, mandated limits on federal regulations and rolled back requirements for the Affordable Care Act.

Similarly, Trump recently made somewhat good on his oft-repeated campaign pledge to "drain the swamp" in Washington, passing rules ostensibly meant to barricade that "revolving door" whereby public servants and special interests intermingle. On January 28 he signed an executive order prohibiting branch appointees from lobbying the agency at which they were stationed for a period of five years after leaving their posts. Most notably, he also prohibited administration officials from ever lobbying the U.S. on behalf of a foreign government.

Both measures could be seen as a potential disincentive to would-be lobbyists, and can also be interpreted as an extension of the anti-lobbying rules enacted by President Obama upon his appointment to office in 2009. Trump also preserved Obama's rule for incoming executive administration officials, which required new appointees to sign an ethics pledge that bans them from working on issues they lobbied on during the last two years.

However, Trump's executive action actually eases some of the lobbying restrictions Obama put into place, notably, the former President's controversial rule that lobbyists could not join any agencies they'd lobbied in the last two years. That rule is now gone. Trump also removed a key provision requiring the administration to disclose, through annual reports, how the executive branch is enforcing its own lobbying rules.

According to Craig Holman, Ph.D., a government affairs lobbyist for non-profit consumer rights advocacy group Public Citizen, this calls transparency into question, as it makes it very difficult for us to know how many waivers to his lobbying rules Trump will sign for incoming officials.

Holman also said Trump's lobbying restrictions ultimately aren't that meaningful when it comes to outgoing administration officials, because it merely makes exceptions to what they can lobby on, which isn't particularly restrictive.

"Overall, it's really not a big deal for the lobbying profession," Holman, said. "I think the foreign ban element is a bit more substantive than the five-year ban, and [the executive order] has one very positive element in that it preserves the core of Obama's executive order for incoming executive administration officials, which is what made Obama's administration scandal free. It has a good conflict of interest element, but when it comes to actually affecting the lobbying industry, it does quite little."

"It's certainly not more onerous than Obama's rules. If anything, it's less restrictive," said Gadi Dechter, who runs APCO Worldwide's public affairs practice in D.C.

Dechter, a former senior advisor to the National Security Council and National Economic Council in the Obama administration, said concerns about revolving doors and suspicions regarding the lobbying industry have always been around. In reality, however, there's a trade-off at play.

"You can restrict people from serving in government and maybe you can reduce potential interest, but I think government is better served when it has access to information and when the people advising others on how to make policy are experts," Dechter said.

It isn't the first time that Trump has scaled back on regulatory promises. Another refrain he made during the election campaign was to battle the rising costs of prescription drugs. Trump planned to address the problem by allowing Medicare to directly negotiate drug prices. He now appears to have walked back on that pledge as well; during a late January meeting with PhRMA lobbyists, Trump referred to the idea as a form of "price fixing." He now said he wants to lower taxes for drug companies instead.

"There's a lot of uncertainly regarding what direction things are taking. It seems like this administration is flying by the seat of its pants and just making it up as they go along, which is creating a great deal of uncertainty for businesses and public policy," said Hal Dash, chairman and CEO of Los Angeles-based public affairs firm Cerrell Associates. "There's concern across the board. Virtually every department, from the Health and Human Services department to the Department of Education is wondering what's going to get undone, and what they can and can't do. Any lobbyist in the healthcare industry is scratching their heads over what's going to happen with Obamacare. They're almost freaking out."

Regardless of the uncertainty, Dash said the anecdotal concerns he's heard from clients and colleagues may actually result in an increased demand for public affairs services, be it in K Street firms adding staff in a bid to accommodate this new landscape, or at PR firms, which aren't affected by the latest wave of lobbying regulations and may now see a growth industry in setting up a public affairs practice. Political TV ad spends have also been a boon, as evidenced by the millions conservative groups have recently poured into campaigns to help Judge Gorsuch get confirmed to the Supreme Court.

The general consensus is that the Trump administration is a pro business environment, and we might safely predict an easing of regulations that, on the surface, will be beneficial for the private sector. Not all regulations are made equal, however; what may be helpful for one industry can increase the cost of business for others.

"This election has created an explosion in demand from clients that are interested in gaining insight into what's happening in Washington and how to constructively engage the administration and manage stakeholders across the spectrum while protecting themselves from risk," Dechter said. "Some of them are energized about the administration and others are feeling alienated by it. There are always going to be some customers, suppliers and business partners who have different reactions — that's why it's important to have a seat at the table, so that when things change you can make sure your perspective is reflected in the regulations. It's all created an enormous amount of demand for the advice and types of services we offer and we don't expect that to diminish anytime soon."

M&A communications require TLC

Mergers and acquisitions continue to be a strategy for companies to gain market share, acquire talent and expand offerings. For the decision-makers behind the scenes, however, it's important to plan an effective communications strategy to guide the organization through planned change.

By Mandy Arnold

Through our experience guiding clients and managing our own acquisition of TFM Advertising last year, we've had the opportunity to see first-hand the nuances of organizational change. M&A can often bring complicated change and culture clashes, and companies have failed by ignoring opportunities to be proactive in their communications. Part of navigating landmines is seizing the opportunity: with the right approach, you can come out at a true advantage with added brand equity.

It's easy to focus too much on the potential sales advantages of the newly forged relationship, rather than how you'll manage all the changes leading into the merger or acquisition — especially because the process of M&A can move at varying speeds. Some go awry due to blatant lack of planning, missed communications or assumptions that information or opinions won't matter in the big picture.

When a company misses an opportunity to reinforce its commitment or fails to recognize the value of a particular audience, the misstep can greatly affect morale, pride, trust and acceptance of the benefits to be gained in the changes ahead.

No matter the size of a merger or acquisition, your communications team should be given a seat at the table. Ideally, communications should be on the agenda from the start of the discussions. Any good business advisor will tell you that culture and operational processes are two layers that can break a deal. The same goes for your public relations and communications strategy.

Where do you begin? It starts with an effort that reinforces trust and respect from the beginning. M&A communications should be broken down into four phases:

- Planning for the announcement.
- Internal announcement.
- Public announcement.
- Post-announcement.

Invest time to understand audiences

As you develop an approach for each phase, you'll want a clear assessment of each segment of your audience. In my time overseeing communications strategies, I've seen many executives dismiss the need to invest the time and energy to address each audience and their needs through the change.

By investing the time into a plan and effectively implementing that plan by communicating with everyone — and by paying attention to their concerns and questions — you build a stronger team and brand trust in the process.

We typically break down audiences as follows: executives, senior/middle management, employees, clients, vendors, referral sources, strategic partners, external influencers such as legislators and community leaders, stakeholders/stockholders/donors/contributors, potential clients, past clients and the general public.

To assess each audience's voice in order to understand how to prepare, here are a few questions I've found that companies may not think to ask as you build an effective strategy.

What is the client's relationship with the executive team currently in place?

Is there an opportunity to gain past clients through this change? (Will this change address a past weakness?)

Are executives and staff clear on the proper language of merger versus acquisition and the importance of not confusing them?

What are all the touchpoints to be considered with the update in communications?

How could a leak prior to the public announcement affect sales and morale?

Who should be treated like a VIP in the communications process?

Who can help you mitigate risk through third-party messaging?

Prioritize your communications

Prioritizing the timing of who you communicate with — and when — will allow you to build and maximize the potential in a relationship, and mitigate risk through proactive messaging.

An example of this would be a merger we managed that was expected to result in an office relocation, at a time when the community was struggling with recruiting and retaining businesses and jobs. By reaching out in advance to local government officials, including economic agencies and the local chamber, we were able to get in front of the issue and work with them on a consistent, clear message: That, although one of the offices might be consolidated to a new location, no jobs were leaving the region — and, in fact, the company projected job growth over the next 5 years. Eliminating the opportunity for people to fill a void of information with assumptions or falsehoods helped to build momentum through the change ahead.

Don't ignore buy-in opportunities

Some M&A are not large enough to capture the attention of media, but that doesn't mean you should underestimate attention to planning. We recently oversaw communication of a smaller acquisition. Through our evaluation of audiences, we realized an opportunity to maximize how the acquired team merged successfully into the new company. We facilitated conversations with employees on the frontlines in advance of the news going public, working to help them understand critical messages and added services and to answer anticipated questions.

Mandy Arnold

As part of the process, we also recommended that there be a familiarizing tour of their new home with the acquiring firm to meet the team, see where their desks would be located and where to park. This effort went a long way — you'd be surprised how many employees just want to know what their new office is going to be like. Employees were able to let go of disruptive anxiety, and instead focus on how to leverage the change to grow sales with current and past clients.

In the process, we also discovered that the acquisition would eliminate the need to refer out services that the acquired company formerly could not fulfill, as the new owner brought a deeper offering. This created a chance to re-engage past clients and get current clients excited about improved services.

