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EDITORIAL

Weren’t we supposed to be out of the woods by now?

Am I the only one who had a good year? Looking back, 2011 resembles something like a nightmare without any hint of meaningful symbolism, the kind of fever dream one gets after ingesting too much cheap cough syrup.

There was an ongoing recession, increased debt, historic global political unrest, layoffs, a plummeting dollar, wars, earthquakes, the resurgence of a protest culture not seen since the Civil Rights era, the Presidential signage of a bill that can indefinitely detain civilians without trial, a Congress so ensnared in months-long deficit standoffs that our currency is downgraded, and political theatre embarrassing enough to substitute for reruns on “America’s Funniest Home Videos.” Am I missing anything? Even third-world dictators — typically an embodiment of the untouchable — had a historically awful year in 2011.

It’s funny in a way. In 2008, every financial expert I spoke with said we’d be out of the financial doldrums by 2011 — maybe 2012 at the latest. Now the consensus is we’ll be here a lot longer — maybe indefinitely. Look, it’s been 11 years since we’ve had a balanced budget. I think it’s time to finally accept the fact that the world we live in is a different place.

What’s worse, the division, corrosion and indecision that plagues our political climate is no longer seen as symptoms of a temporary stagnation, but has now been accepted as its salient traits. We’ve moved from what was once seen as a perceived dip in the road to embrace an all-encompassing culture of abject disillusionment.

We’ve been so divisive for so long now we think stalling bills that everyone admits aid working families is somehow a good game plan for getting what you want later, or that holding the economy hostage simply because you don’t like the man running the house is sensible policy. As a result, 2011 has ended with a confusing role reversal that would carry hilarious poetic force if it wasn’t so sad. Obama is now the one who wants to cut taxes, and House Republicans are the ones voting down payroll tax cuts for the middle class. The entire back-and-forth reminds me of petulant children who scream “no” for every adult “yes,” until, when the adult says “no,” the hoodwinked child retorts with a reflexive “yes” before commencing with a screaming tantrum.

No one’s happy with the current leadership we have. And for the first time in recent memory, no one’s happy with the current line-up of prospective replacements either. We find ourselves at a political stalemate, where the only thing we can agree on is the fact that we can’t agree — and that we aren’t happy with the way things are. This isn’t just a policy problem. Our collective disunion from compromise and common sense has evolved into a comprehensive cultural paroxysm. The American conversation remains at, conservatively, an eight-grade level. Our food of choice is celebrity infidelities, Charlie Sheen, pervert politicians, the authenticity of the President’s birth certificate (yes, still) or “The War on Christmas,” because, to put it bluntly, we require some sedative to forget how utterly insufferable we have become. Is it any wonder reality TV — the lowest bastion of entertainment aside from hitting yourself with a hammer — is now the de facto network export? Is it any wonder our media have now found more success editorializing the opinions of their executives over delivering actual news? Is it any wonder Hollywood now makes a huge portion of its profits by remaking films that were already released twenty, or even ten, years before? Our culture has become a museum of itself. We opine for the sake of having opinions and actually remembered why.

Something’s got to give. There’s a small part of me that thinks some grand Mayan calendar finale would be a fitting conclusion to such predictably third-act lulls, but fortunately life doesn’t work with the literary neatness of a Michael Bay film. Undoubtedly, we’ll just have to suffer through this until we can collectively agree to bite the bullet and affect a change together at the cost to our fevered egos, or until something so incredibly stupid happens that one day we’ll begin to look back at 2011 as one of our golden years, the same way we look at the 1990s today. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

— Jon Gingerich
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trusted advice. For the always-on conversation, contact Jim Tsokanos at 646.500.7600.
Media, with few exceptions, took a severe beating on December 15 on charges that they are not fairly representing Israel in their news and editorial columns.

By Jack O’Dwyer

Torossian also declared that media bias against Israel is obvious but that the country is making fundamental mistakes in PR.

Military veterans don’t belong in PR posts and diplomats should be able to speak the language of the country to which they are assigned, he said.

Israel’s PR people are hampered by having no expense accounts, he said, while PR pros in other Middle East countries have them.

England’s BBC was said to be habitually unfair to Israel and treatment of Israel by French media was said to be worse.

