

# O'Dwyer's



Communications & New Media

Feb. 2018 | Vol. 32 No. 2

## THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ISSUE

February 2018 | [www.odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com)





# Marketing Maven

## **SUCCESSFUL PR ROOTED IN SOCIAL GOOD**

Public Affairs | Social Media Management | Corporate Positioning | Community Education  
Media Training | Litigation & Regulatory Support | Reputation Management

Los Angeles 310.994.7380

[www.MarketingMaven.com](http://www.MarketingMaven.com)

New York 212.967.5510



# 5W GETS PUBLIC RELATIONS.

We Build Brands,  
Create Value,  
and Get Results  
for Our Clients

See what we can do for you at  
[www.5wpr.com](http://www.5wpr.com)



212.999.5585 | [info@5wpr.com](mailto:info@5wpr.com)

**GOLD**  
STEVIE® WINNER  
AMERICAN  
BUSINESS AWARDS



THE  
**SABRE**  
AWARDS



PRNews'  
**DIGITAL  
AWARDS** **PR**  
**WINNER**



## EDITORIAL

### INFLUENCER PRESENCE ON INSTAGRAM DOUBLES

Instagram takes the top spot with online influencers, report says.

### TRUMP HOTELS, CNN RATED MOST POLARIZING BRANDS

Along with Fox and NBC, they divide GOP and Dems, study says.

### TRUST IN U.S. INSTITUTIONS COLLAPSES

Edelman study finds trust levels in U.S. institutions are in free fall.

### PR EMPLOYMENT LAGS BEHIND 2009 PEAK YEAR

Up for four consecutive years, jobs are still not at pre-recession levels.

### HOW TO COMMUNICATE WHEN A DISASTER HITS

Disaster situations present unique communications challenges.

### ADVERTISING BECOMES LATEST FAKE NEWS TARGET

The fake news phenomenon has moved beyond phony headlines to afflict the digital ad world.

### BRINGING REALITY AND PERCEPTION TOGETHER

Changing minds is hard when the facts aren't everyone's truth.

### IS CRY FOR PR DIVERSITY DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

This groundswell for diversity in the marketing sector seems genuine.

6

8

8

9

9

10

11

12

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

25

28

29

## COLUMNS

26

27

### WOMEN IN PR SEEK ALLIES TO FACE ETHICS ISSUES

Study finds Millennials unlikely to speak up, men favor case studies.

### STRATEGIES FOR DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE

Sartups are navigating how to stay on the right side of the very regulations they hope to disrupt.

### THINGS TO WATCH FOR IN TRUMP'S SECOND YEAR

Will echoes of 1968's tumult shape 2018's political arena?

### PEOPLE IN PR

### TIPS FOR GAINING INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

Creative content, market focus can result in earned followers.

### PROFILES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PR & PUBLIC AFFAIRS FIRMS

### RANKINGS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PR & PUBLIC AFFAIRS FIRMS

### WASHINGTON REPORT

### INTERNATIONAL PR

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Fraser Seitel

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Arthur Solomon

## ADVERTISERS

5W Public Relations.....	3
Marketing Maven.....	INSIDE COVER
Omega World Travel.....	7
Padilla.....	5
Peppercomm.....	BACK COVER



WWW.ODWYERPR.COM

Daily, up-to-the-minute PR news



## EDITORIAL CALENDAR 2018

January: Crisis Comms. / Buyer's Guide

February: Environmental & P.A.

March: Food & Beverage

April: Broadcast & Social Media

May: PR Firm Rankings

June: Global & Multicultural

July: Travel & Tourism

August: Financial/I.R.

September: Beauty & Fashion

October: Healthcare & Medical

November: High-Tech

December: Entertainment & Sports



**We spent  
5,475 days  
turning crop  
protection into an  
around-the-clock  
passion.**

**We don't plan on sleeping anytime soon.**



For more than 15 years, we led strategic marketing communications and issues management around product launches and industry programs for a global leader in crop protection. Now that BASF is no longer a client, we're ready for a new challenge. See how we help organizations across all industries, including agriculture, connect with purpose at [PadillaCo.com](https://PadillaCo.com).

**padilla**  
connect with purpose



# Weather Channel takes on global warming deniers

**H**ats off to The Weather Channel for the launch of its “United States of Climate Change” effort to report on the impacts of global warming on a state-by-state basis.

The campaign comes as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt has vowed to replace Obama carbon regulations and open up the debate in 2018 on climate change.

TWC, though, operates in the real world, not the Big Oil fantasy land of Pruitt. It sees no reason to debate the science of climate change. That matter has been settled. Or as TWC notes on its site, “There is no climate change debate.” About 97 percent of climate scientists agree change is happening. NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued reports this month showing that 2017 ranked as either the second or third warmest year on record.

“The basic mechanism of climate change was described in 1896,” the site says, “and while the climate system is wickedly complicated, humans’ understanding of climate change and the factors which might alter or mitigate it has only grown over the past century.”

Believing that a picture is worth a thousand words, TWC is going to let images tell the story of climate change.

“We’re going to tell a story for every state in the nation,” said a statement from TWC. “We’re going to talk to people. We’re going to take pictures and shoot video and report. We’re going to investigate.”

The “United States of Climate Change” section of TWC’s website has an interactive map, where users can click on any state to get a capsule view of how climate change is affecting it. It also has a series of in-depth features that examine such subjects as California’s costly efforts to protect residents from a potential megaflood and innovative bison-grazing strategies that could lead to a reduction in greenhouse gases.

TWC will report how individuals, communities and businesses are responding to changes happening across the American landscape. Kevin Hayes, executive editor of TWC, worries that the US is unwilling to invest in “mitigating the effects of climate change to the degree that future safety and stability requires.”

In addition, “United States of Climate Change” provides links to both TWC’s own Climate and Weather vertical and the blog Weather Underground. It also gives users a quick, way to share its stories with others via Facebook or Twitter.

The US of Climate Change project is a partnership with Center for Public Integrity, InsideClimateNews, The Marshall Project, Food & Environment Reporting Network, The Lens and other media and non-profits.

Let’s hope Pruitt spends some time visiting the US of Climate Change site before he dives into his 2018 priority of junking Obama’s Clean Power Plan, which was the former president’s climate change regulation centerpiece.

Or better yet, let’s pray that members of what *Vice* has called one the “most anti-science Congresses in history” check out the TWC site to view how their unwillingness to accept scientific facts is impacting their home districts. ○

—Kevin McCauley



## O'Dwyer's

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Jack O'Dwyer  
jack@odwyerpr.com

### ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

John O'Dwyer  
john@odwyerpr.com

### SENIOR EDITOR

Jon Gingerich  
jon@odwyerpr.com

### SENIOR EDITOR

Kevin McCauley  
kevin@odwyerpr.com

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Steve Barnes  
steve@odwyerpr.com

### CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Fraser Seitel  
Richard Goldstein

### EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS & RESEARCH

Jane Landers

John O'Dwyer  
Advertising Sales Manager  
john@odwyerpr.com

O'Dwyer's is published monthly for \$60.00 a year (\$7.00 a single issue) by the J.R. O'Dwyer Co., Inc.  
271 Madison Ave., #600  
New York, NY 10016.  
(212) 679-2471 Fax: (212) 683-2750.

© Copyright 2017 J.R. O'Dwyer Co., Inc.

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

#### www.odwyerpr.com

Breaking news, commentary, useful databases and more.

#### O'Dwyer's Newsletter

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

#### O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms

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

#### O'Dwyer's PR Buyer's Guide

Products and services for the PR industry in 50 categories.

#### jobs.odwyerpr.com

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





800-545-1003 • OmegaTravel.com



## Advanced Business Travel Management

Business Travel

Meetings & Incentives

Vacation Specialists

Download the  
Award Winning  
Cruise.com App



## Cruise Deals From New York City



### 7 Day U.S. & Canada

Carnival Cruise Line - Sunshine  
Sep 10, 2016 • fr.\$470

### 8 Day Bahamas

Norwegian Cruise Line - Gem  
Jun 4, 2016 • fr. \$599

### 7 Day Caribbean/Bahamas

RCCL - Anthem of the Seas  
Dec 9, 2016 • fr. \$824



**OMEGA M.I.C.E.**  
Meetings • Incentives • Conferences • Events

**CRUISE.COM**  
ONE OF THE INTERNET'S LARGEST CRUISE SPECIALISTS

**TRAVTECH**  
TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY

**WOMEN OWNED**

**Junior Achievement**

**GlobalStar**  
Travel Management

800-545-1003 • nlananna@owt.net

1500 Broadway, Suite 1900 • New York, NY 10036



# Influencer presence on Instagram doubled in 2017

Instagram has become the most popular social media channel for online influencer marketing, according to a recent report.

By Jon Gingerich

Photo-sharing site Instagram has now become the top channel for influencer marketing, according to recent data from social media analytics and intelligence platform Klear.

Using the #ad or #sponsored hashtag now mandated by the Federal Trade Commission to identify influencer-endorsed posts, Klear in January reported that the number of posts on Instagram sponsored by influencers nearly doubled between 2016 and 2017 to account for more than 1.5 million posts worldwide last year.

Klear's findings, which were published in its "The State of Influencer Marketing 2018 Report," claim that the total use of influencers in online marketing campaigns grew by 198 percent in 2017, with consistent month-over-month average growth of five percent. The report revealed that influencer-sponsored Instagram posts generated about one billion total "likes" globally last year, averaging about 682 "likes" per post.

Klear's data also found that young people and women overwhelmingly comprise the majority of Instagram's influencer economy, with nearly 84 percent of #ad posts in 2017 coming from women, and three-fourths of those posts coming from influencers be-

tween 18 and 34 years of age.

When it comes to what sectors are now leveraging influencers the most to raise brand awareness and drive engagement, Klear's report claims the number-one spot currently goes to the fashion and accessories industry, followed by beauty and cosmetics, food/beverage, automotive and consumer electronics. Travel, entertainment, retail, tech and fitness/wellness rounded out the top ten, respectively.

## Instagram was social media star of 2017

January estimates by digital market research company eMarketer found that Instagram, which now counts about 594 million regular total users, is quickly catching up with Facebook in terms of becoming the leading social platform, and now accounts for nearly a quarter — 24 percent — of all social network users worldwide.

While Facebook still accounts for the lion's share of social media activity — with more than 1.5 billion people, or about 62 percent of all social network users worldwide, logging onto that site at least once a month last year — eMarketer's report suggests that online photo service Instagram is quickly catching up, revealing big gains in new members and accounting for an in-

creased share of total global social network users.

eMarketer now predicts that nearly 700 million people worldwide will use Instagram at least once a month in 2018, representing more than 26 percent of all social network users. By 2021, that share is expected to surpass 30 percent.

eMarketer reported that nearly 2.5 billion people worldwide — or about one in three living on the planet today — logged onto a social network in 2017. In a development that should come as no surprise, eMarketer claims that mobile now constitutes the primary means by which Internet users access social media sites. eMarketer estimates that 82.5 percent of all social network users worldwide used a mobile device to access social sites at least once a month in 2017, and 74.7 percent of all mobile phone internet users worldwide used their device to access a social media site.

eMarketer predicts that social media's future growth across the globe will come as a result of improvements to Internet access in developing nations, itself a consequence of government investments in mobile broadband coverage and the availability of affordable consumer smartphones. ○

# Trump Hotels, CNN among most polarizing brands

By Jon Gingerich

Brands reflect ideological associations, and keeping in the spirit of the present political climate, it appears that some have never been more divisive than they are today.

According to a recent study of the most polarizing brands in America conducted by digital politics and policy outlet The Morning Consult, companies, organizations or brand names seen as pro- or anti-Trump reveal massive gaps in favorability, depending on Americans' political affiliation.

The Morning Consult's study asked respondents to rate how they felt about particular brands, and brands were then ranked in terms of the differences they exhibited in net favorability (favorable ratings minus unfavorable ratings), to determine which are the most divisive among those who identified as Republican or Democrat.

The long and the short of it should come as no surprise: Republicans immensely dislike brands critical of President Trump, and Democrats view any pro-Trump or Trump-associated brand as anathema.

President Trump's hospitality company, Trump Hotels, was rated the most polarizing brand in America in The Morning Consult rankings, with the study's greatest net favorability divide (78 percentage points) between Republicans or Democrats.

Democrat-favored news network CNN was number two (with a 66 percent net favorability divide) while right-leaning Fox News and left-leaning NBC tied for the third-place (both with a 54 percent favorability gap).

In terms of overall aversion, Trump Hotels, Wells Fargo, DirectTV and Phillip Morris are among the brands with the highest unfavorable rating among Democrats, while the National Football League, CNN, MSNBC and MTV are some of the brands most disliked among Republicans. The NFL's unusually high ranking, cited as the single most disliked Republican brand, was undoubtedly influenced as a result of the league's First Amendment player protests against police brutality, which eventually boiled over into a spat with President Trump.

U.S. media companies accounted for the brands that divided Democrats and Republicans the most often. The *New York Times* took fifth place in the list, beating out MSNBC, which was number six. The *Washington Post* was ranked tenth. Overall, media brands comprised 19 of the top 30 most polarizing brands in America, and accounted for all but one brand in the top ten (Trump Hotels).

The rankings brought to light other political battlegrounds among brands as well. Walmart is more popular among Republican shoppers, while Democrats see Target in a more favorable light. The NBA is a Democrat favorite, while Republicans prefer NASCAR. National pizza chains such as Papa John's, Little Caesars and Pizza Hut are enjoyed overwhelmingly by Republicans.