Expect the unexpected

Not everything goes smoothly in M&A communications. We've dealt with leaks, misinformation, layoffs, price increases and more. But, having a proactive plan in place for any scenario allows the executives and employees to move faster through any challenge.

In the end, M&A can look a lot of different ways, and each has its nuances that require special attention. Never underestimate how the flow of information can affect your brand equity and trust, and don't miss the opportunity for greater gains by communicating through change — both internally and externally.

Mandy Arnold is CEO of Gavin.

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Cannabis becomes communications cash crop

Operating behind the scenes for years, the legal cannabis industry has finally gone mainstream, and startups representing every point in the cannabis ecosystem are now seeking counsel from PR firms for everything from earned media programs to branding, strategy and research services in a bid to align this burgeoning sector with its surging demand.

By Jon Gingerich

The U.S. cannabis industry has gone mainstream. Advancements in disease management, recent legalization measures for recreational marijuana use in more than a half-dozen states and fading social mores have allowed a counterculture keystone to play the center role behind some of the most anticipated IPOs to come out of the tech and health sector in recent years.

Legal cannabis sales were a $7 billion market last year, with the medical cannabis industry alone accounting for more than $4 billion. Combined sales in the industry are poised to amass as much as $20 billion within the next five years.

Investors, private equity funds, consultants and startups representing every point in the cannabis ecosystem have since surfaced to align this burgeoning industry with its growing demand, be it in vaporizer manufacturers, extracts or edibles, cannabis-specific media companies or med-tech startups doing research that could lead to new types of treatments for a variety of illnesses.

Some analysts now believe this "green rush" has the potential to rival the dot-com era in terms of investment and innovation, and as cannabis' business impact and consumer demand surge on a national stage, the communications world has taken note.

PR shops across the country have now lined up to service virtually every vertical in the cannabis sector, offering everything from branding and strategy to research to tried-and-true earned media programs that aim to share cannabis companies' stories with consumers. Some PR agencies have now even opened their own cannabis-specific service divisions; others have sprung up entirely for the purpose of representing industry leaders in this new frontier.

PR services run the gamut

New York-based PR shop North 6th Agency in January announced that it had formed a new division dedicated entirely to servicing clients in the legal cannabis industry. The firm, which now serves as agency of record for numerous cannabis companies including Canopy, Green Flower Media, Jetty Extracts, Poseidon Asset Management, Surna, Tradiv, VapeXhale and Wurk, has been representing cannabis clients since states first began legalizing marijuana for recreational purposes.

N6A president and CEO Matt Rizzetta said his agency, which was founded in 2010, was introduced to the field "by chance" with the signing of a new account and has since doubled down and decided to scale its practice to create a new group dedicated to the industry. A director was recently promoted to head N6A's cannabis division and the agency is now looking for account coordinators, executives and managers to fill out this practice.

Rizzetta described today's cannabis players as akin to classic startups, an industry in its incipience that may have only recently realized that a marketing plan is something they can't afford not to have. Like many consumer brands, cannabis companies are seeking integrated communications programs to get their names into the marketplace, but Rizzetta said what many of these companies are now asking for often goes beyond earned media campaigns alone and encompasses everything from messaging, awards, speaking events and branding.

"The most interesting observation we've seen in cannabis is that clients need earned media first, but they're also leaning on us a littler earlier for services beyond that. They want their brand to be put on the map from a national perspective, so they'll need coverage and brand equity, but since they're so early as a business they'll also need help with branding, social media, design work. They need us as business advisors. There's a demand for ancillary services at a much higher rate than clients in other industries."

"This is an industry that was working in the shadows for years," said Jonathan Bloom, CEO and founder of San Jose, CA-based tech and consumer agency McGrath/Power Public Relations.

McGrath/Power, which holds a range of clients in the B2B and B2C tech sectors, recently became agency of record for Richmond, CA-based medicinal cannabis extracts provider Constance Therapeutics, a leading manufacturer of therapeutic-grade cannabis oil, whose medicinal use is now widely recommended by physicians.

Bloom said his agency, whose forays into the cannabis world remain limited to the medicinal side, entered the field through the California investment community, which for several years had been quietly flowing funds into cannabis startups in a bid to broaden brands in these spaces or create new ones. Bloom said what we're now seeing in the cannabis world is similar to what happened during the beginnings of the dot-com era, where several key industries — applications, hardware, software — converged to contribute to a larger movement that ultimately changed how companies and people share information.

Matt Rizzetta

Jonathan Bloom

"When you're dealing with people who haven't worked in a standard business environment, you'll see requests for services that run the gamut. It's almost a one-to-one applicability to services we'd do for any standard client, but we're applying it to people, products and services that have never been in the light before, and we've now counseled them on everything from product names to market segment targeting," Bloom said.

Writing the cannabis PR playbook

Legal cannabis presents a new market for a centuries-old — though until recently, entirely illicit — product. A strategic conundrum exists here: how do you tackle communications duties for a movement where no script exists? Like any brand, Bloom said marketers ultimately have to walk consumers through the same classic buyer's journey program that would be at play if a customer was looking to buy a pair of jeans or a new car.

"We always look at any client through the same lens up front: what are their goals, who are the people we need to influence

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CANNABIS BECOMES CASH CROP

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and what desired action do we want them to take?" Bloom said. "Whether it's cannabis or cloud software, you're communicating with people so they'll understand something and then do something. We're not looking at consumers who want to catch a buzz. We're looking at people who are looking for true alternatives to existing treatment and many have a clear understanding of what they're looking for. They need to be educated and they need to be informed, and we have to create an educational information flow that shows them what's possible, and we also have to be transparent and have a true conversation that introduces them to what is effectively becoming the new normal."

Evan Nison

It seems that, at least for the time being, it's primarily the mid-sized and boutique PR agencies doing most of the work in these spaces. Agencies like N6A have been on the ground floor of a movement, and as a result, have been able to learn about the cannabis industry, invest in relationships and gain a foothold long before it went mainstream. This sort of leap is often not possible at a larger PR agency, where bureaucratic red tape may tie these sorts of ventures to the springboard.

"We've scaled our business so that we have our hands in different industries and can afford to take a chance and a little bit of a risk," Rizzetta said. "We're able to react quickly, and speed and expediency is key. If we're going to beat the global agencies, we're going to have to roll the dice."

One such agency is cannabis-specific PR shop NisonCo, which was founded three years ago by owner Evan Nison. Nison, who bills his company as a "socially driven public relations firm," began his career in college as a marijuana legalization advocate before being hired as a pro bono lobbyist for a publicly traded cannabis company. He's the youngest member on the board of directors for nonprofit lobbying organization NORML and also sits on the board for Students for Sensible Drug Policy.

"The cannabis industry is new. If you've been here for two or three years you're a veteran," Nison said.

NisonCo's clients now include iconic cannabis publication *High Times*, as well as newer companies such as news platform CFN Media, cannabis aficionado social network MassRoots and Whoopi Goldberg's medical cannabis company, Whoopi & Maya.

Nison, who eventually plans to branch out his shop to represent clients in the sustainability and impact investing sectors, said the most common complaint he currently hears from clients is that most PR agencies simply don't yet understand the cannabis industry and its landscape.

"Marijuana is similar to many other industries in that there's a need for a lot of ancillary services, but it's different in basically every other regard because we have to be on top of what's happening both at a state and federal level related to regulation or legalization," Nison said. "Marketing is different in cannabis for many reasons, one being that you can't just advertise many things on Facebook or Google."

Those FDA guidelines, of course, establish clear parameters for the cannabis sector whose adherence is paramount.

"It's one of the primary reasons why research is critical," Bloom said. "You can't make claims you can't verify, and you have to work within FDA guidelines or you're going to have a real problem. There have been times when we've had to walk our clients back more than encourage them to go forward in regard to what we're willing to put our name on."

Media is receptive

As cannabis use becomes accepted by a larger percentage of the population, it becomes a topic taken more seriously by the press. Some outlets now consider it a beat in any other respect, and several media outlets such as CNN, Business Insider and *Forbes* have now begun to assign dedicated reporters to cover the cannabis space.

"When we first started, cannabis was kind of wink, wink topic that wasn't taken very seriously," Bloom said. "The media has since become far more receptive, and now you're seeing stories that are looking at everything from the business and medical impact of cannabis to the legislation stage. We're starting to see the media's thirst not only for medical impact but social and cultural as well."

Rizzetta said the mainstream media covering cannabis also remains different in some ways from mainstream reporters covering other categories.

"We need to understand that when we're dealing with national media, for the most part, it's an education-first mindset. These reporters are still learning. They don't know a lot of about the industry, and that's an important distinction because as an agency you need to understand who you're dealing with, and the media is meeting our clients from an educational perspective so they can learn the beat," he said. "The reporters covering cannabis are also on looser deadlines. They don't feel pressured to write the stories immediately. The same rules that apply to non-cannabis reporters don't apply to beat reporters covering the cannabis space in the mainstream media."