Bias found in NYT

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last month rejected a request from the New York Times for an op-ed piece, saying via senior advisor Ron Dermer, that NYT has a long record of unfair treatment of Israel, said a story in the Dec. 15 Jerusalem Post.

Netanyahu as well as many in the audience were upset over a column by NYT’s Thomas Freidman Dec. 13 in which he said that an “ovation” for Netanyahu in Congress earlier this year “was bought and paid for by the Israeli lobby.”

Dermer wrote that a study of 20 op-eds about Israel in the NYT and its subsidiary the International Herald Tribune in the last three months found that 19 were “negative” about Israel.

NYT also has failed to heed Senator Daniel Moynihan’s view that “everyone is entitled to their own opinion but no one is entitled to their own facts.”

Cited was the issue of Palestinian statehood. The Dermer letter said an NYT story in May “turned on its head” the fact that the Palestinians rejected the UN partition plan in 1947 that was accepted by the Israelis and then joined five Arab states in launching a war against Israel.

Algemeiner leads PR drive

Algemeiner, which says it’s the “fastest-growing Jewish newspaper in America,” co-sponsored the panel with the Gershon Jacobson Foundation.

Torossian has contributed numerous articles about Israel’s PR and other matters to the paper.

Says Algemeiner:

“Our modern day challenge is ignorance, misinformation and a gross lack of positive and pro-active communication about Israel and the Jewish people.”

The paper has built a worldwide team of entrepreneurs using an online and social networked media platform that will use “the most advanced media tools” to reach a worldwide audience.

The guiding principle, according to Algemeiner, is that “in order for Israel to have an impact in the arena of global opinion, the Jewish people need to write our own story, define our own headlines, and frame our own narrative. In place of a reactive and defensive mode, we strive to be at the forefront of every story, proactively ensuring that Israel’s empowering voice is heard, and influencing other outlets in kind.”

The Torah Café videotaped the program and made it available for viewing on its website.

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**Jewish leaders seek ‘fair’ media treatment**

Benjamin Brafman, one of three panelists speaking at the 5th Avenue Synagogue before more than 260 people, said Israel is “unfairly ostracized” in the media, a view that was shared by the other two panelists, James Taranto, editor of the Wall Street Journal’s online opinion page, and Ronn Torossian, CEO of 5W Public Relations.

Brafman, a criminal defense attorney whose clients have including Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Jay Z and Plaxico Burress, said that getting media to correct erroneous reports was nearly impossible.

Taranto also found much evidence of media bias against Israel and said the only medium that supported Israel’s 1981 bombing of the Baghdad nuclear reactor was the WSJ.

WSJ, which claims a balanced view of the Middle East, is the only paper in the U.S. that is “growing,” he added.

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**Media News Briefs**

**ROTHMAN RAPS FRIEDMAN OVER ‘ISRAEL LOBBY’**

Congressman Steve Rothman is demanding an apology from New York Times columnist Tom Friedman who wrote in December that the Congressional standing ovation received by Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in September was “bought and paid for by the Israeli lobby.”

The New Jersey Democrat released a statement that read:

“Thomas Friedman’s defamation against the vast majority of Americans who support the Jewish State of Israel, in his New York Times opinion piece today, is scurrilous, destructive and harmful to Israel and her advocates in the US. Mr. Friedman is not only wrong, but he’s aiding and abetting a dangerous narrative about the US-Israel relationship and its American supporters.

“I gave Prime Minister Netanyahu a standing ovation, not because of any nefarious lobby, but because it is in America’s vital national security interests to support the Jewish State of Israel and it is right for Congress to give a warm welcome to the leader of such a dear and essential ally. Mr. Friedman owes us all an apology.”

Friedman believes Netanyahu would receive a much different reception if he spoke at a different venue, such as the University of Wisconsin.

“My guess is that many students would boycott him and many Jewish students would stay away, not because they are hostile but because they are confused,” he wrote.
U.S., Iran wage PR war
By Greg Halzey

With tensions mounting on the diplomatic and PR fronts between Iran and the U.S., the U.S. State Dept. in December unveiled plans for a virtual Tehran embassy intended to “penetrate the electronic curtain of isolation the Iranian leadership has imposed on its people,” according to its public affairs unit.

The move came a day before Iranian officials released state-produced video of what they say is a U.S. intelligence drone shot down in Iran. Images of the aircraft were run throughout global media, including newspaper front pages across the world like the New York Times.