Morning Consult's "Most Polarizing Brands" study was based on survey interviews with more than 360,000 U.S. adults conducted online between early Oct. 2017 and early Jan. The top 30 brands were drawn from a prospective list of about 1,900. ○



# Trust in U.S. institutions collapses

The 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer finds trust in US institutions registers the biggest drop in the poll's 18-year history. Trust in media also is in free fall.

By Kevin McCauley

The just-released 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer finds that trust in US institutions showed the biggest drop in the poll's 18-year history, plummeting nine points to 43 percent among the general population and a staggering 23 percent plunge 45 percent among the "informed public."

Among the informed public, trust in American institutions ranked dead last, lagging behind countries such as Russia, Poland, South Africa, Turkey and Mexico.

Commenting on the dismal trust numbers, Richard Edelman said the US "is enduring an unprecedented crisis of trust."

He noted that it's the first time that the massive plunge in trust wasn't linked to a faltering economy or catastrophe. "The root cause of this fall is the lack of objective facts and rational discourse," he said.

The Barometer finds a buoyant China surging to the top of the trusted list among both the general and informed publics. India, Indonesia, United Arab Emirates trail China.

The report finds the media in free fall, ranking for the first time as the least trusted institution. It pins the lack of confidence in media on the collapse of trust in platforms such as search engines and social media.

The poll finds that nearly 60 percent of respondents believe the media are politicized and about half say they are elitist. Nearly two-thirds agree that the average person cannot distinguish between good journalism and false information.

In the Barometer's executive summary, Edelman warns of a world "without common facts and objective truth, weakening

trust even as the global economy recovers."

He blames the rise of disinformation for undermining the very essences of rational discourse and decision-making.

"Fortunately, we are already seeing the first signs of regret about over-dependence on peers and blind reliance on populist leaders," wrote Edelman. "People's concern about fake news and their willingness to listen to experts show that they yearn for knowledge."

The media, which is suffering from economic and political restraints, can't solve the trust problem alone. "Every institution must play its part by educating its constituents and joining the public debate, going direct to the end-users of information," wrote Edelman. "That means taking the informed risk to join the battle for truth so that facts triumph over fears." ○

## PR employment lags behind industry peak year

While they have risen for four consecutive years, jobs figures in the industry aren't yet back to their pre-recession levels.

By Steve Barnes

While employment figures in the PR industry have risen for four consecutive years, they still lag behind the peak levels reached in 2009, according to a new report from PR Underground.

The study, based on data compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, says that the industry added 11,620 jobs in 2016, hitting a total of 209,910. Despite that hike, the number of jobs still lagged behind 2009's total by about 5,000.

The growth trend did not float all boats equally, however. When it comes to pay, the gap between managers and non-managerial employees continued to widen. From 2008 to 2016, managers saw 10.98 percent growth in real income, with an average 2016 salary of \$123,360. For non-managerial employees, a combination of small pay raises (up to an average of \$66,540 for 2016) and increasing inflation led to a microscopic .09 percent growth in real income during the same period. Things are even worse for entry-level workers, who have seen their real income drop by 4.42 percent.

Location proved to be a major factor in both number of PR jobs and in the salaries that those jobs pay, the study says. Washington, D.C. has seen a PR employment boom, with 325 percent more jobs in 2016 than in 1999. States that have seen big employment jumps include Maryland (up 257 percent from 1999), Texas (up 183 percent), Massachusetts (up 169 percent) and Hawaii (up 138 percent). States that have seen declines for that period include Wisconsin (down 41 percent), Connecticut (down 25 percent) and West Virginia (down 18 percent).

The nation's capital also ranked near the top in salaries paid to both managerial and non-managerial employees, with only the Bay Area averaging higher pay for non-managers and the New York metro area topping D.C. for managerial salaries. However, when the cost of living is factored in, Providence, RI sits at the top of heap for non-managers, while managers do the best in the Durham-Chapel Hill area of North Carolina.

Another takeaway from the study is that trade associations and other business

groups have shifted a significant part of their lobbying budgets from traditional lobbyists to PR firms. In 1999, the report says, there were twice as many lobbyists as PR professional in D.C. By 2016, that ratio was inverted.

But the four-year growth trend may be hitting a wall in 2018, according to research from staffing firm The Creative Group. In a survey of approximately 200 marketing execs and 200 ad execs, only five percent of respondents said that they planned on expanding their staffs this year. That contrasts with nine percent for the second half of 2017 and 12 percent for the first half.

Most firms planned to "maintain" their firms, i.e., just filling vacated positions. The survey numbers say that 78 percent of respondents plan to follow that course this year, up from 64 percent in the last half of 2017 and 67 percent in the first half.

The good news: Zero percent say they plan on reducing staff in 2018.

The areas in which the survey saw the most room for growth were content marketing, brand/product management and digital marketing. ○



# Avoiding communications disasters

Disaster situations present unique communication challenges for brands, and PR professionals have an obligation to utilize effective messaging in a sensitive and timely manner to ensure their clients are represented in a positive light.

By Eliza Roemisch

Citizens across the globe last year witnessed several of the worst natural disasters on record with the destructive fire season in California, ravaging hurricanes impacting the Caribbean and continental U.S., and deadly earthquakes in Mexico and Iran.

These moments of crisis lead to unique challenges in communication for national and local brands alike; how do you as a public relations professional ensure that all messaging is sensitive and timely in disaster situations? It's vital to be prepared to ensure appropriate efforts are made. Companies need to avoid being demonized for capitalizing on tragedy and instead become a source of assurance and reliability.

## Plan ahead

While you can't place natural disasters on your calendar, it's important to have a plan in place well beforehand on how to effectively manage the crisis. This is especially true for events that occur annually, such as hurricane season in the late summer and early fall.

If you represent a client that produces a product used in disaster situations — i.e. batteries, blankets, dry goods, etc. — creating a separate budget for donations to affected areas allows for a timely response without unnecessary red tape. Proactively developing disaster messaging that's strong and consistent, and that all parties agree on, goes a long way in ensuring your client is represented in a positive light throughout the crisis.

You should also be prepared to postpone sponsored posts and articles as messaging that's normally innocuous can be easily viewed as insensitive during a crisis. Review any scheduled social media posts, influencer promotions or sponsored articles for messaging that can appear insensitive during a disaster. Should your target demographic be affected by the disaster, pause all branded and promotional messaging until an appropriate time has passed.

If your business will likely be affected by disasters, be prepared with messaging to communicate with your audience via social media and key news outlets on the status of your business and how your audience may be impacted.

## Be adaptable

In a crisis, it's paramount to have a strategy in place, and be adaptable with resources, relief efforts and messaging. For example,

within 24 hours of learning about a leading non-profit's project to raise funds following Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, call center ListenTrust coordinated two major telethon events, set up two on-site phone banks and even sent an employee to each location to oversee the operations. Timely reactions such as these require adaptability and clear communication. The company took more than 80,000 donation calls in a three week period, depicting the call center as a company that cares to give back to both the local community and communities around the world.

In a crisis, having clear and approved messaging in addition to a strategy is key to an effective public relations plan. Identify the spokesperson who will be in communication with media and the public. Media moves fast during a crisis, and being able to provide up-to-date information and professional reaction will help the company be portrayed as a reliable source to media and an expert in the field to the public.

When pitching to media, tell stories as opposed to platitudes. As many companies, celebrities and non-profit organizations will step up in a time of need, consider what will make your company stand out. Effective messaging will incorporate human interest and tell the stories of real people, not be canned messages offering support and cliché well wishing. By providing media with compelling human-interest stories told by real people, your company will be able to successfully tell the story of the support you provided to those affected at ground zero.

## Be sensitive, not punny

Making jokes or puns in any messaging related to natural disasters is a sure-fire way to receive backlash and negative publicity. For example, in 2012 in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Urban Outfitters received negative backlash after advertising a sale by saying, "This storm blows (but free shipping doesn't)." The company's adverse promotion landed it in Business Insider's article "The 9 Biggest Brand Fails Exploiting Hurricane Sandy." As many companies have learned the hard way, humor has its place in marketing, but not during a time of disaster.

Beyond keeping a serious tone, make sure your brand's messaging puts brand building on the back burner. A company should see a natural disaster as an opportunity to develop stronger relationships with customers rather than increasing profits and place-

ments. Focus messaging on employees and community first, and business second. Let the company's actions lead the story and set the tone. Be sure to maintain a respectful voice and avoid positioning charitable efforts as a way to win placements for your client. Humanitarian relief should be placed in the light of kindness, not of business strategy.

As a communication specialist, it's your job to provide wise counsel and manage client expectations. Advise the business on the importance of communicating with caution as talking about relief efforts too soon can result in negative feedback. All messaging needs to be well thought out and planned to avoid articles that are poorly timed or places the client in a bad light.

## Run the marathon, not the sprint

It can be tempting to focus messaging around a natural disaster for a short period of time, but the positive community relations you can build surrounding calamities are best created with time. Consider how a business can benefit from both short-term relief efforts and long-term involvement. For example, it's important immediately following disasters that public relations efforts focus on bringing back tourism to the affected areas. Not only is it good business, but it also helps rebuild the affected community and economy.

The key to ensuring that your messaging is sensitive and timely in disaster situations is to view everything through two frames: the immediate emotions and states of your client's community and the longer view of building goodwill and trust. Remember that sacrificing placements and sales in the short term can be the best option to building a strong community that trusts your brand. During disasters, people have very strong memories and they'll remember the brands that were there during the challenging times, be it positive memories of the supportive brands or brands that took advantage of them and the disaster.

Eliza Roemisch is Marketing Maven's Creative Specialist, responsible for asset development and brand messaging via multiple mediums, including social media. She can be reached at [Eliza@marketingmaven.com](mailto:Eliza@marketingmaven.com). ○



Eliza Roemisch



# Advertising becomes fake news' latest target

**The fake news phenomenon has evolved beyond phony Internet stories to afflict the digital marketing realm as well, damaging consumers' already plummeting trust in digital media and leaving industry professionals at a loss for what can be done to solve the problem.**

By Jon Gingerich

In January, an outbound link purporting to be an ESPN.com article appeared on the *New York Post's* homepage. It reported that Cavaliers legend LeBron James was under an NBA investigation after being caught using a performance enhancing drug called Primal Growth Testosterone. The headline read: "LeBron James Surrounded by Questions as Investigation Sparks!"

But it wasn't true. In fact, the link wasn't even an "article" at all, but an advertisement made to look like a story, placed on the *Post's* site not by its editorial staff but through a third-party media buyer. Once viewers clicked on the link, they were sent to a site that sold nutritional supplements.

LeBron isn't the only celebrity to fall victim to this latest strand in the fake news epidemic. *The New York Times* recently reported that similar ads have claimed that Melania Trump has moved out of the White House and that televangelist Joel Osteen is planning to leave his wife. Gone are the days when "fake news" implied hyperpartisan conspiracy sites that dupe gullible readers, or even Russia-funded social media campaigns to influence U.S. elections. The practice has now evolved to include a commercialized misinformation analogue that Google calls "tabloid cloaking," or phony news items with attention-grabbing headlines that are actually ads, typically placed through Google's AdWords service, which appear on otherwise legitimate news outlets. The problem is now so prevalent that, ironically, these ads have even made recent appearances on fact-checking sites such as Politifact and Snopes.

## The blame game

The scourge of fake news is not merely a technological issue; it's a psychological issue as well. It underscores the problem of confirmation biases and how we willfully gravitate toward information that parrots our preconceived worldviews. Add to this a decentralized and democratized media environment, complete with the automated ad systems upon which so much of the web is now built around, and it's no wonder why the problem is so pervasive today.

It's also why there's plenty of blame to go around for its cause. Unfortunately, the pariah of fake news and the havoc it's afflicted on the media and communications

industries has been complicated by the immutable fact that no one seems to want to take ownership of the problem, with our experts — publishers, tech leaders, content providers and marketers — offering solutions that thus far seem as disparate as fake news' growing list of victims.

Any consensus regarding who's to blame for this complex problem seems to change depending on what industry you ask. When it comes to marketing practitioners, research shows that most seem ready to point the finger at publishers. A December survey conducted by the Society for New Communications Research of the Conference Board found that 83 percent of U.S. marketers and advertisers believe publishers and media companies should be held accountable for fixing the fake news problem. Ask members of the press, however, and you'll get a different story. An October Ogilvy survey of news professionals found that 24 percent of North American reporters lay the blame for fake news on social media, with the rest citing either a polarizing media environment or readers' confirmation bias. And when it comes to the public, a December 2016 Morning Consult survey of more than 1,000 U.S. adults found that a near-equal percentage of Americans think search engines like Google (67 percent) as well as the person reading the news (66 percent) bear the responsibility in preventing the spread of phony news.

## Trust in social media collapses

What isn't debatable is the fact that the rise of fake news has diminished consumers' trust in the very real ads and editorial copy that often run adjacent to fake content online.

A September *National Journal* study of senior-level policy influencers in Washington found that only 23 percent now claim to trust online-only media brands as a source of news. A December consumer survey commissioned by Two Sides found that while 56 percent of U.S. consumers trust the news items they read in printed newspapers, only 34 percent admitted trusting the news they see on social media. An August report published by the Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri found that web-based news outlets now account for the least trusted media brands in

America, regardless of whether those outlets lean left or right.