The type of media interested in cannabis is also changing. According to Nison, many of the trade and niche publications — everything from accounting publications and law enforcement publications — are beginning to write stories about the industry.

"A lot of the firsts are gone. What would be considered new or groundbreaking is dramatically different from when I started," Nison said. "In 2014 we were pitching the story that a lot of 'legitimate' type people were leaving Wall Street and entering cannabis. That was considered groundbreaking then. Nowadays that's not news; it's just the smart thing to do." O

SHAKING THE BAD GUY LABEL

_ Continued from page 10

should prepare for a fall from grace.

Look at what happened to Chipotle – one of the most frequently cited case studies for brand authenticity, still hasn't fully recovered after a food safety crisis overshadowed all of the work it put behind communicating its personality and purpose.

Last year, the Harris Poll's RQ® Summary Report noted that consumers ranked Samsung among the top 10 in terms of reputation among the most visible companies in the U.S. Think they'll fare as well this year?

Bad situations, whether natural or man-made, can set back the work you accomplished communicating your purpose and your stories. Without launching into a diatribe about the value of anticipating and planning for crisis situations, we can all agree that it needs to be taken seriously.

Say 'good night' to the bad guy

Maybe it's not realistic to think that the bad guy label can ever be completely shed. But it is possible to open minds and transform perceptions. Be patient and humble. Be real and realistic. Plan for the unplanned. Not all clients or companies will have the stomach for it, but for those that do, the journey can yield positive outcomes.

Tina Charpentier is a senior vice president and leads the environmental sciences team at PadillaCRT. O

Getting corporate comms. up to speed with Snapchat

More companies are now utilizing the vast array of social media networks to get their messages to the public. So why do corporate communications departments remain so skittish about hopping on the bandwagon?

By John Franklin and Robbie Goffin

It's hard to believe there was once a time when corporate communication departments balked at creating a company website. Back in the dial-up days (and even earlier), the idea of sharing corporate news on an always-on, consumer-facing electronic platform would have been considered a dubious use of resources. You want to know about company doings? We'll mail you the sales and marketing reports.

The world has come a long way since then. Today, a company without a corporate website essentially doesn't exist. And yet, many Corp Comm departments still drag their feet when it comes to fully embracing the digital era. At a time when multiple social media channels and platforms offer the ability to steer reputation and reach mass audiences, some corporations still cling to old-school methods like static websites and yes, even, press releases. That raises a simple question; Why?

It's time for Corporate Communications to take a page or two — or three — from both their sales and marketing departments and join the digital age.

Wealth of platforms

Over the past ten years or so, social media platforms YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have become standard communication tools for sales and marketing, as well as customer service, to engage with the public. By one estimate, about 88% of companies in the U.S. make use of social media for marketing purposes.

More recently, Snapchat, the multimedia-messaging app in which images disappear shortly after being received, has exploded in popularity and emerged as a legitimate delivery tool as well. It has more than 100 million daily active users, and played a key role in candidate messaging during the just completed U.S. Presidential campaign season.

Social media allows companies to communicate directly with consumers and clients instantly in a variety of content styles — all at the same time. Want to shout out to investors about quarterly earnings? Twitter's 140 characters is a good choice. Share a clip of the CEO ringing the opening bell on the NASDAQ? Try a Facebook Live video feed. In each case, companies can use the medium to draw users to a full story — which is well suited for another, sometimes overlooked publishing platform—the corporate website.

Social media serves an audience hungry for information anytime, anywhere. It increases the opportunity for more frequent communication, and it breaks Corp Comms out of the outmoded one-way broadcast street left over from the press release era. It opens up a two-way dialogue — something engaged social media users expect.

A case of the nerves

What's holding Corp Comms back from hitting the send button more often? For one thing, there is the seeming complexity of a true omni-channel model. As companies contemplate making greater use of the various platforms, the number of decisions surrounding the quality and frequency of messaging can be overwhelming. It's easy to get caught up in debating what company presence should look and sound like on a short-burst, daily feed like Twitter, a thought-leadership platform like LinkedIn, and an image-heavy, self-destructing messaging app like Snapchat. Designating tone of voice across each can be a challenge.

Then there's the risk of broadcasting to a public that devours information and responds as it sees fit. Putting information out requires a certain letting go of control. The casualty list of brands that suffered a torrid backlash after either misreading their audiences or failing to think through messaging is long — and intimidating. Preserving reputation, or having to restore it, is a legitimate concern.

Medium is the message

A thorough grasp of the risks involved should not continue to deter Corp Comm from participating in the world as it is versus the world they would prefer. It's true that managing corporate reputation — or more precisely, commercial influence — across the vast array of media and social channels, online and off, is tricky, especially when you consider the speed at which news breaks and accessibility to the public. But huge divisions of many companies already do it very well. There's no longer any great reason for the most visible "face" of an organization — and the source of that organization's responsibilities when it comes to policies, capital allocation, legal liability, governance and management — to be virtually off the grid and frozen.

At a time when a company's success or failure can hinge on public perception, getting social media right is essential. Being smart and strategic upfront is the starting point — and defining a set of key digital and content competencies aimed at the responsibilities above, as opposed to just products and service, is the second step.

John Franklin

Knowing who your audience is and how competitors use the medium and the wins and missteps they've experienced is enlightening. Centralizing decision-making and bringing on a social media expert if needed can help navigate a landscape that lives on speed and iteration. Adapt and adopt are industry bywords for staying fresh.

Robbie Goffin

Variety is the spice of social media, as well. Going beyond press information and publishing narratives about the company that engage visitors emotionally is key. Along those lines, video storytelling is growing quickly and works well not only on a company YouTube channel, but also as an embedded asset on a corporate website. Finally, variety includes regular publishing that keeps consumers coming back for more. Long gone are the days of the static website. Those who stand still will be left behind.

Caution is understandable in the rapidly shifting digital frontier. But Corporate Communication departments that think of the medium as the message open the door to new possibilities. By exploding their stories out into the world and scattering the breadcrumbs among the various platforms, corporate communications provides a trail for consumers to follow back to their website. And that is good for business.

John Franklin is a Managing Director and Sector Head of TMT (Technology, Media, Telecommunications) in the Strategic Communications segment at FTI Consulting. He is also a contributor to FTI Journal. Robbie Goffin is a Managing Director in Strategic Communications at FTI Consulting.

Sadoun is Publicis chairman and CEO

Arthur Sadoun, CEO of Publicis Worldwide and head of Publicis Groupe's creative hub Publicis Communications, has been named CEO and Chairman of the French PR/ad combine, succeeding longtime leader Maurice Lévy.


Arthur Sadoun

Sadoun officially assumes the top executive role on June 1. Lévy, 74, will continue with the holding company as Chairman of its supervisory board, an appointment contingent upon shareholders' vote.

Sadoun, 45, joined the multinational marketing conglomerate as CEO of French agency Publicis Conseil in 2006. Three years later he was picked to head Publicis France. In 2013 Sadoun was named Publicis Worldwide CEO and joined the company's management board. Last year, the conglom underwent a massive restructuring effort in a bid to reorganize its business and leadership model and better coordinate its agencies' resources. As part of that initiative, Sadoun was named head of the newly minted Publicis Communications hub, overseeing creative agencies Publicis Worldwide, MSL, Nurun, Saatchi & Saatchi, BBH and Leo Burnett.

Sadoun becomes Publicis Groupe's third top executive since its founding in 1926.

Fernandez becomes B-M U.S. CEO

Mike Fernandez, Chair of Burson-Marsteller's global corporate and financial practice, has been promoted to the role of U.S. CEO.

Fernandez assumes the CEO slot immediately. He succeeds former U.S. CEO Michael Law, who has now been named Worldwide Executive VP, a new position at the WPP unit.


Mike Fernandez

Fernandez, a senior communications executive for several major U.S. companies, joined the global PR/PA giant in September, where he led client development, strategy and new offerings for the agency's corporate and financial practice.

He arrived at B-M from international food conglomerate Cargill, where he served as corporate VP and led communications, brand and marketing services, as well as corporate affairs. He previously oversaw PR and communications efforts at State Farm Insurance, which he joined in 2006 and served as VP of Public Affairs. He was also previously CCO at packaged foods company ConAgra Foods, and Senior VP of public affairs for worldwide health services organization CIGNA. He began his career as a Press Secretary to Senator Ernest Hollings (D-SC).

Fernandez will partner with worldwide President Kevin Bell to grow B-M's U.S. business. He'll remain in the agency's New York headquarters.

C&W promotes Joseph to worldwide president

Jim Joseph, Cohn & Wolfe's chief integrated marketing officer and Americas region president, has been promoted to the role of Worldwide President.