The new virtual embassy for Tehran, features a welcome by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton encouraging users to use social media tools to communicate and criticizing the current Iranian regime for stifling communications, especially digitally, among its citizens and violating human rights.

“Departing from the Persian empire’s historical role as a crossroads of civilizations, the Iranian regime has gone to great lengths to restrict what the Iranian people see, hear, and think — violating widely held standards of human rights,” said a fact sheet distributed by State Dept. public affairs staff.

The U.S. has not had a physical, stand-alone embassy in Iran since the hostage crisis of 1979, operating instead from a section of the Swiss embassy in the capital.

Iran’s foreign affairs spokesman issued a statement Dec. 8 saying the U.S.’s virtual embassy “highlights the confession to the big mistake they have made in severing ties between two nations and turning their back to Iranian people.”

The State Dept. said the website, which has been blocked in Iran, will provide Iranian audiences with information about U.S. policy towards Iran, the Middle East, and Muslim communities and counter “disinformation and persistent myths” about the U.S. and world reaction to Iran’s policies.

Iran, meanwhile, rolled out the drone with video footage of the aircraft under the country’s flag saying its own electronic attack forced it down. U.S. officials have acknowledged to reporters that a CIA drone went missing, but said the aircraft which flies at 50,000 feet likely crashed, raising questions about the intact drone depicted in the Iranian propaganda film.

NYT to unload regional newspapers
The New York Times Co., which in December announced the surprising exit of CEO Janet Robinson, said it is in “advance discussions” with Halifax Media Holdings to unload its 16-member regional group. Those papers contributed $150 million in nine-month revenue, which was down 6.7% from last year.


The NYTC also publishes the Boston Globe and Worcester Telegram and Gazette. The company lost $98.6 million this year following restructuring charges. Revenues were down three percent to $1.7 billion.
Penn State, Herman Cain, Oakland top 2011 PR blunders

Penn State, Netflix, Bank of America and several GOP nominees topped this year’s PR blunders list of brands that were caught unprepared, undecided, uninformed and unconscious.

By Michael Fineman

Penn State’s scandal isn’t going away. The story of disgraced former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky’s arrest on charges of sexual abuse is a terrible one, but news of the university’s lack of action over more than 10 years infuriated the public and media alike. University President Graham Spanier fanned the flames with a poorly planned initial statement featuring more support for two University officials alleged to have been covering up a 2002 incident than for the eight abuse victims. But that was just one of many stumbles in the eyes of prominent media and PR professionals, who urged Penn State to get organized, take responsibility, prioritize the victims and get all the bad news out as quickly as possible. Poor crisis planning was an obvious issue, with Advertising Age reporting that “despite months of advance notice, Penn State’s board didn’t enact a communications plan, and waited until after the arrest … was all over the news” before retaining crisis counsel. Even Penn State senior lecturer of public relations Steve Manuel agreed, telling Politico regarding accusations of past sexual harassment promptly and completely unprepared for scrutiny on the subject. According to numerous media sources, the candidate breathed audibly and glared at Politico’s John Martin for several seconds when asked if he had ever been accused of harassment before evasively echoing the question. Cain’s bizarre, reactionary responses incited his past accusers to come forward, prompting him to stumble further by dismissing their claims as “baseless” (despite five-figure NRA settlements with two women involved), suggesting race was a factor in the coverage and claiming that either rival candidate Rick Perry’s camp or the “Democratic machine” was out to smear him. U.S. News and World Report opinion editor Robert Schlesinger wrote that “Cain left the presidential race as he entered it — more a sideshow than a contender,” after he suspended his campaign. Cain had “ample time” to prepare for the crisis and should have “sat down his staff, explained that he was sitting on an unexploded landmine, and asked them to prepare a contingency plan” early on. But despite being aware of media interest for at least 10 days, Cain and his staff appeared completely unprepared for scrutiny on the subject. According to numerous media sources, Cain invited protesters back the very next day — after spending more than $1 million to clear them out — and later encouraged city employees to join an Occupy-sanctioned general strike against the “establishment.”