Facebook, for its part, has promised a series of changes in recent months, overhauling its feed to de-emphasize news and other branded content in exchange for what it calls "meaningful social interactions" from individual feeds as well as more "trustworthy" news items, with an emphasis on local and regional news. Without question, Facebook's reputation has suffered the most in the ensuing fake news furor, especially after it was revealed that as many as 126 million of the platform's U.S. users had been exposed to Russian propaganda efforts during the 2016 election. A recent Verge survey found U.S. Internet users' current level of trust in the social media site now trails Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple and even banks.

If digital media wants to move the needle in terms of regaining consumers' trust, it might be worthwhile to consider the role each discipline plays in making that happen. One social media company can't fix this alone. Marketers, publishers, the tech industry and even consumers have to take ownership of their respective spaces in the digital realm and ally with other uniquely positioned entities to find a solution.

One company that's doing just that is News Corp.'s social video unit, Storyful. That company, which supplies video content to networks and publishers, in 2016 added a risk and reputation initiative that provides a trust framework for publishers and brands.

Storyful Editor-in-Chief Mandy Jenkins told *O'Dwyer's* that the company is now in a partnership with analytics and measurement company Moat in which they maintain a constantly-updated list of fake news sites, providing them insights into the characteristics of fake news sources and where phony ads will likely appear. Knowing the ads' content as well as their final destination not only allows them to warn clients regarding where not to place content, it provides an opportunity to work with the programmatic and third-party ad networks and get those fake ads booted from their rosters.

"On the editorial side, we work with publishers and platforms to keep them from falling into this trap by making sure stories that come their way through social media aren't passed along through unverified sources," Jenkins said. "By scanning across the ad networks and seeing the current fake news sites that are out there, we can do the same thing on the brand side." ○



# Bridging the chasm between perception and reality

The challenge of changing minds in a world where the facts aren't everyone's truth.

By Megan Fairchild Anderson

This past year, ABC News polled adults across the United States about their perception of genetically modified foods. The survey, titled "Skepticism of Genetically Modified Foods," found that 52 percent believe GM foods are unsafe, despite scientific consensus that they are. A 2015 survey from the National Chicken Council showed 77 percent of consumers believe chicken contains added hormones or steroids, despite the fact that the U.S. Department of Agriculture banned all hormones and steroids in poultry nearly 70 years ago. Finally, 2016 research from Oklahoma State University showed 98 percent of consumers surveyed incorrectly think hormones are used in pork and chicken production.

Today, many consumers perceive that conventional agriculture produces unsafe food. This chasm between perception and reality, which isn't unique to the communications industry, is a vast divide for communications to bridge. Is it even possible?

The reality is that agricultural innovation, built on science, has allowed farmers to safely and efficiently produce the food required to feed a growing global population. According to *National Geographic*, a farmer in the early 1900s produced food to feed a family of five. Today, one farmer can feed more than 100 people. But again, these facts aren't everyone's truth.

Researchers exploring the psychology of why facts don't change our minds generally start with the concept of confirmation bias. Simply put, this means that we humans tend to interpret new information as confirmation of our existing beliefs. Some researchers suggest that we get a shot of dopamine when our brains process information that supports our beliefs, giving us pleasure. When we're presented with information that contradicts our beliefs, this creates discomfort, or cognitive dissonance. We work to reduce this discomfort with a set of behaviors known in psychology literature as motivated reasoning. We stick to our guns, argue our point, ignore the contradictory information or forget it altogether. Research shows that trying to correct misperceptions can make things worse because we tend to double down on our current belief.

Coupled with the tendency to believe information that supports our existing be-

liefs is evidence that false beliefs can also be social. Our beliefs are often tied to the groups to which we belong, creating deep roots in our lives and sense of self. A study on partisanship by Stony Brook University, and reported on in *The Atlantic* last year, determined that high levels of media coverage are required for partisans to accept a piece of information that runs counter to their political views. According to Politico, liberals tend to demonstrate chemophobia. This belief manifests itself in the fact that Democrats overwhelmingly support bills to ban BPA from products despite evidence that shows it is safe.

While psychology presents a dim picture of our ability to change our minds — and of our ability as communicators to influence rooted misperceptions — we can strategically stack the deck in our favor.

## Start with clarity

How many times have you heard "don't dumb down my information!" from scientists, researchers and technical subject matter experts across industries? It's a common refrain, as we communicators work toward striking the balance between accuracy and clarity. A few years ago, I was working with a scientist on a presentation of research to a trade media group. During prep for the event, the scientist was very focused on sharing the details and nuances of the research, which would have been appropriate for a group of scientists or academics, but not for trade media. We counseled the scientist that this focus on accuracy, sharing data and specifics from all angles, clouded the purpose, results and important implications from the research. He disagreed and presented the detailed research. The first media question at the event was, "Can you explain that research again? I don't understand what the research shows or why you're talking about it." This illustrates an important point that if the people you're talking to don't understand what you're talking about, they'll turn to information that complements the way they already see the world.

A common example in agriculture is the confusion around the number of hormones in beef cattle given growth hormones. The scientific explanation involves nanograms, estrogenic activity and "minimal" residue. That's hard to understand and fuels a narrative that the food is unsafe. We get clar-

ity when we explain the difference in hormone levels between a steak from a steer that did not use growth hormones and one that did is equivalent to a blade of grass on a football field.

## Inoculate against misperceptions

Current research related to perceptions and politicization of climate change shows evidence that perception can be pre-emptively protected against misinformation if people are given "cues" from experts. The study reveals one promising way to counteract the politicization of science is to convey a high level of consensus among experts about the reality of human-caused climate change.

Credibility is the name of the game. As communicators, we often counsel that if you don't tell your story, someone else will. I would append this idiom, adding that if you don't tell your story first and support it with clearly presented, credible expertise someone else will tell your story with misinformation that people believe.

## Connection is key

One of the truths that has come out in the conversations around conventional agriculture, science and consumer cynicism is that people trust farmers. They love farmers but are skeptical of conventional farming practices. As we think about facts, expertise and the complicated business of changing misperceptions, we need to remember the power of a personal connection in delivering information. While human brains are hard-wired to keep deeply rooted beliefs, we can overcome this challenge by focusing on a connection strategy that both recognizes the human behavior that determines which information channels are best for each goal, and also reflects how channels interrelate, synchronize and work with audience behaviors.

One final thought on bridging the chasm between perception and reality: Execution is as important as strategy. Implement innovations and best practices across each channel and use best-of-breed tools to communicate efficiently and effectively.

Megan Fairchild Anderson is Senior Director at Padilla, where she provides strategic oversight for Padilla's clients in the agricultural, animal health and environmental sciences industries. ○



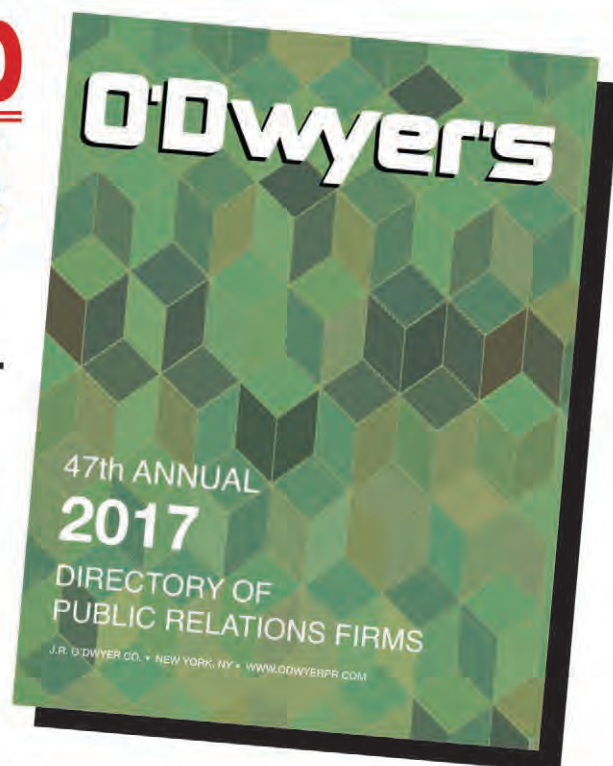
Megan Fairchild Anderson



# ORDER THE ONLY PRINTED DIRECTORY OF PR FIRMS!

**O'Dwyer's is the #1 source for researching public relations firms and outside PR counsel. We've been connecting clients and PR firms for 47 years through our directory of PR firms.**

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



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

- ✓ **Has brought billions of dollars in business to PR firms.**
- ✓ *Authoritative industry rankings, based on CPA statements & tax returns.*
- ✓ *Firms ranked by 14 geographical regions in the U.S.*
- ✓ *Leaders ranked in 12 specialized categories: agriculture, beauty & fashion, entertainment, environmental/PA, financial, food & beverage, healthcare, home furnishings, professional services, sports/leisure, technology and travel.*
- ✓ *Easy-to-use. PR firms sorted geographically and by 23 types of PR specialties. Firms listed alphabetically.*
- ✓ *Articles on how to hire and use a PR firm by industry experts Jack O'Dwyer and Fraser Seitel.*
- ✓ *Cross-Client Index: O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is the only place you can look up a company and determine its outside counsel.*

***"O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is the finest source of informations on PR firms."***

—Howard Rubenstein, President  
Rubenstein Associates

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

—Robert L. Dilenschneider  
The Dilenschneider Group

***"A phemonmenal job-seeking aid."***

—Marie Raperto  
Cantor Integrated Marketing  
Search

***"Single most important source of information on PR firms."***

—Thomas L. Harris, Author  
*Choosing and Working with your PR firm*



# Is cry for PR diversity different this time?

**The latest groundswell for diversity in the U.S. marketing sector seems more genuine and ambitious than previous industry inclusivity efforts.**

By Rick Gould

It happens every few years, just like a Swiss watch. Cries are heard regarding the general lack of diversity within the creative services field and how it's costing agencies and firms dearly. There are a few rounds of self-flagellation within the four walls, as the media trades run agonizing front-page stories examining why agencies remain so homogenized. At marketing industry conferences throughout the country, senior executives vow to do better. Then things pretty much return to the status quo.

However, the latest groundswell for diversity throughout marketing sectors — including the PR industry — feels different this time. PR leaders are moving beyond cocktail-party compliant conversation regarding diversity and looking to take action.

For the last year or so, a flurry of studies has been released pointing out why agency owners and C-level executives must reconfigure their hiring and recruiting practices in order to increase minority representation within their firms. But many agencies remain behind the eight ball.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the ethnic makeup of the PR industry is 10.3 percent African American, 5.4 percent Asian-American and 3.3 percent Hispanic-American.

The Ketchum-Fast Company survey of 500 creative professionals released last summer uncovered an important dichotomy: Respondents believe diversity of thought is valued by their organization (72 percent), yet an overwhelming majority think their organization still needs to do more to encourage diversity of ideas (85 percent).

Another salient aspect of the survey: 54 percent of respondents think that they work in a creative echo chamber. Company leadership was cited as the biggest factor contributing to the echo chamber (64 percent), followed by conversations with like minded people (57 percent).

"To increase the flow of diverse people and ideas into organizations, we must get vigilant about hiring from varied socioeconomic and academic backgrounds and work a lot harder to make people who challenge our way of thinking and working feel welcome and included," said Karen Strauss, partner and chief creative officer at Ketchum. "If people with different opinions, experiences, and perspectives don't feel a sense of belonging, they disengage

and leave. That's at the heart of this issue."

When hiring new employees, Strauss added, PR managers tend to "self-segregate," which hampers firms' creativity and feeds the echo chamber.

Survey participants had several recommendations for diversifying creative talent and opinion in organizations, including:

- Make diversity hiring goals more explicit
- End nepotism, cronyism and referral-based hiring
- Hire for curiosity and experience
- Hire from outside the industry
- Recruit internationally and eliminate insider jargon

Along with the industry at large, individual firms must take the lead proactively and start their own and unique diversity initiatives. They need to invest real money in programs designed not only to enhance diversity, but reduce groupthink and get hiring managers out of their comfort zone.

Take Ketchum's LaunchPad, a "blind system" that enables Ketchum to examine a job candidate's potential versus prior work experience or background.

Candidates compete to address a real client challenge and are selected based on a meritocratic basis. The approach has leveled the playing field, making it easier for non-traditional candidates to get their foot in the door, Strauss says. The agency's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion dashboard enable managers to objectively compare data year-over-year, with results that include more diversity hires since LaunchPad debuted.

What's more, Ketchum in 2016 partnered with Boston University to introduce the Kotcher-Ketchum Scholarship and Internship Program for African-American students.

There are many factors driving such changes. For starters, perhaps agency owners are beginning to appreciate that demographics is destiny.

By 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority. Throughout the next five decades, the majority of U.S. population growth is projected to be linked to Asian and Latin American immigration, according to Pew Research Center. One in seven U.S. infants (14 percent) were multi-racial or multiethnic in 2015, nearly triple the share in 1980.

Another reason diversity efforts now

seem more legit is the growing number of Millennials working in PR, many of whom seem allergic to how previous generations staffed their agencies and cultivated talent. Indeed, Millennials are more racially accepting than previous generations and don't get hung up on, say, interracial dating.

These are profound changes taking root in the U.S. culture. For PR firm owners and hiring managers the ability to attract people of color, members of the LGBT community and non-traditional job candidates will require commitment from the tippy top of the organizations, stick-to-itiveness and, perhaps most crucial, imagination.

Obstacles abound. According to a report released last year by the City College of New York and *The Holmes Report*, one of the fundamental challenges is to develop a singular definition for Diversity and Inclusion that would serve as a measurable standard across the industry.