Jim Joseph

Joseph joined the WPP unit in 2012. He was previously President of beauty, fashion and lifestyle agency Lippe Taylor, a President and Managing Director at Publicis Groupe, and a Senior Vice President at GW Hoffman Marketing. He also previously held marketing posts at Church & Dwight and Johnson & Johnson.

As Worldwide President, Joseph will be responsible for overseeing creative and business development, branding and agency marketing and leadership, as well as the agency's Latin America region, while developing and leveraging resources, products and services that support C&W global offices.

C&W has appointed Laura Pesin Eder to succeed Joseph as North America President. She comes over from Edelman, where she served as Executive VP and Director of Operations for the agecy's New York consumer practice.


Laura Pesin Eder

Pesin Eder will oversee client and talent management and development, strategic operations and business development across Cohn & Wolfe's North America offices.

Tegna tunes in Uberoi

Tegna, the broadcast and digital media giant formed by the split of Gannett Company in 2015, has brought in Sunny Uberoi as VP and Chief Communications Officer.

Uberoi has led global communications for S&P Capital IQ, the financial information unit of S&P Global, and handled its divestiture of J.D. Power in 2015. He previously handled stakeholder engagement for Deloitte and helmed global communications for Pfizer Consumer Healthcare and biotechnology company Agenus.


Sunny Uberoi

McLean, VA-based Tegna's portfolio includes 46 TV stations, including a large group of NBC and CBS affiliates, as well as digital properties like CareerBuilder, Cars.com and G/O Digital.

Uberoi reports to Tegna CEO Gracia Matore overseeing internal and external communications, as well as public affairs.

Third quarter 2016 revenues topped $860 million with net income of nearly $119 million.

Ex-Tesla comms chief drives to Dyson

Ricardo Reyes, who led communications for electric car maker Tesla before stepping down last year, has landed at high-end UK manufacturer Dyson as Global Communications Officer.


Ricardo Reyes

Reyes has advised tech start-ups since departing Tesla for the second time in March 2016 and led a group of Republicans supporting Hillary Clinton's bid for the presidency.

Bloomberg, which first reported Reyes' move to Tesla, noted the hire fuels speculation that Dyson will enter the electric car market. The company acquired US battery maker Sakti3 in 2015 and has landed UK governing funding for electric car battery research.

Reyes earlier handled brand marketing and communications at Square and worked communications and PA at Google and YouTube. He also worked for the US Trade Rep. during the George W. Bush administration.

Corporations can learn from how Trump handles critics

President Trump doesn't try to win over critics because he knows they can't be won over.

By Steven Schlein

At a recent dinner with an old friend — a lawyer and former Democrat Senate staffer — I was regaled with standard criticisms of then-President-elect Trump's cabinet appointees.

"They have conflicts of interest," "they haven't been vetted," "they're rich and therefore will be insensitive to poor people" and "appointing his son-in-law to a senior White House job, is wrong because" ... much of the same argument.

I asked him, "If these people were better vetted and proven to have no conflicts, would you support them?"

The answer was, "Of course not."

And therein lies the effectiveness of Donald Trump's approach to high-stakes communications. Don't try to win over your critics because they can't be won over. They want you to jump through hoops and once you do, they will put up more hoops.

Had Trump released his tax returns during the campaign, it would not have won him more votes. Only his critics were clamoring for his returns and only because they hoped to find something in them that they could use to bludgeon him. He knew that. And, today, he understands that only his critics are bashing his and his cabinet appointees' potential conflicts.

Wearing my hat as a high-stakes communications advisor, I give Trump an A+ for strategy and execution. He wants certain outcomes: his team in place, his agenda passed. Appeasing his critics won't get him that.

Corporate America faces similar challenges all the time. There are media antagonists, environmental groups, consumer advocates, competitors, and over-reaching government regulators that aren't going to go away because of concessions to them. There is no incentive for them to go away. More often than, not, these adversaries are going to ask for more concessions.

I've sat through hours of meetings listening to corporate leaders agonize over how to respond to a demand from a state attorney general for internal scientific data, or an advocacy group threatening a boycott, or a hostile media inquiry. What I've learned is that corporations are culturally wired to assuage critics. They are not in the business of looking for fights. So, the first thing I hear is: "Why don't we educate stakeholders?" which often translates into "How can we get people who will never like us to like us?"

We frequently find ourselves gently telling them, "Critics are not stakeholders, and they don't want to be educated, they want to hurt your company."

Once we get the conversation back to discussing specific goals: protect the brand, save a business practice, reduce media attention, we develop a campaign that isn't focused on giving in to critics. It's focused on building tactics and tools that make the critics go away.

Of course, in an election, a victory is easy to define: you win or lose. In the corporate world, it's trickier. Sometimes a victory is reducing the size and scope of an onerous regulation. Sometimes it's as simple as limiting — but not ending — media hostility. But ultimately, appeasing your critics is not an achievable victory and it certainly should never be the goal. It may sometimes be a necessary strategy, but never the goal.

Steven Schlein

That's not to say we would follow Donald Trump's tactics. He would probably advise Corporate America to tweet out disparaging remarks about their critics and sic battle-tested surrogates on them. While Donald Trump can get away with that, corporations can't. Trump has unique advantages that corporations don't: passionate defenders, experienced spokespeople that relish combat, and a willingness to say anything that helps him win. Corporations also don't have his luck: a shtick the perfectly fits the current cultural and political zeitgeist, at least the zeitgeist of half the country.

But corporations are not defenseless. ExxonMobil had a strong response to several state attorneys general demanding internal memos and reports on climate change strategies. The company's attorneys fought back on sound legal grounds. Connections between environmental groups and the AGs were exposed. Allies amplified these points in the media. Over time, the media began to incorporate these counter-points into their stories. One by one the AGs have begun to back off. The company is on the verge of victory.

When facing critics, corporations need to ask one question: Are these critics reasonable or are they implacably hostile to your company, industry or business model? If they are like my dinner companion referenced above, take a lesson from Trump and don't try to please them. Instead, push back against your critics and focus on long-term success by building a winning counter-campaign. Then like Trump, declare victory — just perhaps not on Twitter.

Steven Schlein is an Executive Vice President at Dezenhall Resources.

Major brands question digital's efficacy

Standard Media Index results for Q4 2016 and the full calendar year show that while the total ad market continues to grow, the rate of growth has slowed slightly (-0.8 percent) despite major events such as the Olympics and election coverage.

From 2012 to 2015, digital ad spend has seen a compound growth rate of +19 percent, with the growth rate from 2014 to 2015 topping out at +26.2 percent. By comparison, year-over-year growth for digital in 2016 is only +13.3 percent, a drop of 50 percent.

Retail, telecommunications and consumer electronics companies have not seen the results they expected from digital and have moved back to TV, in particular over last year's holiday season. For example, in 2015 Paramount Pictures decreased their TV spend by 3.8 percent then reversed this strategy in 2016 by increasing spend on TV by 24 percent. Also, Target reduced TV spend by 20 percent in 2015 but increased spend by 12 percent in 2016 and Progressive Insurance went from -5.5 percent on TV spend in 2015 to +6.2 percent in 2016.

Facebook and Google contribute heavily to the growth of digital overall with Facebook showing +83 percent jump in 2016. Snapchat's messaging app was +356 percent from 2015 to 2016.

Motion picture companies are steadily moving spend (+33.6 percent) toward digital because they believe that's where the consumer starts and ends their movie going experience.

Magazines, newspapers and radio all saw an overall decrease in ad spend in 2016 down 7.2 percent, 19.9 percent and 1.0 percent respectively.

NBC posted a 20 percent gain, benefiting from the Olympics and NFL games. CBS was up 3.2 percent, but ABC declined 2.2 percent and FOX was down 4.6 percent.

O'Dwyer's guide to ENVIRONMENTAL PR & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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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

2016 Winner of PRSA-NY's Best Business Campaign & Best Public Affairs Campaign as well as 2016 PR Agency Elite's Best Public Affairs Campaign. Ranked among top agencies in the New York market for its public affairs, environmental and financial practices. Butler Associates is a communications strategy firm with a proven track record of high-impact results.

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 CEOs.

The Butler group includes seasoned media and communication pros, committed to their clients, who deliver consistently. Its Litical Solutions division delivers online engagement and award winning advertising for broadcast, digital and print.

Clients: Amerigames International; Association of BellTel Retirees Inc.; Alma Realty; Barasch McGarry P.C.; Hostelworld Group PLC; Hunts Point Cooperative Market; Kerry Rose Foundation; Mechanical Contractors Association of New York; New York Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance; Patriot Bank, NA; ProtectSeniors.Org; Uniformed Firefighters Association of New York; Siebert Cisneros Shank & Co., L.L.C.; Stamford Professional Fire Fighters Association; Stamford Police Association; and Steamfitters Local 638, New York.