Bank of America nickels and dimes. Bank of America wasn’t the only bank planning on bolstering revenue through new debit card fees, but it suffered significant reputational damage for being the last to abandon its plans to do so after severe public outrage in what Wall Street Journal termed “the latest publicity nightmare for an industry that is already under fire.” J.P. Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo & Co. and several regional banks dropped similar plans after widespread outcry, but being last out made Bank of America, the nation’s second largest bank, the situational whipping boy in the media, the public eye and even in Congress, where Sen. Richard Durbin (D, Ill.) urged consumers to “vote with your feet.” Consumers nationwide did just that, pulling out of major banks en masse to join local credit unions. The Huffington Post reported that at least 650,000 customers joined credit unions [in about five weeks after] Bank of America announced it would

Continued on next page
charge customers $5 to use their debit cards for purchases."

"Nutty view" damages GOP confidence in Perry. While some might declare Rick Perry’s inability to recall his own agenda his most memorable campaign gaffe of 2011, to many his most significant — and completely preventable — blunder was dredging up the birther meme in an interview with Parade magazine. While Perry may have been “just having some fun,” Philip Rucker of The Washington Post reported that he “undercut the reach of his economic message by repeatedly injecting an issue that most Americans thought had been put to rest.” GOP strategist Karl Rove summed the blunder up neatly, telling Fox News when “you associate yourself with a nutty view like that … you damage yourself.”

Qwikster just a flash in the Netflix pan. How should management handle customer discontent over, say … a controversial 60% price increase that led to hundreds of thousands of lost customers and a drop of nearly half of a company’s stock value? Netflix CEO Reed Hastings remained silent for two months, then released a seemingly reluctant blog statement apologizing for the increased fees and announcing plans to split off DVD-by-mail operations “in the same breath,” according to the San Francisco Chronicle. But the Chronicle also reported that “customers ripped that plan” as seriously inconvenient because it entailed zero coordination between Netflix and proposed new unit Qwikster. Netflix backpedaled in the face of consumer backlash, abandoning plans for Qwikster three weeks later, but its stock value remained severely depressed.

Facebook complaints about lack of transparency, anonymously. Not only did Facebook contract a prominent PR firm to question how Google’s Social Circle collects and uses personal data, the social network allegedly insisted on client anonymity. But things spun out of control when blogger Christopher Soghoian — targeted (and annoyed) by the campaign — posted the agency’s pitch emails online, while “Today” reported of false claims in pitches. Newswise tech editor Dan Lyons described the “clumsy smear” in The Daily Beast and exposed Facebook as the mystery client, noting that “the mess, seemingly worthy of a Nixon re-election campaign, is embarrassing for Facebook, which has struggled at times to brand itself as trustworthy.” Miguel Helft of The New York Times noted Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg’s transparency obsession, skewering the social network for hypocrisy, “Facebook, it seems, doesn’t always practice what it preaches.”

Dodger owner’s words “very, very unfair” to coma victim, family. Los Angeles Dodgers owner Frank McCourt took a year-long pounding in the press for his handling of numerous issues, including the team’s bankruptcy proceeding and his very public divorce. But for many McCourt’s biggest blunder was his insensitive reaction to the horrific, coma-inducing beating received by San Francisco Giants fan Bryan Stow in the parking lot of Dodger Stadium after the March 31st opening day game. The Los Angeles Times reported that McCourt described the assault as “tragic” but also that he was “very, very satisfied” with his organization’s effort to “make [Dodger Stadium] the safest venue in sports” and that it was “very, very unfair to take what was otherwise a fantastic day … and to have a few individuals mar that.” McCourt spent much of the year defending his organization instead of taking responsibility and prioritizing the victim, creating an appearance of callousness and widespread media outrage. McCourt’s problems peaked when his attorney sought to place blame on Stow for the incident. As the Times commented, “one of McCourt’s problems has been his consistent cluelessness about the public relations effects of his decisions. Neither he nor Dodgers fans need to see his lawyers making a similar blunder.”

“Tweeting teen” teaches Kansas Gov. Brownback about social media. Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback and his staff should have considered the source before trying “to police a teenager’s Internet musings,” according to the Associated Press, when 18-year-old Emma Sullivan sent a tweet to her 61 followers claiming to have “told him he sucked.” Brownback’s communications team contacted Sullivan’s principal with news of her online claim, who, in turn, demanded that Sullivan write an apology. But according to the Kansas City Star, Sullivan never wrote the apology. The incident gained rapid national recognition, with Sullivan’s Twitter following exploding to more than 12,000 followers. Brownback eventually apologized for the incident, and according to Gawker, noted that his “staff overreacted.” PRNewser called the actions of his communication staff “an example of how little some people know about how this whole social media thing works.”