"#PRDiversity: The Struggle is Real. Meeting Business Objectives with a 2020 Mindset" took the pulse of 16 CEOs and two former ones of global PR firms regarding the need for greater diversity. Some CEOs said another barrier to greater diversity is that the industry does not hold the "competitive financial or professional attraction that other industries, such as law or business, might have for diverse students."

Time and energy were also cited as barriers to improving diversity. However, when you think of the challenges to improve the complexion of the PR industry, is that a legitimate excuse?

PR firm owners and C-level executives need to get in front of these trends, lest they get stuck in reactionary mode and have to play catch up. If they don't get off the dime soon their firms increasingly will be seen among prospects as relics.

There are other factors spurring diversity efforts, of course. The only constant in life is change. But the bottom line is diversity is simply good business, broadening the firm's brand appeal to a wider array of people, burnishing creative and carving new trails.

Rick Gould, CPA, J.D., Managing Partner of Gould+Partners, is author of "Doing It the Right Way: 13 Crucial Steps for a Successful PR Agency Merger or Acquisition," and "The Ultimate PR Agency Financial Management Handbook: How to Manage by the Numbers for Breakthrough Profitability of 20% or Greater" (4th Edition). ○



Rick Gould



# Women in PR seek allies when facing ethics issues

A Baylor University study found that Millennial PR practitioners were unlikely to speak up when an ethical concern arises, while senior PR pros rely on “rational approaches” when it comes to ethics problems.

When raising an ethical concern to a company’s senior executives, female public relations executives are more likely to recruit allies and form alliances first, while men typically rely on presenting research and case studies, according to a study by Baylor University.

The study, which is published in the *Journal of Media Ethics*, suggests that many PR pros don’t feel adequate in their abilities to provide ethics training or counsel, and highlights the need for PR practitioners to build internal coalitions among colleagues in the course of exerting influence and speaking out on ethics problems within an organization.

The study also found that Millennials were unlikely to speak up when ethics issues arise.

## Women seek allies, men consult sources

PR practitioners interviewed for the study discussed possible ways to exert influence and whether they feel senior leaders value and respect their counsel.

Among those surveyed, PR women were said to be more likely than men to seek allies and form coalitions before they give ethics counsel to senior leaders. Success depended on building relationships with colleagues in other departments so that they have backup when ethical issues arise.

One woman said that “Going in force can help your case. But sometimes it can backfire ... you know, if somebody wants to kill the messenger. But if several people come to you with the same messaging, I think you take notice.”

Another woman said that she was “reprimanded for being so forthright. So, I didn’t do it that way anymore.”

Some women were wary of using emotional appeals because of stereotypes about women being emotional in the workplace. “I probably erred in the other direction,” one woman said.

Men, meanwhile, are more likely to prefer informational sources of power such as research and case studies. But both genders said they ask questions, discuss, listen, share alternatives or solutions and make recommendations.

A few men and women used more confrontational descriptions, such as saying,

“We absolutely put our foot down” and “Tell them it’s wrong.” But in the case of women, “some of these more confrontational accounts were used in connection with allies or coalitions,” said study lead author Marlene Neill, Ph.D., assistant professor of journalism, public relations and new media at Baylor University.

## Senior execs like “rational approaches”

The study found that senior PR executives rely on “rational approaches” when an ethical concern arises, including research, case studies and appeals to what they feel is right and lawful.

“While our study was focused on identifying effective ways to raise ethical concerns, it was quite disheartening to hear multiple stories from the senior executives about times when they faced retaliation after raising ethical concerns through official reporting channels such as ethics committees and hotlines,” Neill told *O’Dwyer’s*.

Neill said survey results also indicated

Another benefit of this is the fact that many PR practitioners feel they should be an “organizational conscience” in cases where they think company actions might pose an ethical dilemma with troubling consequences, and having coalitions that allow straightforward tactics within an organization dissuades them from turning outside the company to more extreme measures: whistleblowing or leaking information to stakeholders or the media, or resigning accounts outright if they decided that client’s business isn’t worth the ethical cost.

Neill said the research also “found companies that invested heavily in ethics training and resources and then followed through by terminating employees engaging in unethical behavior and rewarding employees who were living their core values. Based on the second group, we identified best practices for building an ethical culture.”

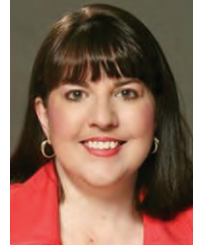
## Page Center, PRSA funded study

Research for the study, which is titled “The Use of Influence Tactics by Senior Public Relations Executives to Provide Ethics Counsel,” was conducted through interviews with 55 PR pros representing nearly 20 industries, many of them *Fortune* 500 companies. The combined sample average of individuals polled was 33 years in PR.

It was funded by the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication and supported by the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards and PRSA College of Fellows.

Co-author is Amy Barnes, associate professor in the School of Mass Communications, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

“What inspired us to conduct this research were findings from a study I conducted in 2016 with Millennials working in public relations,” Neill said. “When it comes to differences in how genders approach the role of ethics counselor, one reason women may recruit allies is that they tend to be outnumbered by men in the boardroom.”



Marlene Neill

INFLUENCE TACTIC	MEN	WOMEN
Case studies	1	5/6 (tie)
Legitimacy appeals	2	1/2/3 (tie)
Allies	3/4 (tie)	1/2/3 (tie)
Personal experiences	3/4 (tie)	4
Research	5	5/6 (tie)
Pressure	6	1/2/3 (tie)

Ranking of influence tactics used in PR by gender.

that Millennials “did not feel prepared to provide ethics counsel, were unlikely to speak up, and did not even expect to face ethical dilemmas.” Neill said the study was conducted, in part, to help instruct them on how to do this effectively “based on the experiences of senior executives working in our industry.”

## Info-leaking may result

The study suggests that building relationships is critical for PR practitioners to ensure other executives would listen to and respect their counsel.



# Strategies for disruptive influence

Startups are turning traditional businesses upside down. But they're still navigating how to stay on the right side of the very regulations they hope to disrupt.

By Doug Pinkham

Startups need more than a clever idea, money and talent to launch a business. They must also clear regulatory and legal hurdles that can delay a product, force a company to change its business model or shut down the enterprise altogether.

In highly regulated industries and professions, it can be close to impossible to overcome barriers supported by entrenched regulators, politicians and companies. But, as two Canadian researchers point out in a *Harvard Business Review* article published in October 2017, insurgent firms like Uber, Airbnb and Tesla have succeeded by mobilizing the public and other stakeholders to become advocates.

Guy Holburn and Davin Raiha of the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario observed that disruptive companies marshal stakeholders in three ways: online petitions, partner organizations and consumer clubs.

Uber has used the petition strategy to engage consumers in at least 10 cities, chiefly in North America and Europe. In Toronto, the authors note, Uber gathered more than 90,000 signatures supporting ride-sharing — a move that helped persuade the city council to permit the company to operate. In London, one of Uber's most important markets, a petition that gained more than 850,000 signatures gave the company a reprieve from efforts to shut it down.

Insurgent firms engage partner organizations to bring credible voices to the public policymaking table. For example, Uber has partnered with Mothers Against Drunk Driving to support studies showing that ride-sharing helps to reduce impaired driving. In some cities, MADD has spoken positively about ride-sharing at municipal hearings.

Consumer clubs are perhaps the most innovative of the three strategies because they connect users with each other and help to orchestrate advocacy activities. Holburn and Raiha explain that Airbnb's "home-sharing clubs" in 100 cities around the world bring people together to discuss regulatory and political issues and facilitate political involvement.

Similarly, Tesla has a Tesla Owner's Club Program that requires clubs to support local legislative efforts and assist with survey

groups and new software tests. In 2014, the Washington state club helped to pass legislation permitting the company to expand its direct sales model.

These grassroots strategies don't just work for tech-sector disruptors or small companies, however. Reading the HBR article reminded me of other examples. In 2012, Southwest Airlines wanted to fly international routes from Hobby Airport in Houston, but the city council and major competitors using George Bush Intercontinental Airport were against the idea.

That's when the company created its "Free Hobby" campaign, which enlisted the help of employees and the local community to conduct a massive petition drive. To give its online petitions more impact, the airline printed out the signatures on paper and delivered them in boxes to city hall.

But the petition drive was only part of the plan. Media outreach, as well as T-shirts and other collateral proclaiming, "Houston, We Have a Solution," helped to attract local and national attention to the effort, which resulted in a near-unanimous city council vote favoring the company. In the same way, Uber, Airbnb and Tesla have drawn extensive news media coverage and social media buzz to their campaigns, which have magnified their impact.

As in other areas of business, sometimes the most valuable lessons are learned when everything doesn't go according to plan. Holburn and Raiha admit that consumer advocacy doesn't work for every company, for every issue or in every location. Uber's petition drive in Calgary, Alberta, in 2015 was disappointing when only 14,000 people — a little more than one percent of the city's population — signed on. Holburn and Raiha say this outcome was predictable because the taxi industry had widespread support in the community, but Uber didn't pay attention to polling.

For insurgents, that's lesson number one: Don't call for a public vote of confidence if you don't yet have the votes.

As an update to the HBR article, I'll add lesson number two: Once you have disrupted an industry, slow down and get things right. Uber found this out the hard way in September when Transport for London finally decided not to renew its license to operate.

New CEO Dara Khosrowshahi, in an email to Uber employees obtained by *The New York Times*, said he thought the decision was unfair, but that "the truth is that there is a high cost to a bad reputation."

Khosrowshahi was referring, of course, to controversies about the company's former CEO, workplace culture and approach to background checks, among other issues.

Nevertheless, many observers think Uber will find a way to return to London. "Any disrupter that is playing in a regulated or unionized market is going to face counter-disruption through legislation and social protests," said Bill Bosworth, CEO of DataStax, in an article in *Forbes*. "They will all have to figure out new rules."



Doug Pinkham

*Doug Pinkham is President of the Public Affairs Council, a nonpartisan, nonpolitical organization that provides training, advice and research on public affairs. This article originally appeared on the pac.org blog.* ●

## Media news brief

### Traditional media to gain as Facebook scales back news

Facebook's decision to downplay news from publishers and brands in favor of what it calls "meaningful social interactions" on individual feeds will likely lead audiences back to the original sources of that news, according to a report from CooperKatz.

Citing Pew Research Center numbers, the report finds 45 percent of Americans use Facebook to access news. CK polled 250 Americans via SurveyMonkey to find out where those users will go for news once it becomes less prominent on FB.

Twitter was the new news source of choice for only six percent of the respondents, and Snapchat, Instagram and LinkedIn came in even lower. Eleven percent said they will seek no new source of information.

Traditional news sources did much better, winning 65 percent of respondents who plan to rely on them for their information.

The CK study has several implications about what this means for both news sources and PR professionals.

For news sources, the fight for loyal readers is likely to become more intense. The study notes the tendency of many people to stick with one or two news outlets rather than surf the web to pick up information from a variety of outlets. Finding and keeping a dedicated audience could become much more difficult.

FB on the other hand, will become less attractive. Breaking through on FB, the report says, will be costly and more difficult. Brands that continue to prioritize FB will need to be prepared to spend more and to devise strategies focused on user engagement.



# Things to watch in year two of the Trump 'resistance'

2018, which marks the 50th anniversary of the tumultuous upheavals of 1968, will be a frenzied year in the public arena, with a cacophony of causes vying for attention during year two of the "resistance."

By Ben Wyskida

It's been 50 years since 1968, the year in which protest found its voice and an awakening of the people's power shaped public policy.

As we enter the second year of the Trump presidency, there are some obvious parallels, including a federal administration hostile to equity and inclusion, and an energized community of activists working for change.

Of course, there were no "social change agencies" back then. Fenton didn't exist. But 1968 is in our DNA. Some of us were on the front lines of movements back then. Others weren't born. And much of Fenton staff is two generations on, a new wave of activists using multiple instant communications platforms and tools to make change.

2018 will be a frenzied year in the public arena, with a cacophony of causes vying for attention during year two of the "resistance." Here are a few trends to watch:

The fight for the Dreamers is on. The cruelty shown to "Dreamers," those eligible for DACA renewal, was at the heart of the recent government shutdown. This will continue to be a significant issue in 2018, and one that has been exacerbated by a lack of credible information. Most dreamers did

not receive any notification from the government alerting them of their status and opportunity to renew, instructions or deadline. They also received mixed messages on whether renewal would be a safe step for them given the current anti-immigrant environment.

Women are storming the House. 2018 has already been called "The Year of the Woman," with nearly 400 women planning to run for the House of Representatives. The 2018 election may reach a fever pitch usually reserved for a Presidential election year, with a major shift towards digital advertising and online video.

We're already seeing the rise of organizations like Indivisible, Swing Left and Run for Something. We're also seeing an emergence of organizations explicitly working to build political power for people of color and women, like Sister District, Black PAC and Vote Pro Choice, who helped women candidates run on reproductive rights — and win — in 2017.

Organizations are mobilizing to stare down racism and anti-Semitism. Facing a wave of racism and anti-Semitism, many organizations are looking for ways to use

communications to challenge hatred. One of the most remarkable organizations is Facing History and Ourselves, a nonprofit that for 30 years has helped schools teach children about racism and anti-Semitism and whose work is as urgently needed now as ever before. We are creating strategy and messaging for Facing History in 2018, which includes supporting a community-wide teach-in on the 50th anniversary of the assassination of MLK, hosted at the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, TN.