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Aric Caplan, President

Caplan Communications is a full-service Washington-DC area agency that carries out targeted news and legislative results. Our issues advocacy influences desired audiences and achieves timely outcomes.

For 13 years, Caplan works at the vanguard of issue-action campaigns and journalism. We attribute our success to citizen-led groups galvanizing target audiences toward clear calls to action.

Clients Include: Alaska Wilderness League, American Lung Association, American Rivers, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Conservation International, Defenders of Wildlife, Earthjustice, Environmental Defense Fund, Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2), Evangelical Environmental Network, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace USA, Hip Hop Caucus, League of Conservation Voters, *National Geographic*, National Parks Conservation Association, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Wildlife Federation, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists and The Wilderness Society.

During its annual Inspiring Actions That Matter™ Day, Crosby staff volunteered for a habitat restoration project and made a donation to support local environmental work.

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Ralph Katz, Principal
Anne Green, President / CEO

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, connect with critical constituencies and leverage opportunities. Client case examples include:

Addressing complex regulatory issues.

Framing issues regarding healthcare reform, delivery and policy.

Publicizing global corporate environmental initiatives.

Promoting scientific research on sustainability topics.

Copyright / trademark protection in digital realm.

Privacy issues related to online behavioral advertising.

Outreach and community-building among key audiences.

Assessing environmental impact of motor vehicles.

Announcing major renewable energy investments.

CooperKatz has developed public affairs and / or environmental campaigns for diverse clients including American Cleaning Institute (ACI), American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (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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Raymond Crosby, President
Jeff Rosenberg, Executive Vice President, Nonprofits & Causes

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, TKF Foundation, 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 #39 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 along with inspiring graphics and media.

Today, public approval really means approval by the public. Citizens have greater influence over the decision-making process, especially when a decision maker is an elected official or government agency.

Davies has a proven and constantly evolving process that transforms public opinion and leverages authentic grassroots strategies to motivate citizens to speak out in favor, overcoming natural fears to manufactured opposition, which results in timely approvals.

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

Davies' focus is Energy & Environment, Mining, Real Estate and Crisis.

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Finn Partners is a leader in Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Impact, Public Affairs and Sustainability public relations, with proven and award-winning expertise. Our team in 12 U.S. and European offices has an extensive understanding of today's pertinent issues and insight into tomorrow's most critical considerations. Our CSR & Social Impact practice provides expertise in mobilizing private sector resources to address public problems and social causes for a variety of emerging, mid-size and large companies, non-profits and associations. In the drive toward sustainability, Finn Partners represents leading corporations, environmental organizations, trade and industry associations and governments. We specialize in raising awareness among stakeholders and influencers, as well as driving public understanding of key industries, complex legislative and regulatory issues and important causes that are often on the margins of our society. Finn Partners directs complex national public affairs campaigns, executes high-profile media relations programs, plans news-making events and initiates broad-based grassroots advocacy efforts. We manage successful issues management campaigns inside the Beltway, in cities across the country and across the globe. Our growing Sustainability work spans many areas including: sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, climate change, clean technology, energy efficiency, water pollution and scarcity, smart grid and green building.

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G&S Business Communications provides clients with a strategic approach to environmental, social and governance (ESG) disclosure and corporate social responsibility (CSR). We collaborate with you to improve relationships with stakeholders and realize 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, ESG disclosure and communications, materiality analysis, clean technology marketing, supply chain monitoring, and cause marketing. Our portfolio encompasses a broad array of services to implement B2B customer experience (CX) studies, brand strategy, content strategy, creative, digital and social, employee engagement, insights and analytics, media relations, and sustainability and CSR.

Annual editions of our Sense & Sustainability® Study are an authoritative source for research into consumer opinions on the corporate commitment to ESG responsibilities. G&S also advances thought leadership via programs that feature business journalists who cover ESG and renewable energy news from leading media outlets, among them *Bloomberg Businessweek, Newsweek* and *Time* magazine.

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

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Imprenta Communications Group is an award-winning public affairs, campaign and ethnic marketing firm, specializing in reaching diverse audiences. Imprenta's services include developing and executing integrated marketing campaigns, commercial production, social media marketing, collateral creation, media relations, and digital campaigns. *Fortune* 500 companies, government agencies, foundations, and elected officials have utilized Imprenta's services for more than a decade. Imprenta's track record of successes has led to the company's exponential growth in recent years, as recognized by *INC* magazine as "one of the fastest growing companies in America" for two years in a row and received various industry awards. Imprenta's mission is to empower communities of color by giving them a voice and communicating to them in ways that respect their diversity and understands their culture. To learn more about Imprenta and its work, visit: www.icgworldwide.com

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

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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 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.

Marketing Maven supports WaterAid America by educating U.S. consumers about WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) and how to impact the global water crisis in-country with advocacy initiatives.

Photo credit: Andrew McConnell

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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.

Our proven ability to design and launch successful public relations campaigns, develop creative communications solutions and exceed client expectations has earned us a reputation as a valued partner and an industry leader. We are highly skilled at integrating communications, 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.

We're knowledgeable in many industries including environmental services, energy, financial services, healthcare, higher education, hospitality, legal, manufacturing, nonprofit, real estate, retail and telecommunications.

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PadillaCRT is a top 10 independent public relations and communications company. Its 240 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, branding, advertising, design, digital, social, mobile, media relations and crisis management expertise to build corporate and product brands with customers, investors, employees and communities.

PadillaCRT's environmental sciences team brings the best of what the agency has to offer — smart, invested people dedicated to helping clients achieve their purpose — along with a passion for companies and organizations engaged in protecting, managing and optimizing the earth's natural resources. Whether it's in agriculture, energy, clean water and air or environmental remediation, PadillaCRT's environmental sciences team collaborates with clients to plan and implement communications strategies to grow their businesses, serve their customers, build alignment with stakeholders and sustain our natural resources.

Clients in the environmental science sectors include BASF, Cargill, Conservis, Land O'Lakes and Pentair.

PadillaCRT is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 143 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents.

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Peppercomm is an independently owned 21-year-old integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York with offices in San Francisco 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.

Our unique approach and dynamic workplace attract the best talent who, in turn, help us win and retain the best clients. While we've won countless awards, we're most proud of being named Best Place to Work in New York City by *Crain's New York Business* and a Best Workplace for Women by Great Place to Work® and *Fortune*.

Our combined years of deep category experience and love of what we do shapes our work. We engage your audiences on every level and set your brand apart. And we do all this to help your bottom-line and build your business. So get in touch. We're all ears.

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Experience distinguishes PCI as a go-to agency on green issues from local to global. We serve a diversity of environmental clients, from advocacy organizations and professional associations, to nationally and internationally 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.

For most of our 54 years, PCI has represented clients in the conservation and environmental fields. Today a growing segment of our business consists of clients who seek international, national and regional counsel on issues, including land use, water quality, wildlife conservation, animal care, marine life protection and living sustainably.

We create and launch campaigns, operate consumer awareness programs, celebrate announcements and milestones, manage social media campaigns and create content and strategies that inform, excite and connect publics with our clients' messages. This includes handling crises, developing digital strategies, coaching spokespersons and providing an outside-in perspective that is difficult for people within an organization to muster.

More than 75 percent of PCI's new business is generated through word of mouth, including referrals and personal recommendations from our clients. This is particularly true within our conservation and environment practice because PCI has established a reputation of understanding our clients' needs and delivering results.

Once clients begin working with PCI, they stay. Nearly half of our clients in the conservation and environmental fields have been with us 10 years or more and our clients benefit.

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Racepoint Global combines the power of worldwide reach with personal attention. Our clients expect everything to be bigger, better and bolder. They also want access to the brightest minds at all times. We have the necessary DNA to do both. We challenge our clients to do more to stay ahead and demand that they challenge us to be accountable. We drive communications that are strategically sound and strive to forge personal relationships, breakthrough results and lasting impact.

We deliver a new kind of accountability based on our ability to better understand your customers, their psychology and how they consume information. The key is our proprietary software, FieldFacts. It's the industry's best tool for identifying influencers and targeting them where they engage verbally, visually and emotionally.

Armed with this intelligence, we give our clients PR, advertising and precision-marketing campaigns that speak to the right people at the right time. Then we dare to measure performance and report how many times high-level influencers have acted on your behalf.

As an integrated agency, our powerful combination features the best in digital marketing, strategy, public relations and stakeholder communications. We start with a powerful story, then create, distribute, and activate content in places people naturally engage, affecting opinion, shaping perception, and driving decisions. To do this, we draw on a powerful network of earned and paid influencers, a deep partner network, and self-published, wholly-owned, and unbranded communities. Clients in technology, healthcare, life sciences, consumer, public policy and public affairs depend on Racepoint Global's unique approach to impact key outcomes. Time and time again, our approach drives better results for our clients.