Ben & Jerry’s churns ice cream into Schweddy Balls. Popular ice cream maker Ben & Jerry’s has a longstanding tradition of edgy flavor names, but the company’s latest effort, “Schweddy Balls,” an homage to Saturday Night Live character Pete Schweddy, has some families and consumer groups, including American Family Association affiliate One Million Moms, up in arms. The Miss.-based organization issued a statement calling the irreverent name “anything but appealing” and claiming that “the vulgar new flavor has turned something as innocent as ice cream into something repulsive.” While Ben & Jerry’s dismissed these claims, noting that the company has always embraced irreverent names, the company may have suffered in the process as NPR, Time, the New York Daily News and other media reported that some supermarket chains, including Mass.-based Stop & Shop, were not carrying the flavor.

Michael Fineman is President of Fineman PR in San Francisco.
2011, the year in review

By Jack O’Dwyer

The Mortgage Bankers Association committed a major hypocrisy by railing against homeowners who walk away from mortgages worth far more than their homes but then sold its own h.q. for $34 million less than the mortgage, stiffing the banks. New Yorker columnist James Surowiecki said Dec. 19 “It might be time for homeowners to do the smart thing” instead of the “right thing.”

What got Surowiecki going was the bankruptcy American Airlines filed even though it has $4 billion and “could have kept paying its bills.” Homeowners are deluding themselves with “inflated expectations” of value returning to their homes, he wrote.

The January 2012 issue of Harper’s advises “Stop Payment! A homeowner’s revolt against the banks.” Christopher Ketchum says the title to many homes is cloudy because mortgages were shifted to and fro without filing with local county registrars and no one may now have a secure title. People could be paying to entities that don’t own the home. He faults the Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems (MERS) created in 1995.

“Rich Get Richer,” headlined the Oct. 26 New York Times, reporting that the top 1% more than doubled their share of income in the last 30 years. Quoted was a report of the Congressional Budget Office. The 1% saw their income rise 275% (inflation-adjusted) from 1979-2007 while after-tax income of the bottom one-fifth rose only 18%.

Economist Joe Stiglitz helped to ignite the “Occupy Wall Street” movement with his April Vanity Fair article entitled “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%.”

The OWS crowd, practicing basic PR (which is to get noticed), and calling themselves “the 99%,” won Time magazine’s “Person of the Year” award.

Poll Position found that 13% of Americans think they’re in the “top 1%.” Among the poverty-stricken are America’s newspapers and other media that have been among the poverty-stricken are America’s newspapers and other media that have been murdered or tortured while dining in some exposure next year, the 30th anniversary of the poisoning.

Key leaders and members of the International PR Association in London quit to protest what they called abuses and irregularities including the abolition of the 60-member Council (equivalent of PRS’s Assembly). Only the Assembly can abolish itself, said the critics. IPRA, like PRS, says it’s ruled by Robert’s Rules, which give bodies like the Council and Assembly ultimate power.

The hypocrisy of the Mortgage Bankers in doing the very thing it condemns (“staggering” wrote Surowiecki) shows that the way organizations define “ethical” is different from the way most people define it.

December 16 was the 12th anniversary of the all time high that Omnicom stock reached — $53.50 on Dec. 19, 1999. It’s currently around $41. Debt is $3.2 billion on revenues of $13.6 billion.

WPP, which reached $92.50 on Feb. 7, 2000, is $50. Debt on revenues of $14.9 billion is $7.19 billion. IPG, which hit $55 in 2000, is $9. Debt on sales of $6.97 billion is $1.72 billion.

WPP’s Martin Sorrell, who regularly gives press conferences that tout the importance of PR and who addressed the Institute for PR in 2008, has emerged as PR’s No. 1 booster (in the absence of anyone doing that in the U.S.).

Evidence of Big Media sticking together is the shutdown it pitched against “The Tylenol Mafia,” a 619-page book by former Johnson & Johnson employee Scott Bartz that shows the Tylenol poisonings of 1982 and 1986 almost certainly took place in the J&J distribution chain and not at the store level. Much evidence was destroyed or under the control of J&J.