Rising anger over conservation. In December 2016, after years of consultation with five tribal nations, President Obama designated the Bears Ears region of Southern Utah a National monument. Last year President Trump gave most of the land back to mining interests, rolling back protections for most of the land in Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, another national monument that has stood for over 20 years. This is part of an overall effort by the Trump Administration to undo almost every environmental protection on the books, including a recent decision to open up both coasts to offshore drilling.

More fake news. Little threatens the integrity of our clients more than the lack of credible news sources and the proliferation of bots and trolls. As an industry, we will need to contend with "fake news" on an ongoing basis in 2018. All brands are at risk — not just political causes. As PR professionals, we have a choice: use fake news and obfuscation to help our clients at the expense of our democracy, or do our work with integrity. At Fenton, we're part of a group working to create an "ethical engine" to spread facts and opinions of real voters on social media, as an antidote to the attacks we're seeing on meaningful public discourse. It won't be easy.

Fifty years ago, a year like no other roiled American history, with breaking — and often genuinely shocking — news each day.

In the second year of the Trump resistance, we are inspired by that history. And we're expecting a year like no other in the public debate.

Ben Wyskida is CEO at Fenton. ○



Ben Wyskida

## Social media is key to CEO success

Engaging with social media may well be one of the keys to success as a CEO, according to the January "The Social CEO" report released by Ruder Finn.

"The Social CEO" analyzes the social media presence of 100 CEOs from across 13 industries. It then split that group up into "high-performing" CEOs and "low-performing" CEOs (those whose companies had below-average stock price growth against the S&P 500 Index).

The study found that high performers have a weightier social media presence than low performers. 50 percent of the high-performing CEOs surveyed have two or more social media accounts. That number is 28 percent for low performers. The high performers also have more followers, averaging 400,566 followers over all their accounts and 244,190 followers per account. For the low performers, the numbers were 55,355 overall and 37,605 per account.

It also matters how open CEOs are on the social platforms they use, the study says. More high performers (20.72 percent) ad-

dress personal topics on social media than do the lower performers (14.12 percent). The high performers are also more likely to share industry news. But they are less likely to post on such topics as current events, politics and progressive topics.

When the numbers are broken down by company sector, it appears that some industries are far more social-savvy than others. Not surprisingly, tech companies lead the way, with 91 percent of tech CEOs in the survey reporting that they had a social media presence. For the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) sector that figure is 60 percent, with pharma coming in at 56 percent and financial services at 33 percent.

The main point reached by "The Social CEO," however, is that tapping the power of social media has a strong relationship to a company's success. "CEOs must find ways to leverage the power of social media as a means to bring their story to life and connect with customers, investors and other audiences," said Ruder Finn CEO Kathy Bloomgarden. ○

## Legendary PR man Herb Schmertz dies at 87

**H**erb Schmertz, the combative Mobil Oil PR exec who pioneered the use of “advertorials” to take on critics of Big Oil, died Jan. 17 from congestive heart failure. He was 87.

The former Army Intelligence Officer and organizer for John F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign joined Mobil in 1966, taking a leave of absence in 1968 to work on Bobby Kennedy’s presidential run.

He returned to Mobil in 1969 to head its public affairs office, stepping away in 1979 to work on Ted Kennedy’s White House bid, before leaving in 1988 to head his own firm.

Schmertz, who advocated “creative confrontation” rather than working behind the scenes to gain influence, launched the advertorial in 1970, buying space on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* to express Mobil’s view of the oil industry and world. The advertorials spread to other newspapers and Schmertz became a fixture on TV news programs.

As Schmertz spearheaded Mobil’s attack on critics, he also softened the company’s abrasive image through sponsorship of the PBS series “Masterpiece Theater.” Viewers would hear that high-end programs such as “I, Claudius” and “The First Churchills” were “made possible by a grant from Mobil.”

The *New York Times* said he was “perhaps the most visible PR executive in the US during the 1970s and ‘80s,” while *New York* magazine profiled him as “Oil Slick.”

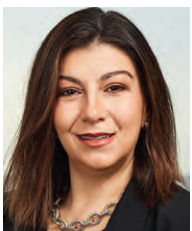


Herb Schmertz

## W2O Group names Gottlieb President

**W**2O Group announced that it has named Jennifer Gottlieb President, a newly created role at the San Francisco-based marketing and communications network.

Gottlieb, who joined W2O in 2006, has held a series of leadership positions at the network, which focuses on tech and global brands. Most recently she served as Chief Operating Officer and client service head, and previously led its



Jennifer Gottlieb

WCG and Twist Mktg units.

Prior to joining W2O she was a Managing Director at Cohn & Wolfe, a role she held for nearly a decade. Earlier in her career, she was an Account Supervisor at Makovsky and a senior account executive at Edelman.

As President, Gottlieb will oversee W2O’s WCG, Twist and Pure properties. She’ll still report to chairman and CEO Jim Weiss, who retains responsibility for overall firm strategy and global operations and will now focus on EMEA growth as well as further integration of digital marketing units Sentient and Marketeching Solutions.

## Ruder Finn ropes in Ryan

**R**uder Finn has named 20-year PR veteran Laura Ryan an Executive VP in its corporate communications practice.

Most recently running LKR Communications, Ryan has big firm expertise earned from stints at Cohn & Wolfe, Ketchum and Burson-Marsteller. She has handled pharma, food & beverage, consumer, finance and hospitality clients.

RF CEO Kathy Bloomgarden praised Ryan’s extensive corporate experience and ability to work across a range of disciplines including crisis PR.

She expects Ryan to strengthen the independent firm’s executive thought leadership, issues, financial communications offerings and its business development push.

## Finn Partners brings on Bona as partner

**C**hristopher Bona, a veteran at Baxter, GE Healthcare and Abbott, has been named a Partner in Finn Partners’ health practice.

Bona joins the agency from metal processor and distributor Ryerson, where he was head of communications and responsible for corporate affairs, investment community and marketing communications functions. He previously led global marketing communications at GE Healthcare for the business specializing in X-ray-based technologies. Prior to that, he was a Global Corporate Communications Director at medical device maker Baxter International Inc. and oversaw biopharmaceutical com-



Laura Ryan



Christopher Bona

munications surrounding product launches, medical meetings and research and development.

He was also previously a Senior VP of corporate affairs at Weber Shandwick and held a series of public affairs positions at Abbott, including leading communications for the global pharmaceutical operations division and supporting the healthcare giant’s pharmaceutical and corporate divisions.

## B-M’s Gee shifts to Finsbury

**F**insbury has recruited Chris Gee as Managing Director to spearhead its integrated digital practice in North America.

Gee joins from Burson-Marsteller, where he handled digital/content strategy for corporate and financial clients. His credits include campaigns for ExxonMobil, Nestle Waters, Walgreens Boots Alliance, Colgate-Palmolive and MassMutual.

Prior to B-M, Gee was Chief Digital Officer at RF|Binder and Managing Director of digital and social strategy at Teneo.



Chris Gee

## Smith bolsters APCO west coast operations

**T**im Smith, who was Executive VP at Edelman, has joined APCO Worldwide as Managing Director in Seattle to spearhead the DC-based firm’s West Coast push.

He joined Edelman’s Seattle in 2009 and rose to lead the office’s corporate and PA practice.

Prior to work at the No. 1 independent firm, Smith held the Senior VP slot at Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, where he led the technology-oriented shop’s PA, issues management, crisis and CSR offerings.

Smith has a wealth of overseas corporate experience gained from stints at Japan Tobacco International (VP-Global Affairs and Communications in Moscow and Geneva) and RJ Reynolds (Senior Director-Corporate Affairs in Moscow).

He also worked as a commercial officer for the State Dept. with postings in Russia (Moscow and Vladivostok) and Uzbekistan (Tashkent).



Tim Smith



# Tips for gaining Instagram followers

Being creative with meaningful content and paying attention to your target market are sure-fire ways to gain Instagram followers naturally, without having to pay for them.

By Anthony Coggine

Instagram is one of the most popular and successful social media tools on the market today. Since 2010, the photo sharing platform has grown rapidly and now boasts more than 500 million users, making it one of the top social media outlets used by businesses to showcase their products.

For those new to Instagram, it may be tempting to pay for followers. It's a seemingly easy way to strengthen your numbers and speed up the growth process, but buying followers comes with a lot more risk than benefit. Accruing fake fans is a lot like get-rich-quick schemes: basically too good to be true. Rather than running the risk of being seen as non-transparent and spammy, take the time to build a solid reputation through meaningful content and audience engagement. While it may take more time, it'll certainly pay off in the long run.

## Never underestimate a hashtag's power

The majority of businesses on Instagram use hashtags. Simple and easy to modi-

fy to your specific needs, hashtags allow businesses to target their audience, in addition to creating a backlog of photos and information that can be accessed with just the tap of a finger. Think of hashtags as the ultimate tool to help you spread the word. If you're putting out a new product, or offering a promotion, adding a catchy tag will boost awareness and encourage your audience to share your content.

In addition to helping you stay organized, hashtags are also a great way to tap into current or seasonal trends on social media. Many brands tweak their content based on current global events, like the Olympics or internationally recognized holidays. By relating your product to what's happening in your consumer's world, you're engaging with them on a more personal level.

## Be consistent

Consistency should apply to all of the content that you post on social media, whether it's Facebook or Instagram. A steady stream of hashtags, photos and campaigns that have a common theme will help you create an engaging storyline, which ultimately creates brand awareness. Everything from your logo, general design, to daily content needs to be easily identifiable. First decide on what you want your audience to know about your brand, and then translate that visually.

When it comes to Instagram, you need to ensure that all of the images you post are of the highest quality. It doesn't matter if you're posting photos of the office dog or your latest product, each photo needs to look as if it was shot with the utmost care and intention.

## Create rich content

While Instagram seamlessly lends itself to visual brands, such as e-tailers and design-centric products, there are numerous companies today that don't necessarily offer physical products, which have found ways to utilize Instagram to create brand awareness. Brands that can't simply rely on a more straightforward approach, like posting photos, have had to get creative with their content. Several years ago, Penn State University held a "day in the life" campaign where students, staff, and alumni could share their experiences at the university through social media over a period of 24 hours. Rather than simply posting photos of the school campus, Penn State took a human-centric approach that

focused on their community to illustrate daily activities as a way to generate interest in the university.

For brands that are more traditional and may be new to social media, conducting market research before you starting posting content is key. Knowing who you are speaking to, and what they want to hear, will help you create more rich and meaningful content that users will actually want to share. Making the most of tools like Google Analytics or consulting a market research analyst can help you identify these specific needs.

## Engage your audience

You'd be hard pressed to come across someone who's never heard of Starbucks. The corporate coffee giants have made a global name for themselves, so you might wonder why they would need any more press than they've already had. But, consumer needs are changing and a growing on-the-go generation of buyers are demanding more engaging campaigns, causing even the biggest brands to rethink their marketing strategies in order to stay relevant.

Starbucks is one of the many companies that's turned to Instagram to freshen up their audience engagement. Inspired by customer doodles on cups, Starbucks in 2014 reached out to their audience through their My Starbucks Idea, asking them if they had any suggestions that could make their brand even better. Thus, the #WhiteCupContest was born, receiving close to 4,000 entries. The winner's cup was sold as a limited edition item on their website.

So, before you consider taking the easy way to Insta-fame, remember that it takes a bit of finesse to get the most out of any social media strategy, and putting in the work is worth it in the end. Paying careful attention to your target market, and getting creative with your content is a great way to gain traction naturally, without having to pay for followers.

*Anthony Coggine is a HR professional turned business writer. He has been covering a range of topics including training, HR, recruiting and cryptocurrency news.* ○



Anthony Coggine

## Media news brief

### Sard Verbinen crowned '17 deals

Sard Verbinen & Co. snagged the top spot in four main categories of Mergermarket's global overview of PR advisors on mergers and acquisitions deals for 2017.

With a global deal count of 248, SVC topped second-place FTI Consulting by 48 deals. Brunswick Group came in number-three with 190 deals, while and Finsbury Hering Schuppener and Kekst, tied for fourth place with 165.

In terms of value, SVC once again took first place globally (\$386 billion), followed by Brunswick Group (\$346 billion), Finsbury Hering Schuppener (\$308 billion), Joele Frank Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher (\$297 billion) and Kekst (\$241 billion).

The numbers for the U.S. were in line with the global figures. SVC ranked first in total deals (221) and value (\$353 billion). Joele Frank came in second in both categories, with 151 deals and \$293 billion in value. Other top firms were Finsbury (number-five in deals, number-three in value), Kekst (number-three in deals, number-four in value), Abernathy MacGregor Group (number-four in deals, number-seven in value) and Brunswick Group (number-seven in deals, number-five in value).

The data for the PR firm rankings measured deals with a value of over \$5 million, or deals with an undisclosed value where the target's turnover exceeds \$10 million. If the deal is for a stake of less than 30 percent, the value must be greater than \$100 million.

Mergermarket, an Acuris company, employs correspondents across 67 locations worldwide to assemble a database of information about the M&A market.

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

## 5W PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Helmsley Building  
230 Park Ave., 32nd Flr.  
New York, NY 10169  
212/999-5585

**Ronn Torossian**, Founder & CEO

5W's public affairs practice manages everything from highly controversial local issue advocacy campaigns and international affairs programs to matters of cross-border litigation and arbitration. 5W implements all facets of public affairs campaigns to impact public opinion — polling, message development, grassroots and grassstops lobbying, coalition building, digital campaigns, media relations, crisis management and more. 5W's distinguishing characteristic over other public affairs firms is our ability to reach our clients' core audiences through the media. We understand how the media thinks and works, from local to national outlets, ensuring that our clients' causes are heard by the audiences they care about most. 5W's public affairs clients include foreign allies of the U.S., international trade associations, political leaders, public employee unions, domestic and foreign NGO's and non-profit organizations.