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Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications (RBSC) is a nationally recognized public and government relations firm with more than a decade of experience providing exceptional client service to organizations that operate at the intersection of business, politics and media. With offices in Boston and Washington, DC, RBSC offers a comprehensive range of services including media strategy and public relations, government relations, reputation management, crisis communication and digital media.

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SACHS MEDIA GROUP

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Ron Sachs, CEO

Sachs Media Group is Florida's dominant public affairs communication firm, building public and opinion-leader support for issues of statewide, regional and national importance. With strong bipartisan relationships, Sachs Media Group team is the smart, strong and strategic partner to any successful government relations team, generating public support, on-message media coverage and third-party validation of client priorities.

The firm combines public relations, digital/social media, integrated marketing, public affairs, crisis management, and research strategies, creating effective campaigns for corporate, nonprofit and governmental clients and is a na-

_ Continued on page 28

SACHS MEDIA GROUP

_ Continued from page 27

tional leader in branding and public education campaigns.

The firm's leadership team — steeped in media, government and politics — deeply understands how to shape issues, move public and policymaker opinion, and win in the halls of power.

The firm is headquartered in Tallahassee with offices in Orlando, Boca Raton and Washington, D.C. Sachs Media Group is the go-to firm for public affairs in Florida and the southeast.

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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

733 Tenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20010

Paul Massey, Executive Vice President
Cindy Drucker, Executive Vice President

Weber Shandwick is a leading global communications and engagement firm in 79 cities across 34 countries and operations extending to 127 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 Social Impact practice is an award-winning global team that builds engagement strategies for purpose-driven organizations. The team creates best-in-class engagement campaigns, partnering with leading corporate, foundation, and nonprofit clients to advance shared value and progress on complex 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, public affairs and engagement services designed to help clients navigate the evolving energy landscape, build reputation and advance organization and business goals in the areas of renewable energy, energy innovation & technology, energy efficiency, climate change, sustainable cities, and goal setting/reporting across a wide spectrum of industries.

Weber Shandwick counsels clients on social responsibility, sustainability, energy issues management and public affairs strategy in partnership with the agency's specialized public affairs division,

Powell Tate, based in Washington, D.C. Powell Tate staff includes top communications and policy experts from both parties on Capitol Hill, the White House, federal agencies, trade associations, advocacy organizations and the media.

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2015)
1. **APCO Worldwide**, Washington, D.C.	$25,047,300
2. **Edelman**, New York	14,252,567
3. **Finn Partners**, New York	12,125,000
4. **Davies**, Santa Barbara, CA	10,392,086
5. **Cerrell Associates**, Los Angeles	5,948,056
6. **Fiona Hutton & Assocs., Inc.**, Los Angeles	2,990,440
7. **Moore Comms. Group**, Tallahassee	2,447,537
8. **Singer Associates, Inc.**, San Francisco	2,355,964
9. **Sachs Media Group**, Tallahassee	2,278,470
10. **Pierpont Comms. Inc.**, Houston	2,133,035
11. **Lambert, Edwards & Assocs.**, Grand Rapids	2,062,000
12. **Perry Comms. Group**, Sacramento, CA	1,440,079
13. **PAN Communications**, Boston, MA	1,184,563
14. **Public Communications Inc.**, Chicago, IL	973,804
15. **WE**, Bellevue, WA	813,000
16. **Crosby**, Annapolis, MD	799,266
17. **PadillaCRT**, Minneapolis, MN	797,226
18. **Makovsky**, New York	750,000
19. **Butler Associates LLC**, New York	$632,403
20. **Peppercomm**, New York	603,116
21. **rbb Public Relations**, Miami	593,139
22. **CooperKatz & Co.**, New York	536,803
23. **Inkhouse Media + Mktng**, Waltham, MA	531,525
24. **Schneider Associates**, Boston, MA	473,142
25. **French | West | Vaughan**, Raleigh, NC	350,000
26. **McNeely Pigott & Fox PR**, Nashville	251,711
27. Landis Communications, San Francisco	250,000
28. **WordWrite Comms. LLC**, Pittsburgh, PA	229,970
29. **Zeno Group**, New York	214,786
30 **Trevelino/Keller**, Atlanta, GA	150,000
31. **Red Sky PR**, Boise, ID	147,608
32. **LEVICK**, Washington, DC	142,083
33. **Marketing Maven PR,** Camarillo, CA	122,180
34. **The Hodges Partnership**, Richmond, VA	80,000
35. **Didit Communications, LLC**, New York	56,010
36. **Jackson Spalding**, Atlanta, GA	54,094

Rex Tillerson, Exxon and public relations

By Fraser Seitel and John Doorley

A few years ago, we authored a book called "Rethinking Reputation."

Our premise was that in a communications age dominated by incessant social media, where the Internet can't be turned off and cable TV and talk radio drone on non-stop, traditional marketing and advertising have lost their clout.

Fraser P. Seitel, Adjunct Professor at New York University, and **John Doorley**, Visiting Associate Professor at Elon University, and are co-authors of "Rethinking Reputation," published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2012.

In such an environment, we posited that the only communications answer for a politician or a celebrity or an athlete or a CEO or an organization wishing to improve credibility is the practice of public relations.

Once just the icing on an effective communications campaign, public relations now stands at the center of business strategy, the most powerful and valuable communications force in the 21st century.

We defined positive public relations in our book as beginning with proper performance and good behavior and then communicating that reality to the public; in other words, "doing good and getting caught."

At its best, we said, "Public Relations works to develop relationships for mutual benefit."

We cited many examples of positive and negative public relations but ended the book with one company we believed had come the furthest in "rethinking" its reputation, changing its image and beginning to recapture lost credibility.

That company was ExxonMobil, the much-maligned energy giant, whose former CEO Rex Tillerson is Donald Trump's choice as U.S. Secretary of State.

While Exxon's critics have made their case against Tillerson with great emotion and vitriol, it's also important to recognize how the company became more open, less insular and basically changed for the better under his watch.

In 2006, when he was named Exxon's CEO, Tillerson inherited a company that had experienced public relations ignominy in the form of the nation's most disastrous oil spill to date, when an Exxon tanker dumped 260,000 barrels of oil into the pristine waters of Alaska's Bay of Valdez; affecting 1,300 square miles of water, damaging some 600 miles of coastline and killing as many as 4,000 Alaskan sea otters.

As if that wasn't bad enough, the company's public relations response was a case study in what not to do in a crisis. Exxon was slow to respond, tight-lipped and served up as its public face, a taciturn and uncomfortable lifetime engineer, CEO Lawrence Rawl.

Exxon's halting crisis response was pummeled in the press, and even Rawl publicly acknowledged the company's "public relations disaster."

In the wake of that Valdez "disaster," Exxon began to rethink its reputation and emerge from the shadows. Among other refinements, according to company executives we interviewed for our book, Exxon:

- Upgraded the public and governmental affairs function, which in the past had largely been a fire-fighting afterthought, to report directly to the management committee.
- Implemented an exhaustive, quantitative study of its "image" among informed publics, including analysts, politicians, environmentalists, reporters. Predictably, study findings were horrible, but at least they provided Exxon with benchmark data and a communications roadmap for improvement.
- Organized off-the-record, get-together meetings around the world with environmental leaders, NGO officials, human rights advocates and others for the sole purpose of beginning a "dialogue." The sessions marked the first time most of the participants had ever met anyone from Exxon.
- Recruited former reporters to build relationships with energy beat reporters and help "introduce" management to them; to begin to change Exxon's generally hostile relationship with the media.
- Introduced the energy industry's first multi-weekly, online blog to discuss matters it thought important for public consumption.

This more ambitious public relations initiative grew stronger under Tillerson, when ExxonMobil began to morph from its closed, guarded, reactive posture to a more open philosophy in explaining its views on issues of public concern.

Now what about climate change, the issue that Exxon's most virulent critics seize on, challenging the company's motives and charging it with purposely deceiving the public with tobacco industry-like duplicity?

While neither of us is qualified to opine on "motives" or "purposeful deceptions," we can cite Exxon's evolving public record on climate change, especially under Tillerson.

- For decades, the company's scientists studied the risks of climate change, documenting their discussions in company papers made available to the public through the University of Texas Archives.
- In 2006, when Tillerson became CEO, Exxon acknowledged that after years of scientific uncertainty, climate change was a reality and that human activity contributed to it.
- In 2008, the company announced it would discontinue contributions to climate-denying groups, such as the Capital Research Center, Committee for Constructive Tomorrow and the Institute for Energy Research, among others.
- In 2009, Tillerson announced that Exxon Mobil would support a federal carbon tax to help reduce the consumption of carbon-based fuels.

We conclude our book by suggesting that merely refining public relations philosophy and tactics aren't enough to build a long-lasting, positive reputation. Rather, to accomplish sustained credibility requires proper performance and behavior over time.

ExxonMobil, under Rex Tillerson, may not have satisfied every observer with the extent or pace of change it adopted in recent years.