Bartz got publicity in Chicago but the New York Times, although it wrote many thousands of words about J&J this year, did not return calls and e-mails from Bartz. Network affiliates including Fox, NBC, ABC and CBS covered the book but not the networks themselves. This was blatant news management since the mainstream press covered a reopening of the case in 2009 when suspect James Lewis’s apartment was searched and when the FBI said in 2010 that DNA of “Unibomber” Ted Kaczynski was sought in connection with the murders. Neither man could possibly have done the poisonings but by re-opening the case many documents were sealed for another 25 years. The Bartz book may get some exposure next year, the 30th anniversary of the poisonings.

Another story NYT skipped was the rape charges against college’s most famous athlete, the devoutly religious Garret Wittels of Florida Int’l University, who owned a 56-game hitting streak in baseball. He and two other FIU students were accused of alleged raping two 17-year-old women at the Atlantis in late 2010. NYT had pulled out all the stops when three Duke students were accused of rape in 2006. Wittels quit FIU at the end of his junior year to join a St. Louis Cardinals farm team. The rape charges against all three were dropped.

Although executives and editors of NYT and 20+ other media including the Washington Post, Economist, Financial Times and Time as well as the investigative ProPublica have spoken at (PR) Seminar, the annual gathering of 150 or so top corporate and PR execs, none of them have ever mentioned its existence. Seminar took in 49 new members this year meaning that about number of PR execs lost their jobs because job loss means dismissal from the group and replacement by someone new. •
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When crisis strikes, don’t duck and cover

When crises hits and the media starts calling, there’s often an impulse simply to dodge the issue at hand, for a variety of reasons that may seem plausible at the time.

By Steven Alschuler

Consider another scenario: an employee alleges she has been harassed and discriminated against on the basis of her gender. She files an EEOC complaint and gives an interview to the local newspaper. She also gives the reporter a company telephone directory and the reporter begins calling other employees to ask if they’re aware of other incidents of harassment or discrimination. Several employees air complaints of their own with the understanding that the reporter will not reveal their identities.

When the reporter calls the company for a comment, one possible reaction would be to decline to comment, since it is a matter before the EEOC and involves confidential personnel issues. Indeed, it may also require investigation to determine what actually transpired.

But that would be missing an opportunity. Why not say: “We value and respect our employees and take pride in our workplace environment. We have clear policies prohibiting discrimination or harassment and a clear process our employees air complaints of their own with the understanding that the reporter will not reveal their identities.

The concerns about getting the facts right however, are well founded, as are concerns about the impact your comments may have on litigation. But fear of saying the wrong thing — saying something that could have legal consequences down the line or that could turn out to be inaccurate as events unfold — doesn’t necessarily require that you say nothing at all.

I spoke at a meeting of governmental lawyers recently and was asked the following: “If there’s an allegation of a potentially harmful event at one of our facilities, it may take some time to investigate the cause, to determine the impact, to figure out what we should do about it. How can we possibly comment on that first day without knowing anything?”

Clearly, many in the audience had been in precisely this situation and had advised their clients not to comment.

I suggested another alternative — a statement along the following lines: “The health and safety of the community is of paramount concern to us and we would like to communicate to you the results of our investigation. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our employees and the community. We have taken steps to address the issue and we will continue to work with the appropriate authorities to ensure the safety of all involved.”

It’s important to note that interaction with the media needn’t necessarily involve a live conversation. If there is a concern that an initial comment is only going to lead to more questions, the comments can be made via e-mail. And follow up questions can be responded to or not, depending on the situation. But it is possible to maintain some degree of control over the “conversation.”

Obviously, the communications team must work in tandem and ultimately defer to the legal team; it’s the legal strategy that guides the communications strategy. But if you understand the lawyers’ concerns, you can usually craft a communications strategy that also serves — or at least doesn’t neglect — the client’s other business and reputational needs.

If there are concerns about doing interviews in the midst of a litigation, can we make the lawyer available to brief selected reporters on background? Can we provide a few written “talking points” which are approved by the legal team in advance? Are there statements included in our court filings that we can pull and use as quotes? Can we at least steer the media toward certain sections of our court filings that include what we believe are the most noteworthy points?

When crisis strikes, don’t duck and cover
John F. Budd Jr., a member of major PR groups and counselor to blue chip companies who nevertheless kept a maverick frame of mind, died Nov. 21 at age 88.