## CAPLAN COMMUNICATIONS LLC

1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 400  
Rockville, MD 20852  
301/998-6592  
Fax: 301/983-2126  
aric@caplancommunications.com  
press@caplancommunications.com  
www.capancommunications.com  
@CaplanComms

**Aric Caplan**, President

Caplan Communications is a full-service Washington-DC area agency that carries out targeted news for legislation and advocacy. We work at the vanguard of issue-action campaigns, message design and journalism. Caplan galvanizes citizen-led groups that champion matters in the public interest to effect desired audiences to achieve timely results. Our practice aligns clients with their most de-



Crosby staff members volunteer for worthy organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

sired press contacts working in the media. We advance the news value of clients with clear calls to action on the local, state and regional levels, inside the Beltway and on the national stage.

## CERRELL ASSOCIATES, INC.

Partner in The Worldcom Public Relations Group

320 N. Larchmont Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90004  
323/466-3445  
Fax: 323/466-8653  
www.cerrell.com

**Hal Dash**, Chairman & CEO  
**Steve Bullock**, CFO  
**Brandon Stephenson**, CSO  
**Marc Mitchell, Tori Chica & Dan Loeterman**, VPs

For more than 50 years, Cerrell has been at the center of California's biggest environmental projects and most consequential issues. Our unmatched energy and environment experience is built on decades of successfully working for some of the largest oil and gas, solar, water, power plant and recycling private and public-sector entities in the state.

Whether we're confronting regulations from air, water and/or related agencies, or managing

communications and outreach for Superfund Site clean-ups and hazardous waste remediation projects, our team has the skills and subject-matter expertise to achieve our clients' results.

Cerrell creates strategic and targeted multilingual public affairs programs that California's diverse environmental projects demands. The key to our success is a comprehensive approach that combines the disciplines of government affairs, public relations, land use and outreach campaigns.

We advocate for smart public policies, build effective coalitions, and tell compelling stories that get results and drive our communities forward. That's why Cerrell is the firm of choice for local, national and global organizations doing energy and environment projects in California.

## COOPERKATZ & COMPANY

205 Lexington Avenue, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
www.cooperkatz.com

**Ralph Katz**, Principal  
**Anne Green**, President / CEO

CooperKatz has significant experience helping clients respond to complex business, public policy or environmental issues with inte-

grated 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.



## CROSBY MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

705 Melvin Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
410/626-0805  
www.crosbymarketing.com

**Raymond Crosby, President**

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 protect the climate to stopping the spread of invasive species, from fighting for veterans' rights to promoting innovation in education, Crosby partners with clients to raise awareness of today's most important issues and call people to action.

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

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

Crosby is #33 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](http://www.crosbymarketing.com).

## DAVIES

808 State Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
805/963-5929  
jboisvert@daviespublicaffairs.com  
www.DaviesPublicAffairs.com

Los Angeles  
310/395-9510

Washington, D.C.  
202/580-8930

**John Davies, CEO**  
**Taylor Canfield and Joshua**

**Boisvert, EVPs**  
**Caitlin Bidwell, COO**

Creating wins for clients facing public opposition and major crises for 35 years.

Davies is a full-service strategic and crisis communications agency that employs insightful public opinion research to craft thought-provoking materials that share client stories. We uncover and motivate vocal public support, soothe crisis and thwart opposition through hands-on community activation and thoughtful strategy.

Davies delivers the power of public support for clients engaged in local, state, and federal environmental regulatory permitting battles and land use entitlement challenges.

When trouble strikes, Davies manages crisis response with focused management, message driven communications and strategic planning that calms the media and public storm.

Partial Client List: Sudberry Properties, Toll Brothers, Napa Pipe, NRG, Dominion, SoCal-Gas, BGE, PG&E, Vestas, E.ON, Calpine, EDF, Anglo American and Augusta Resources.

## FAHLGREN MORTINE

4020 Easton Station, Suite 300  
Columbus, OH 43219  
614/383-1500  
Fax: 614/383-1501  
neil.mortine@fahlgren.com  
bob.boltz@fahlgren.com  
www.fahlgrenmortine.com

**Neil Mortine, President and CEO**  
**Bob Boltz, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs Lead**

Fahlgren Mortine's public affairs professionals have a successful track record of helping clients negotiate the often difficult waters where private- and public-sector issues and concerns intersect. Collectively, we have decades of experience working with businesses, trade associations, and informal and formal coalitions, as well as government officials, public agencies and the media. Our core competencies include supporting industry coalitions; organizing and supporting grassroots advocacy efforts; planning and conducting special events and conferences; writing policy briefs, position papers, legislative testimony and other advocacy materials; and coordinating newspaper editorial board meetings and outreach to the

media.

Our team of public affairs professionals has the required working knowledge of executive and legislative government processes to enable us to develop effective communication strategies, messages, materials and activities to support clients' advocacy goals.

## G&S BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Worldwide Headquarters  
60 East 42nd Street, 44th floor  
New York, NY 10165  
212/697-2600  
Sustainability Consulting Practice:  
312/648-6700  
www.gscommunications.com  
learnmore@gscommunications.com

**Luke Lambert, President and CEO**  
**Ron Loch, Managing Director,**  
Chicago and Sustainability  
Consulting Lead

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.

## GREENOUGH BRAND STORYTELLERS

1 Brook Street  
Watertown, MA 02472  
617/275-6500  
info@greenough.biz  
www.greenough.biz

**Phil Greenough, CEO**  
**Scott Bauman, EVP/GM**

Greenough Brand Storytellers expertly moves audiences toward affinity and action with compelling stories. Whether we're educating consumers about energy efficiency and solar investment or helping to influence state legislators and policy-makers for a greenhouse gas initiative, wind energy or a ballot issue, every campaign starts with the central issues and a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the characters. Greenough's energy practice excels at delivering national, local and hyperlocal media results, developing and distributing journalistic-quality stories through owned and paid channels. It begins with "Brand Journalism," our program foundation that comprises PR and marketing tactics based on journalistic discipline. We are effectively your in-house investigative reporting team, uncovering the meaning behind issues and offerings by presenting them through the lenses of the target audiences themselves. Our energy campaigns actively engage viewers, readers and listeners, encouraging them to think, share and act.

## MARKETING MAVEN

1460 Broadway, 1st Floor  
New York, NY 10036  
212/967-5510  
lindsey@marketingmaven.com  
natalie@marketingmaven.com  
www.MarketingMaven.com

Los Angeles Headquarters  
310/994-7380

**Lindsey Carnett, CEO & President**  
**Natalie Rucker, Director of Business Development**

Marketing Maven's sophisticated share of voice and sentiment

Continued on page 22

## MARKETING MAVEN

Continued from page 21

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 a federally recognized Native American Owned 8(a) and WOSB certified company. We are also a certified Small Business (SB) with the California Department of General Services (DGS), a certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) with METRO, a certified Women/Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE) through the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), and a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

## MARX LAYNE &amp; CO.

31420 Northwestern Hwy., #100  
Farmington Hills, MI 48334  
248/855-6777 Ext. 105  
mlayne@marxlayne.com  
www.marxlayne.com

**Michael Layne**, Managing Partner

For more than 25 years, Detroit-based Marx Layne & Company has provided outstanding, results-oriented communications counsel to a broad range of clients

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 associate editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2080 or [steve@odwyerpr.com](mailto:steve@odwyerpr.com)



**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: WaterAid/Tom Greenwood

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.

## MWWPR

304 Park Avenue South  
New York, NY 10010  
212/704-9727  
[www.mww.com](http://www.mww.com)

**William P. Murray**, Executive VP & National Director of MWWPR's 50 State Public Affairs Network  
[wmurray@mww.com](mailto:wmurray@mww.com)

**Amy Dacey**, Executive Vice President & Managing Director, Washington DC Office and National Public Affairs  
[adacey@mww.com](mailto:adacey@mww.com)

MWWPR, one of the world's top independent PR agencies, has decades of experience building relationships with the national, state and local advocacy groups that matter most. We help clients turn a spotlight on key issues they care about, move policy that makes a difference and establish them as thought leaders in the environment in which they work.

Our Public Affairs professionals have worked at the highest levels of the executive branch, congress, and state and local governments, as well as in a variety of advocacy

groups and political entities. Our strategies are built on data-driven insights and human intellect and instinct. With an approach to public affairs that goes beyond the boundaries of expected thinking, we help you matter more to the stakeholders who matter most.

Services include: Public Policy Advocacy, Issues Management, Coalition / Consensus Building, Government Relations, Grassroots Campaigns, Strategic Communications, Influencer Mapping and Perception Audit, Executive Visibility and Eminence, Stakeholder Engagement and Messaging Platforms.

## PADILLA

Headquarters:  
1101 West River Pkwy., Suite 400  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
612/455-1700  
[www.PadillaCo.com](http://www.PadillaCo.com)

**Matt Kucharski**, President  
**Tina Charpentier**, Senior Vice President, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences Lead

Padilla is a top 10 independent public relations and communications company comprised of 240 employee-owners. Padilla builds,



grows and protects brands worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds and the research authorities at SMS.

Padilla's Agriculture and 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, Padilla's Agriculture and 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 agriculture and environmental sectors include The Almond Board of California, Cargill, CHS, Dominion Energy, Land O'Lakes, Pentair and U.S. High-bush Blueberry Council.

Padilla is a founding member of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 143 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Make a connection at PadillaCo.com.

## PEPPERCOMM

470 Park Ave. South  
4th flr. North New York, NY 10016  
212/931-6100  
www.peppercomm.com

**Steve Cody**, Co-CEO and Co-Founder  
**Ed Moed**, Co-CEO & Co-Founder  
**Ted Birkhahn**, Partner & President  
**Ann Barlow**, Partner & President, West Coast  
**Deborah Brown**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Jacqueline Kolek**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Maggie O'Neill**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Mike Friedin**, Chief Digital Officer

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel

communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses customer insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including *The Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Midsized Agency of the Year. The agency has been listed as one of Fortune's 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

Services include Branding, Content Strategy & Development, Creative Services, Crisis Management, Digital Solutions, Experiential, Insights & Strategy, Licensing, Public Relations & Social Media and Research & Measurement.

For more information, visit [www.peppercomm.com](http://www.peppercomm.com).

## PERRY COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

980 9th Street, Suite 410  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916/658-0144  
Fax: 916/658-0155  
[www.perrycomm.com](http://www.perrycomm.com)  
@KassyPerry

**Kassy Perry**, President/CEO  
**Julia Spiess Lewis**, Senior Vice President  
**Jennifer Zins**, Vice President

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

Whether the politically savvy PCG team is managing a complicated issue, running a statewide initiative campaign, leading a high-profile coalition or helping clients communicate, shape and influence with a mix of traditional and digital strategies, we achieve

success by building strong relationships with policymakers, the media and corporate influencers. We excel at working with local and state governments. Since the company's founding, we have worked with *Fortune* 500 companies, major industry associations and charitable organizations.

PCG provides public affairs services for an array of clients including: California Chronic Care Coalition, California Manufacturers and Technology Association, California Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons, EHS Medical Group, Pharmaceutical Research & Manufacturers of America, West Health Policy Center and ZGlobal, Inc.

## PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

One East Wacker Drive  
24th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601  
312/558-1770  
[www.pcipr.com](http://www.pcipr.com)

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

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 55 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.

## RASKY PARTNERS

Boston Address & Phone:  
70 Franklin Street, 3rd Floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
617/443-9933  
Email: [raskypartners@rasky.com](mailto:raskypartners@rasky.com)  
[www.rasky.com](http://www.rasky.com)

Washington, DC Address & Phone:  
555 11th Street, NW, Suite 401  
Washington, DC 20004  
202/ 530-7700

**Larry Rasky**, Chairman & CEO  
**Ron Walker**, Chief Operating Officer  
**George Cronin**, Managing Director  
**Justine Griffin**, Managing Director

Rasky Partners is a nationally recognized public and government relations firm with more than three decades 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, Rasky Partners offers a comprehensive range of services including media strategy and public relations, government relations, reputation management, crisis communication and digital media.

Rasky Partners' Public Affairs practice has extensive experience representing multinational clients' interests before all levels of gov-

Continued on page 24

## RASKY PARTNERS

— Continued from page 23

ernment and helps clients capitalize on the firm's strong relationships with elected officials in New England and on Capitol Hill.

The Energy and Environment practice excels in helping clients including large utilities, clean tech startups and renewable energy companies achieve their business objectives through integrated communications strategies.

An independent firm, Rasky Partners provides consistent, strategic hands-on engagement, with client teams — including the senior professionals — highly engaged throughout each client engagement.

## SCHNEIDER ASSOCIATES

Member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group

2 Oliver Street, Suite 402  
Boston, MA 02109  
617/536-3300  
launch@schneiderpr.com  
www.schneiderpr.com

**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.

We implement a proprietary process known as Community Launch™ to develop campaigns and government relations strategies for premier commercial, retail, and residential real estate developers as well as corporations, nonprofits, and municipalities. We build support to drive initiatives through the public process, and execute campaigns for our clients.

Schneider Associates is a full-service public relations and integrated marketing communications agency specializing in Launch Public Relations®, a proprietary method of launching new and revitalizing iconic products, services, companies, institutions and communities to build awareness, excitement, and sales. Visit [www.schneiderpr.com](http://www.schneiderpr.com).