But any fair-minded analysis of the company and its former CEO would have to give ExxonMobil credit for becoming more transparent and engaged in the public discussion of energy issues, more concerned with public perception and more committed to improving its reputation among all of its diverse constituencies. O

Looks, words count on political TV. Facts, not so much

By Arthue Solomon

When I decided to become a journalist, years before jumping to the PR business, I did some cursory research with three New York journalists, asking them how best to prepare for a career as a reporter.

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

I received the same answer from all three: Go to college and take a liberal arts course, because having a broad education is what best prepares a reporter from having tunnel vision. In particular, they advised me to take as many English, history and philosophy courses as I could. Working on a high school and college newspaper and becoming a college correspondent to newspapers would also be a plus. Taking journalism courses would not impress hiring editors, they said. They look for candidates with broad-based liberal arts degrees.

That was not a problem when I went to college. There was no such thing as a journalism or communications degree. I took the liberal arts course, majoring in English, in addition to being allowed to take a few journalism courses in my senior year. But it was reading every story in every section of several newspapers on a daily basis, augmented by weekly news magazines that provided a "master class" in journalism that no communications school's curriculum could match. My self-styled syllabus also included reading historical non-fiction books, fiction and the classics, which educated me in stylistic differences.

The times have changed. And while I'm not a believer in the "good old days" schmaltziness of history — for people who like good journalism, the "good old days" would be the late 30s to the early 50s — and though I think some outstanding journalism is still with us in the New York Times, Washington Post and Newsweek, good journalism has largely been replaced by the less than sub-par TV news outlets, evidenced by the 24/7 cable coverage of the 2016 election.

Today, communications schools turn out would-be journalists in an assembly line fashion. In particular, cookie-cutter journalism reigns in the realm of cable TV beat political reporters, who instead of uncovering new information during the 2016 election campaign, acted as town criers for campaign-provided material from the GOP and their candidate.

As we approach the inauguration of a new President, here's some tuition-free advice to would-be TV political journalists. After watching way too many hours of trivial political TV reporting and echo-like pundit discussions during the 2016 campaign, I've come to the conclusion that knowing the lingo is more important to a successful career than knowing the facts you'll be reporting on.

Based on the coverage of the presidential election the lingo you'll need to succeed is fairly short. But you must say them with assurance. Taking acting lessons can help you master that.

Below are the phrases that you'll have to work into your reporting regardless of the situation:

Over-the-top: This can be used to describe a comment that a candidate makes that is outrageous.

Low expectations: This can be used to describe what a candidate says about a rival.

Presidential: This is a word that political journalists must use to describe how a candidate looks; it easily can be changed to nonpresidential.

School teacherish: An essential term to describe candidates who reporters think hide their true personalities, used only when referring to women.

Policy Wonk: This is the code word for a candidate who actually knows all the details of legislation (unlike reporters).

Debatable: This is perhaps the most important word for TV political reporters to remember. It is their lifeline when surrogates make accusatory statements about an opponent. When that happens, the TV reporters, who most likely don't know the facts behind the accusations, can say, "That's debatable," to give the impression of knowledge, when in reality they haven't the slightest idea if the accusations are correct or a lie.

Most important election in our lifetime: This describes the election you're reporting on regardless of the year.

Surrogate: It has replaced "supporter" to describe propagandists for candidates.

Grading on a curve: This is used when one candidate doesn't know the facts, but the TV industry wants to keep that person in the contest in order to gain viewership.

Pundit: Any person who provides analysis regardless of how wrong they've been in the past.

Expert Analyst: Anyone who's asked to provide analysis of the campaign. When used to describe several people substitute, "Our all-star panel."

Binary choice: That was the new hip word for GOP surrogates and TV reporters during the 2016 presidential campaign. Keep this in back of your mind but chances are you'll never have to use it. Because there'll probably be another "in" word meaning you have to vote for one person in future elections.

Interesting: Used when a reporter can't add anything to what has been said. Best uttered with a hand on chin or while nodding.

There's still what is probably the most important hurdle aspiring TV reporters must pass: The visual test conducted by the "casting directors," who do the hiring in this new age journalism.

Female candidates must be energetic and score high on the attractiveness test. (In this case, the saying that beauty is only skin deep is what matters. Inner beauty? Counts for nothing.) Men hopefuls must look like leading actors in Western movies, perhaps like Gregory Peck, Clark Gable or Rock Hudson.

And there's the rub. What to do if you're a truly qualified woman who doesn't look like a Hollywood beauty or a man who looks more like Woody Allen than a rugged, handsome leading film star? All is not lost. There's always plastic surgery.

On January 20, Donald J. Trump was sworn in as President of the United States. Part of his acceptance speech should have included a shout out to the pundits, pollsters and especially the cable TV political reporters and their producers.

After all, Trump might not have made it if they hadn't been absent in their lack of journalistic judgment regarding what constitutes important news, if beat reporters hadn't echoed everything Trump said, if they hadn't let him rearrange program agendas by permitting him to call in at will, reported on his every tweet as if it was a sermon from the mount, permitted his surrogates on programs despite knowing they were less than truthful and if they hadn't largely glossed over Trump's personal behavior and business conflicts.

ICF prescribe CDC Comms.

ICF's health communications operation has locked up work for the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention worth up to $34.4 million.

The Fairfax, Va.-based consulting giant will work across nine different pacts on assignments covering campaign development, research, creative, digital advertising, traditional and social media, social marketing, and stakeholder engagement.

The account includes the CDC Office of Smoking and Health, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (sepsis, infection control and travel-related diseases), National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, and National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (Nat'l Diabetes Prevention Program).

ICF earlier last year picked up duties to promote the CDC's guidelines for prescribing opioids for chronic pain, a bid to combat prescription opioid abuse around the country.

Lt. Gov. joins Brunswick

Arkansas Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin has joined corporate advisory giant Brunswick Group, where he's been named a Senior Counselor.

Griffin, who was named AK's Lieutenant Governor in 2014, was elected to Congress in 2010 where he served as the 24th representative of The Natural State's Second Congressional District and also served as Deputy Majority Whip for the Republican caucus and was a member of the U.S. House Ways and Means committee. He previously held several posts in George W. Bush's cabinet, filling Deputy Director of Political Affairs and Special Assistant positions.


Tim Griffin

Griffin was formerly a U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas and is currently serving as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army JAG Corps. Last year, Griffin took a Senior Advisor Post at Washington-based advisory shop Purple Strategies.

At Brunswick, Tim will focus on public affairs, corporate reputation, and crisis as well as digital campaign strategies. He'll continue to hold the Lieutenant Governor position and will be stationed in Brunswick's Washington, D.C. outpost.

Google hires lobbyists for AI help

Google has tapped government consulting firm Perry Bayliss Government Relations for Capitol Hill representation on lobbying issues related to artificial intelligence.

Perry Bayliss will also help the search giant on amendments to the 1996 Telecom Act, according to lobbying registration documents filed in December.

Google has been placing big bets on its AI program in recent years, hoping to compete with rivals Microsoft, Amazon and Apple in the fields of speech and image recognition, as well as other forays that will allow computers to adapt better language understanding and human-grade intelligence capabilities.

The company's long-running AI research team, Google Brain, which began as a project inside its Google X lab, now powers its Android operating system's speech recognition capabilities. The company earlier this year debuted its Google Cloud Speech API, updating its cloud services to offer voice-to-text conversion as well as the ability to recognize more than 80 languages.

Perry Bayliss is headed by former top Grayling lobbyists Steve

Perry and Kim Bayliss. Perry until 2003 was CEO of Grayling's Dutko Worldwide unit. Bayliss was previously a staffer to the late Congressman Mike Synar (D-OK) and Government Relations VP at United Video Satellite Group before later co-directing Grayling's Communications Information Technology practice group.

H+K hires Brexit Remain comms head for energy post

David Chaplin, Communications Director for the Remain campaign during Britain's EU referendum last year, has joined Hill+Knowlton Strategies, where he's been named a Senior Associate Director in the WPP powerhouse's energy and industrials team.


David Chaplin

Chaplin was Strategic Communications Director for the Britain Stronger In Europe campaign as well as a founding member of the Remain team, and managed the campaign's overarching media and communications strategy and oversaw the creation and recruitment of its press office function across the UK. Prior to the EU referendum campaign, Chaplin was Communications Adviser and Spokesperson to the Labour Party cabinet minister Douglas Alexander. He was also previously an Account Director at London-based PR and public affairs firm MHP Communications and a Corporate Affairs Advisor at non-profit children's organization NSPCC.

Chaplin will be stationed in H+K's London office and will provide insights and expertise to the agency's growing energy and industrials practice.

APCO appoints Sheynberg

Raisa Sheynberg, a former Senior Advisor to the Treasury Department who was also director for international economic affairs at the National Security Council, has joined Washington D.C. PR and business strategy giant APCO Worldwide, where she's been named a Director.