## WEBER SHANDWICK

733 Tenth Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
[www.webershandwick.com](http://www.webershandwick.com)

**Paul Massey**, President DC  
**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, science-based goals and 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. ○

# List your PR firm with O'Dwyer's and get new business.



**“We have received many calls as a result of our listing on [odwyerpr.com](http://odwyerpr.com).**

**We have signed up a number of clients that way.”**

*Lou Rena Hammond  
Lou Hammond Group  
New York, NY*



# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2016)	Firm	Net Fees (2016)
1. <b>APCO Worldwide</b> , Washington, DC	<b>\$32,612,500</b>	17. <b>Inkhouse Media + Marketing</b> , Waltham, MA	<b>\$520,210</b>
2. <b>Edelman</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$16,736,000</b>	18. <b>Public Communications Inc.</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>\$517,052</b>
3. <b>Davies</b> , Santa Barbara, CA	<b>\$10,184,244</b>	19. <b>French   West   Vaughan</b> , Raleigh, NC	<b>\$485,000</b>
4. <b>Finn Partners</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$7,219,000</b>	20. <b>Peppercomm</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$465,778</b>
5. <b>Cerrell Associates</b> , Los Angeles, CA	<b>\$6,098,177</b>	21. <b>MP &amp; F Public Relations</b> , Nashville, TN	<b>\$390,036</b>
6. <b>SevenTwenty Strategies</b> , Washington, DC	<b>\$3,571,820</b>	22. <b>Perry Communications Group</b> , Sacramento, CA	<b>\$361,362</b>
7. <b>Sachs Media Group</b> , Tallahassee, FL	<b>\$3,186,500</b>	23. <b>Greenough</b> , Boston, MA	<b>\$225,058</b>
8. <b>Moore Communications Group</b> , Tallahassee, FL	<b>\$2,293,191</b>	24. <b>Schneider Associates</b> , Boston, MA	<b>\$198,517</b>
9. <b>Lambert, Edwards &amp; Assoc.</b> , Grand Rapids, MI	<b>\$2,116,000</b>	25. <b>Jackson Spalding</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>\$189,465</b>
10. <b>Makovsky</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$1,971,000</b>	26. <b>CooperKatz &amp; Co.</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$140,942</b>
11. <b>Singer Associates, Inc.</b> , San Francisco, CA	<b>\$1,547,225</b>	27. <b>Red Sky PR</b> , Boise, ID	<b>\$129,173</b>
12. <b>Crosby</b> , Annapolis, MD	<b>\$865,754</b>	28. <b>Marketing Maven Public Relations</b> , Camarillo, CA	<b>\$120,310</b>
13. <b>Pierpont Communications</b> , Houston, TX	<b>\$757,249</b>	29. <b>IW Group, Inc.</b> , West Hollywood, CA	<b>\$82,000</b>
14. <b>Padilla</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>\$740,475</b>	30. <b>Trevelino/Keller</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>\$75,000</b>
15. <b>rbb Communications</b> , Miami, FL	<b>\$687,731</b>	31. <b>WordWrite Communications LLC</b> , Pittsburgh, PA	<b>\$52,000</b>
16. <b>PAN Communications</b> , Boston, MA	<b>\$624,233</b>	32. <b>SPM Communications</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>\$22,039</b>



# How Bannon got played

By Fraser Seitel

Steve Bannon's fall from grace was so rapid, so precipitous and so conclusive — not to mention so unexpected — that recalling his name now requires some thought. Never before in the annals of power politics has such a close personal advisor to the President been offed so definitively. Talk about “Gone in 60 seconds.”



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

How Bannon, the self-acknowledged smartest man in Washington and primary creator of the Trump strategy, got “played” by a notoriously untrustworthy and conniving journalist, should be a cautionary tale for any PR person who deals with the media.

The story by now is well known. Michael Wolff, a strange and prodigiously disliked Wall Street/media columnist for such publications as *Vanity Fair* and *New York Magazine* and frequent TV contributor, approached Bannon — then Donald Trump's strategic advisor — about access to the White House for a book Wolff was writing on the new administration.

Bannon, a former Goldman Sachs manager, movie producer and Breitbart executive, was outspoken in his contempt for the mainstream media and particularly what he saw as its contempt for his candidate. Trump and Bannon led the campaign to demonize the “fake news” delivered by the usual suspects, from CNN to the *New York Times*. And it was Lt. Bannon, in particular, who served as Gen. Trump's point man on his anti-media flank.

The Trump-Bannon combination continued to thrive until the publication of Wolff's book, “Fire and Fury,” which tells the inside story of a hopelessly dysfunctional White House, where most of the senior troops lament the ignorance, naiveté, insecurity and childishness of the man they serve. While it's impossible to know how much of Wolff's best seller is true and how much is baloney, it remains a mystery how someone with a reputation as sleazy as Wolff managed to finagle his way into the inner sanctum of the Trump White House, and why his new friend Bannon awarded him carte

blanche access to the West Wing staff for nine solid months, which ultimately resulted in Bannon's self-immolation.

Within weeks of the book's first leaks, Trump fired “Sloppy Steve” and presumably severed ties with his former top aide. Bannon's financiers followed, as did his employer, Breitbart. Today, Steve Bannon is an historical afterthought. Finished. Over. Kaput.

Here are the three simple public relations reminders he leaves in his wake.

## Don't trust reporters

Or at least the ones you don't know.

The simple rule that every public relations professional must know is that reporters and sources have different objectives: the latter want good stories about their employers; the former want stories that sizzle. That's why one must always be wary of reporters.

Bannon, no doubt, was impressed with Wolff's pedigree. After all, the man was an outstanding writer, winning two National Magazine Awards, and had worked for the highest-rated publications in the country. He was a published author, sought-after TV media critic and a friend to media movers and shakers, some of whom he partnered with in an attempt to buy media giant Primedia Inc. Perhaps most important to Bannon, Wolff was disdainful of the working press, preferring to rub elbows with power players rather than ink-stained wretches.

What Bannon apparently didn't realize was that Wolff was a snake. Sure, he was a “good reporter,” just not “good” in terms of fairness, honesty or ethics. Michael Wolff was known for his provocative prose and producing stories people wanted to read. But he was equally well known — as described in a most public 2004 cover story in the *New Republic* — as someone who couldn't be trusted. That's why other reporters had no particular use for him, but since Bannon had no use for them and because the Trump strategist obviously didn't do much homework, he opened the White House tent for the snake to slither in. The dope.

## Don't believe your own press

Good public relations people know that any publicity — good or bad — should be believed by half, always playing down expectations.

But Steve Bannon — the President's architect, his top man, the chief arbiter of policies that affected millions — was flying high for the first time in his life and loving it.

So, when the conniving Wolff approached him with a proposition to write the book that would memorialize Bannon's place in history, the gullible Bannon ate it up. He believed that in Wolff, a writer who regularly hobnobbed with the moguls to whom

Bannon compared himself, he had found a writer who could properly discern the superior thoughtfulness that he possessed and the Svengali-like impact he had on an eager believer like President Trump.

This book, the self-inflated advisor thought, would provide the true context of his own policy-making authority and the outsized role that the President's key advisor would play in reshaping America and the world. Michael Wolff, in other words, would be Steve Bannon's Arthur Schlesinger.

So Steve Bannon dropped his guard and spilled his guts.

Among other pearls, Bannon, according to Wolff, declared Don, Jr.'s infamous meeting with Russians in Trump Tower, “treasonous.” He admitted his antipathy to Trump daughter Ivanka and her husband Jared Kushner and dismissed the two amateurs as “Jarvanka.” Ivanka, Trump's favorite, was evidently a particular Bannon target. Wolff quoted him as calling her a “@#\*% liar” and gleefully extolling after the United States pulled out of the Paris climate agreement that Ivanka championed, “Score. The bitch is dead.”

Now the only feasible reason anyone would open up so graphically — about his employer's family, no less! — was that Bannon trusted Wolff to keep some comments off-the-record and protect him as a source. Surprise!

## Organizations supersede individuals

PR professionals understand that your first loyalty is always to he or she who pays the check. In this case, it's the President who gets the credit, made the decision or wrote the speech (as White House speechwriter Peggy Noonan famously found out when she bragged that she was the one, not President George HW Bush, who invented the term, “thousand points of light.” Neither Poppy nor Mommy Bush were pleased.)

Stated another way, the organization's welfare always comes before your own. Steve Bannon, so consumed with his own presumed place in history, either forgot or didn't realize that simple truth.

So he hungrily swallowed the Wolff Kool-Aid, let the Trojan Horse through the gates and proceeded to backstab his employer. By enabling Wolff to paint the White House as a dysfunctional organization and Trump as an unprepared, dim-witted, way-in-over-his-head buffoon, Bannon sealed his fate.

So intent was Bannon to ensure that he, himself, was memorialized, he never realized that in assisting the devious Wolff, he was committing the cardinal Trump World sin, disloyalty, and sealing his own demise. ○



# Tax changes for PR firm owners and their agencies

By Arthur Solomon

This year has brought us the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act,” which will impact PR agency owners personally as well as their agencies. This column will review the key provision changes that we will be facing in 2018 and beyond.

## New income tax rates and brackets

To determine your regular tax liability, there are now new tax rate schedules. There will be four tax rate schedules based on filing status. Under the pre-Act law, individuals were subject to six tax rates: 10 percent,

15 percent, 25 percent, 28 percent, 33 percent, 35 percent and 39.6 percent. The new tax law introduces seven brackets for individuals: 10 percent, 22 percent, 32 percent, 35 percent and 37 percent. For example, a married couple with taxable income over \$165,000 but not over \$315,000 will incur a tax of \$28,179 plus 24 percent on the excess over \$165,000 up to \$315,000.

There are basically three ways to measure tax rates: marginal tax rate, average tax rate and effective tax rate. The marginal rate is the tax rate that applies to the next additional increment of the taxpayer's taxable income. The average tax rate is the average rate of taxation on each dollar of tax income. The effective tax rate is the rate of taxation on each dollar of total income (both taxable and nontaxable). In my view, most taxpayers focus on the effective rate.

## The standard deduction

We all know that the tax act eliminates the deduction for state and local taxes that are more than \$10,000 and reduces the amount that can be deducted for home mortgage interest (see below). The new standard deduction is \$24,000 for married filing a joint return, \$18,000 for head-of-household filers and \$12,000 for all other taxpayers. Note, no changes are made to the current law additional standard deduction for the elderly and the blind. The deduction for personal exemptions is effectively suspended by reducing the exemption amount to zero.

## Homeowner deductions changed

Under the pre-Act law, the mortgage interest and home equity loan deduction was

limited to acquisition indebtedness of up to \$1 million (\$500,000 in the case of married filing separate), plus home equity indebtedness of up to \$100,000.

The new tax law provision suspends home equity indebtedness and the deduction for mortgage interest is limited to underlying indebtedness of up to \$750,000 (\$375,000 for married filing separately). For tax years after December 31, 2025, the prior \$1 million/\$500,000 and home equity indebtedness is restored. Note, the treatment of indebtedness incurred on or before December 15, 2017 is not subject to this new provision. Also, if you entered into a binding contract written before December 15, 2017 to close on the purchase of a principal residence before January 1, 2018 and purchase such residence before April 1, 2018, the new tax law limitation will not apply.

An open question: Assume you own a home and have no mortgage but need to make substantial improvements to your home; a new kitchen and baths as an example. You borrow under a new “home equity” loan to make these improvements (banks generally do not lend under a “mortgage”). Will the underlying debt be considered “home acquisition indebtedness” allowing the interest to be deducted? In my view this should work! However, guidance is needed by the IRS to put this to rest. Some tax professionals say “yes” and others “no.”

## Some itemized deductions suspended

Under the pre-Act law, taxpayers could deduct certain miscellaneous itemized deductions to the extent they exceeded, in the aggregate, two percent of adjusted gross income. For tax years beginning after December 31, 2017 and before January 1, 2026, this deduction is suspended.

This means any “business expenses” incurred by an employee of a PR agency will not be deductible! This is a good time to learn how an employer can bypass this rule by setting up an “accountable plan.”

## Deferred compensation

Internal Revenue Code Section 83 governs the amount and timing of income inclusion for property, including employer stock, transferred to an employee regarding the performance of services. Under the code, an employee must generally recognize income for the tax year in which the employee's right to the stock is transferable or is not subject to a substantial risk of forfeiture. The amount of income to be recognized is the excess of the stock's fair market value at the time of substantial vesting over

the amount, if any, paid for the stock by the employee.

The new law allows a qualified employee to elect to defer for income tax purposes the amount of income attributable to qualified stock transferred to the employee by the employer. The deferral period is made by election no later than 30 days after the first time the employee's right to the stock is substantially vested or is transferable, whichever occurs earlier. (Note: the balance of the rules are complex and professional advice is needed!!)

Obviously, I can't review every provision in this column. However, one important provision to understand is the new deduction for pass-through income. Generally, the new law allows a non-corporate taxpayer, including a trust or estate, who has qualified business income from a partnership, S corporation or sole proprietorship to deduct what is known as the 20 percent deduction. Have you been told this will now work for PR agencies? We'll discuss this next month. ○

## PR news brief

### Finn Partners acquires Brighter Group

Finn Partners announced that it has acquired London-based travel and tourism firm Brighter Group.

Financial terms of the acquisition were not publicly disclosed.