Sheynberg joins APCO from the National Security Council, where she was Director of Trade and Investment and advised the White House's Chief of Staff as well as the national security advisor and the director of the national economic council. She was previously a Senior Advisor in the Terrorism and Financial Intelligence office at the U.S. Department of the Treasury, where she collaborated on shaping sanctions and focused on illicit finance issues.

Before joining the Treasury Department, she was a macroeconomic research and analysis fellow at Alfa Bank, the largest private commercial bank in Russia.

VML signs $20M Panama tourism pact

WPP Group's international marketing unit VML has signed a two-year, $20 million agreement with the Tourism Authority of Panama to develop a marketing and communications strategy and international campaign to attract U.S. and Canadian tourists to the Central American country.

The contract marks the first time since 2012 that the Republic of Panama has hired a foreign agency to promote the country's tourism efforts.

VML's services for Panama's DOT will include implementation of a marketing and communication strategy and promotional program, which will include online and traditional marketing and advertising as well as "limited public relations activities, targeted primarily toward tourists in the United States and Canada," according to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed in December. VML will also supervise market research efforts and will manage media planning and buying, as well as data analytics initiatives.

The agency will conduct its services outside of Panama but may engage a third party advertising agency within Panama to assist with the contract's on-site requirements.

Total cost of the contract will be $20 million, which will be distributed at intervals until 2018.

BGR reps Ukraine

Washington, D.C.-based lobbying firm BGR Government Affairs has inked a pact with the government of Ukraine to provide strategic PR and government affairs counsel for the embattled Eastern European nation.

BGR has been hired to design and implement "a comprehensive government affairs and business development strategy" meant to strengthen U.S.-Ukrainian relations and increase U.S. business investment in that country, according to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed in January.

The work will include media outreach, as well as potential contact with U.S. government officials.

BGR's contact began in December and runs through the end of December 2017. The year-long campaign carries a $50,000 per month retainer.

BGR Government Affairs is part of BGR Group, the firm founded by former Mississippi governor Haley Barbour, who was also chairman of the Republican National Committee.

France hires Hoffman to bolster tech sector

Business France, the national economic development agency that supports international investment in the French economy, has hired San Jose-based tech shop The Hoffman Agency to promote developments in France's tech community throughout Asia and North America.

Hoffman will specifically work to support La French Tech, a recent initiative established by the government that brings together startups, investors, universities and government agencies to strengthen France's burgeoning tech ecosystem and foster an environment for entrepreneur-friendly policies.

Working through teams located in Silicon Valley and Shanghai, Hoffman will boost awareness of France's technological successes and will promote La French Tech's efforts in North America and Asia through media relations, social media, thought leadership and event support.

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.

Cornerstone Government Affairs, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 20, 2017 for The Embassy of the Republic of Korea**, Washington, D.C., regarding the benefits of professional visas for Korean nationals to work in the U.S.

Scribe Strategies & Advisors, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 20, 2017 for Government of the Republic of Gambia**, Washington, D.C., to communicate to the Trump Administration the legitimacy of the election of President Adama Barrow and to assure that the will of the Gambian people will be respected.

K&L Gates LLP, Pittsburgh, PA, **registered Jan. 23, 2017 for Korea International Trade Association, Inc.**, New York, NY, regarding public policy advice and advocacy assistance as it relates to U.S. trade, economic, and other polices affecting KITA member companies.

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.

Hobart Hallaway & Quayle Ventures, LLC, Nashville, TN, registered Jan. 30, 2017 for Capital One Financial Corporation, McLean, VA, regarding banking, credit card and tax policy.

Fidelis Government Relations, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 30, 2017 for AFLAC**, Coumbus, GA, regarding insurance regulation.

Federal Advocates, Inc., Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 30, 2017 for CyberTran International, Inc.,** Richmond, VA, regarding federal funding for ultra-light rail passenger system.

Pine Street Strategies, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 27, 2017 for H&R Block**, Washington, D.C., regarding corporate tax reform and financial services.

Crossroads Strategies, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 24, 2017 for Airlines for America**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues related to commercial airline competitiveness and efficiency.

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Employees: 14. Founded: 2009.

Agency Statement: With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Marketing Maven's integration of PR, SEO and social media marketing helps provide a competitive edge to their clients. Marketing Maven helps businesses grow their revenues by developing campaigns that engage a target audience, generate sales then utilize advanced metrics to measure ROI. Their services aid national marketing campaigns and product launches with reputation management, organic SEO tracking, competitive analysis reports, key influencer identification and online product reviews to help increase revenue. Hispanic marketing is also a core competency for Marketing Maven, not only focusing on Spanish language media relations, but assisting clients with culturally relevant content for various marketing channels. Visit www.marketingmavenpr.com for more information.

Lindsey Carnett, CEO & pres.; Phil Rarick, COO; Natalie Rucker, VP of business dev.; Aljolynn Sperber, director of social media; Mari Escamilla, Hispanic media mgr.

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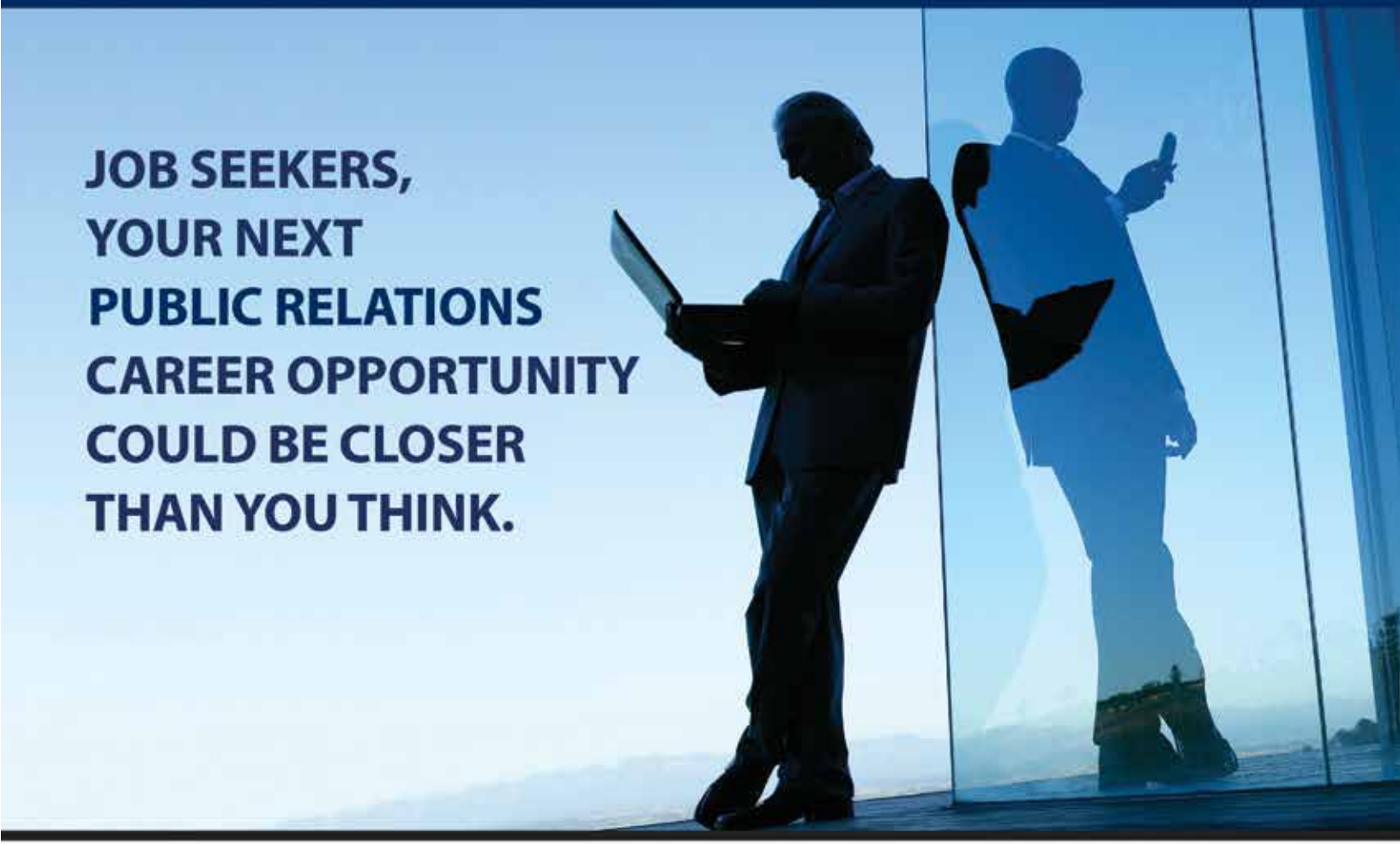

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