One of the UK's largest independent travel and tourism PR firms, the Brighter Group represents clients across the travel sector and also provides crisis, media training and event production offerings.

The agency, which staffs 22, was founded in 1995 by CEO Debbie Flynn. Clients include Belize, Dubai, Intrepid Travel, Jordan, Air Europa and South African Tourism.

In light of the acquisition, the agency will now be known as The Brighter Group, a Finn Partners Company, and will physically move its operations into FP's existing London offices.

Flynn takes the position of managing partner and reports to Chantal Bowman-Boyles, who leads Finn Partners Europe, and Gail Moaney, who heads FP's travel practice. Brighter Group chairman Steve Dunne becomes senior partner of strategy and non-executive director Fiona Jeffery takes the role of Finn Partners global tourism advisor. No other staff changes were reported.

“The move means we'll be able to offer support in EMEA to our existing client base composed of world-class destinations, global airline and hotel brands, and travel services companies,” Finn Partners founding Partner Peter Finn told *O'Dwyer's*. “The acquisition is also another important step in our overall growth in Europe, as my vision is for Finn to become one of the world's top three independent marketing and communications firms with offices on every major continent.”

Global M&A advisor SI Partners advised Brighter Group in the deal.

## PPG speaks for 'Dreamers'

**P**rime Policy Group is working with the American Immigration Council as it seeks a bipartisan legislative alternative to President Trump's decision to kill the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration status, which covers nearly 800,000 people, in March.

Beth Werlin, Executive Director of the Council, said the White House's move on DACA ignores "our American identity of being a nation of immigrants" and fails "to embrace the energy, innovation and opportunities that immigrants bring to our country."

PPG, which is part of Burson-Marsteller, also reps the Council on the "temporary protected status program," which provides immigration status to people living in countries that experienced armed conflict and environmental disasters.

Trump ended TPS for 200,000 people from El Salvador last month.

The Council criticized Trump's move as a "tragic decision" for people "who have lived here, paid taxes and registered with the government for nearly 20 years."

PPG Chairman Charlie Black, former Aide to Ronald Reagan/George Bush I and Republican National Committee Spokesperson, leads his firm's five-member lobbying team. ○

## Twinlogic tackles immigration reform

**I**migration Voice, a national grassroots advocacy group committed to addressing problems in the U.S.'s green card system and changing immigration laws to support legal, high-skilled foreign workers, has tapped D.C.-based government relations firm Twinlogic Strategies in response to a contentious immigration bill currently making its way through Congress.

The San Jose-based non-profit, which was founded in 2005, has hired Twinlogic to advocate on behalf of H.R. 392, the "Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2017." That bill would amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to lift the U.S.'s current per-country cap for employment-based green cards.

Currently, arbitrarily-defined per-country limits in the employment-based green card system create a massive backlog for many immigrants, who arrive in the U.S. on work visas but wait decades for permanent residence, particularly those originating from high-population countries such as India or China, nations that now receive the same amount of visas as sparsely populated countries.

The bill's lead sponsor is Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS). It was previously introduced last year by Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), who retired from the House of Representatives in June and assumed a contributor role at Fox News.

Twinlogic co-Founder Elizabeth Frazee manages the IV account with a three-person team. ○

## Rasky Runs Raytheon's DC Push

**R**asky Partners is working Washington for defense giant Raytheon, a leading contractor for missile defense systems.

The Waltham, MA-based company produces the Patriot Air and Missile Defense system, which is used by 14 countries. Raytheon on Jan. 9 picked up a \$1.5 billion pact to provide additional capabilities for the Patriot system.

The State Dept. in January approved the \$133 million sale of anti-ballistic missiles to Japan as part of that country's effort to de-



fend against an attack from North Korea.

Reuters reported the Japanese deal would include anti-ballistic missiles from Raytheon and BAE Systems to follow through on President Trump's commitment to provide defense capabilities to allies threatened by North Korea's provocative behavior.

Rasky's Jessica Tocco (BGR alum and one-time Director of the US Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam), Bethany Bassett, former Legislative Aide to Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Alexandria Wich, Aide to Sen. Mark Kirk (R-IL), are on Rasky's Raytheon team. ○

## Glover leads Big Mac's DC. push

**M**cDonald's has hired Glover Park Group to lead its government relations and PA push in Washington.

GPG, which is part of WPP, will focus on issues such as agriculture, food, nutrition and sustainability.

McDonald's kicked off its beef sustainability program in 2014, forming the industry's groundbreaking "Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef" with World Wildlife Fund and suppliers JBS and Cargill.

In 2016, the fast-feeder focused on coffee sourcing, committing to buying 100 percent of its coffee from sustainable sources by 2020.

GPG's Grant Leslie (Aide to former Democratic Leader Tom Daschle and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack) handles the McDonald's account with Joel Leftwich (ex-Majority Staff Director on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry and Congressional liaison at Agriculture Dept.). ○



Grant Leslie

## GOP politico votes for APCO

**D**an Meyers, who spent nearly a decade at DCI Group, has joined APCO Worldwide as Senior Director and head of advocacy in the firm's PA practice.

As VP at DCI, Meyers managed federal/state/local political campaigns, overseeing messaging, field operations, finance/compliance, digital and paid advertising.

Meyers was Press Advance Rep. for the George W. Bush White House, Special Assistant to the Political Director for the Republican National Committee during the 2006 mid-term elections and personal Aide to former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani for his 2008 presidential run.

Evan Kraus, APCO president, believes Meyers' "extensive experience as a Republican political operative" will be invaluable to clients as they navigate the dynamic DC environment. ○



## Ketchum touts Turkey

**K**etchum is handling media relations in the US and promoting Turkey as a desirable place for business investment, on behalf of the Turkish Exporters' Assembly.

The Omnicom unit also will arrange meetings and interviews with academics, authors and business leaders with TEA representatives focusing on Turkey.

Relations between the US and Turkey have been fraught with tension following the April beating of protestors in Washington by bodyguards of Turkish strongman Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and U.S. support for Syrian Kurdish forces that Erdogan considers terrorists.

The U.S. and Turkey had tightened visa requirements, but both sides dropped those restrictions at the end of 2017.

TEA chairman Mehmet Büyükekşi projects a record year for Turkish exports in 2018, buoyed by growth in international trade and favorable policies advocated by Erdogan. ○

## Grassroots Political Consulting works Yemen Crisis

**G**rassroots Political Consulting has a \$180,000 one-year pact to represent the Southern Transitional Council of war-torn Yemen. The contract went into effect Jan. 1.

The Washington-based firm is to provide political and strategic advice to the STC on how to achieve its goal of declaring an independent state comprised of the southern part of Yemen.

A coalition of Arab nations entered Yemen in 2015 to wage war on Houthis rebels, who control the north, including the capital, Sana.

The conflict has killed and wounded more than 60,000 people,

while millions of others have suffered from famine and cholera.

Coalition members Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are now split over the future of Yemen, according to a report in Aljazeera on Jan. 22. The Saudis, who support Yemen's government, now "want out," while the UAE is backing the STC and has become more involved in the war.

Aljazeera reports STC's ultimate goal is to overthrow Yemen's government. ○

## Global Vision focuses on Taiwan

**T**aiwan has signed Global Vision Communications to a \$560,000 contract to provide lobbying, PR and strategic communications services.

GVC's consulting pact began Dec. 1 and runs through Jan. 30, 2019. It calls for outreach to the major industrialized nations of the world in the G-7 and G-20 groupings, excluding the US.

The Washington-based firm will make the rounds of Embassy Row, conducting meetings with officials and producing marketing kits and materials to support the Taiwan Civil Government.

The People's Republic of China views Taiwan as a breakaway province and is committed to its re-unification with the Beijing Government.

The *Financial Times* reported that China is stepping up pressure on corporations that refer to Tibet or Taiwan as independent countries. After a Shanghai media outlet fingered Qantas for identifying Taiwan as an independent destination, the Australian carrier adjusted the "offending" drop-down menu. The FT also reported that Chinese aviation officials warned Delta Air Lines about its listings.

Neal Hare, former Corporate Communications VP at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and content director at USLaw.com, heads GVC. ○

### 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](http://www.fara.gov).

**Crossroads Strategies LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 18, 2018 for Government of Victoria, Australia**, Melbourne, Australia, to develop a communications strategy targeted at US companies illustrating the opportunities available and the appeal of investing in Victoria.

**Meliora Strategy**, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 22, 2018 for Genfit**, Loos, France, to provide guidance on US-tailored NASH (nonalcoholic steatohepatitis) education program and engage and educate stakeholders on the disease.

**Ogilvy Public Relations**, New York, NY, **registered Jan. 22, 2018 for Government of India**, New Delhi, India, to provide support for the Government of India's Ministry of Food Processing Industries, including media relations, materials development and on-site support for media interviews.

### 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](http://www.senate.gov).

**North South Government Strategies**, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 24, 2018 for Motion The Digital Chamber of Commerce**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues related to the regulation of blockchain-based technologies.

**Mehlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 24, 2018 for Lyft, Inc.**, San Francisco, CA, regarding shared economy issues including tax, labor, consumer safety, privacy, and technology.

**Turnberry Solutions LLC**, **registered Jan. 23, 2018 for T-Mobile USA, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., regarding guidance and counsel on telecommunications issues.

**Twenty-First Century Group, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., **registered Jan. 24, 2018 for NeuroRx**, Wilmington, DE, regarding research and treatment related to suicide prevention for veterans and patients with bipolar depression.

**Morrissey Strategic Partners, LLC**, Annapolis, MD, **registered Jan. 22, 2018 for Printing Industries of America**, Washington, D.C., regarding matters pertaining to association health plan legislation.

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

O'Dwyer's has been linking clients and PR firms for 47 years. This will be the best money you'll ever spend for marketing.

## Public Relations Firms Database

Like 1 Tweet Share

[Alphabetical Index](#) | [Geographical Index](#) | [Specialty Index](#)

## Marketing Maven

### Marketing Maven Public Relations

2390 C Las Posas Rd., #479, Camarillo, CA 93010

310/994-7380; fax: 310/868-0222

[lindsey@marketingmavenpr.com](mailto:lindsey@marketingmavenpr.com)

[www.marketingmavenpr.com](http://www.marketingmavenpr.com)

Multicultural, beauty/fashion, professional services, travel/hospitality, home furnishings, financial PR/investor relations, healthcare, food & beverage, entertainment/sports, technology, environmental/public affairs clients and social media.

Employees: 19. 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](http://www.marketingmavenpr.com) for more information.

Lindsey Carnett, CEO & pres.; Phil Rarick, COO; Natalie Rucker, VP, business dev.; John Krisiukenas, mng. dir., NY

### Allstar Products Group

Amini Furniture

Baby Trend

BulbHead

CI Jets

EVA Air

DuraScience

Freshpet

Gaudio

Gibson

Giovanni Cosmetics

Institute for Better Bone Health

JDS Therapeutics

Kingston Technology

Long Beach City College

Lovely Beards

Luvic Foods

Medical Electronic Systems

N2 Global Solutions

Natren

New Whey

Par Avion

Platekompaniet

Pohl Boskamp

PowerShares QQQ Championship

Reconnect Research



**\$300 enhanced listing** includes your logo and up to 75 words describing your unique background and services.

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

Our database is **broken down geographically** (including your branch offices) and by **23 specialties** such as healthcare, social media, food, technology, beauty, travel and finance.

For \$300 you get:	Value
Logo and agency statement in the "Find the Right PR Firm" section of <a href="http://odwyerpr.com">odwyerpr.com</a> . Check out some of the current entries as a guide to preparing your own. Listing will also appear in the printed 2018 O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms. The 2017 edition contained 1,200+ firms.	<b>\$300</b>
One-year of access to <a href="http://odwyerpr.com">odwyerpr.com</a> . Stay on top of the latest industry news, professional development and commentary from our editors as well as many outside contributors. Get a leg up on the competition by consulting our exclusive listing of new RFPs.	<b>\$295</b>
One-year subscription to O'Dwyer's magazine, now in its 31st year. Each issue covers not only current topics and stories, but focuses on one of the PR specialties such as healthcare, food, technology or finance. PR firms are invited to profile their special practices in each issue.	<b>\$60</b>
2017 O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms, the only printed directory of its kind!	<b>\$95</b>
<b>Total Value</b>	<b>\$750</b>

Submit online at [odwpr.us/list-your-firm](http://odwpr.us/list-your-firm)

or contact Melissa Werbell, Director of Research, 646/843-2082, [melissa@odwyerpr.com](mailto:melissa@odwyerpr.com)



# O'Dwyer's CAREER CENTER at [jobs.odwyerpr.com](http://jobs.odwyerpr.com)

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



## **Job Seeker Benefits**

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

**O'Dwyer's**

[jobs.odwyerpr.com](http://jobs.odwyerpr.com)

Phone: 866/395-7710

**[jobs.odwyerpr.com](http://jobs.odwyerpr.com)**





# Pushing Boundaries is Always in Season

Everyone loves a good listener – and at Peppercomm, we're always paying attention. Carefully, thoroughly, thoughtfully.

We decipher the data and make sense of the disruptors, enabling us to look around the corner and see what's next. The result? Tailored insights that inspire us to help take your business in a brave new direction by pushing boundaries while migrating risk. We help clients connect to the right audiences at the right moment by creating genuine brand stories.

Whatever your communication needs, Peppercomm is here to partner with you. Let's start your story.

[Peppercomm.com](https://peppercomm.com)

peppercomm  
LISTEN. ENGAGE. REPEAT.