He had run his own firm since 1991 after 30 years at the firm of Carl Byoir & Associates and seven years at Emhart.

Budd criticized corporate PR for having little impact on financial scandals such as Enron and Tyco in the early 2000s and the more recent scandals involving AIG and major financial institutions.

Corporate PR people, said Budd, a ten-year member of (PR) Seminar who was given the PR Society’s Gold Anvil in 1988, behaved more like “courtiers than counsel.” He felt they were mostly “ignored” or just used to transmit corporate messages created by others.

Created “credibility index”

Budd created the $150,000 research project called the “National Issues Credibility Index” whose results (“PR specialist” landed 43rd in credibility on a list of 45 information sources) put the PR Society in the equivalent of cardiac arrest in 1999.

Surviving Budd are his wife of 58 years, Elaine, a mystery writer and critic; daughter Tracy McRoberts, and son Jonathan. A brother William lives in California and sister Marjorie in Florida.

A memorial service was Thursday, December 29 at St. John’s of Lattingtown, Long Island.

Budd was at Byoir from 1949-79, rising to group VP and member of the plans board. He was at Emhart Corp. as VP-external relations from 1979-86. He returned to Byoir, then a unit of Hill & Knowlton, as vice chairman from 1988-91.

He then set up The Omega Group of senior PR counselors who worked with numerous blue chips including AT&T, General Motors, Merck, Deere, BellSouth, Union Carbide and Sara Lee as well as educational institutions including Columbia, Syracuse and Wesleyan Universities. He became an expert on nonprofit boards, serving on 22 of them.

Although a member and program committee member of (PR) Seminar ten years, he rapped its members hard on the knuckles in 2009 for scheduling their annual meeting at the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Niguel, Calif. Such a meeting, in the middle of a recession, sent the wrong message about corporate America, he felt.

He said the decision to go ahead with the meeting “smacks of the sort of hubris for which their CEOs have been accused — an arrogant demonstration of tone deafness in light of public and media outrage when such ‘retreats’ at posh resorts are reported.”

Two meetings of executives of bailout recipient AIG at plush resorts in 2008 had received heavy publicity. Budd advised Seminar to switch the meeting to a hotel in New York or Washington, D.C. He said he would be “very uncomfortable” taking part in an event that cost the average Seminar couple $6,300 and has a total cost of nearly $1 million.

While on the subject of Seminar, he also rapped its decision to drop “PR” from its name. “What management discipline do they represent?” he asked. “Is this some sort of affectation that presumes some policy role unknown to chief executives?”

Saw Corp. PR as weakened

Budd said in 2009 that senior PR executives, “who boast of their access to the CEO, had failed to save CEOs from ‘boneheaded conduct’ that “significantly increased the trust deficit.”

The executives, he said, have exhibited “collective impotence in persuading iconic CEOs to exercise common sense in dealing with public exposés.”

Budd defined PR as “the management of perceptions.” He was a founding member of the Fellows of the PR Society; a trustee of the Arthur W. Page Society; member of the Wisemen of New York, and received three awards of the National Investor Relations Institute.

Budd later published Observations, a newsletter covering the PR aspect of current issues, which was published bi-monthly for many years. An Omega Report published in April 2004 recapped the accomplishments of the publishing group and listed it as having “Conceived and played an instrumental role in the creation of a nationwide ‘Credibility Index.’”

Writer, PR leader John Budd dies at 88

By Jack O’Dwyer

Providing crisis management, strategic communications and public relations counsel for more than three decades to a diverse group of nationally and internationally-known public, private and non-profit organizations.

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The emerging future of crisis thinking today

Crisis communications must be re-taught and re-thought if we want the practice to remain relevant in today’s world.

By Montieth M. Illingworth

The central operating conceit of our profession is that we say we can manage just about any kind of crisis. The longer I practice however, the more I wonder whether the world is changing in ways where we should be more concerned about the phenomena we can’t manage.

Before we claim stake to cutting edge thinking we need to engage in cutting edge analysis. The problem with our analytical architectures is that they’re largely backward looking: they’re defined by the crises we’ve already experienced. Call it the tyranny of the case study approach. There’s a tendency to say that past performance is an indication of future outcomes.

Our challenge then, is evaluating what’s happening in the world at the speed it’s moving at now. Here’s my list of the things I don’t fully understand yet but know are relevant and will impact our ability to serve our clients. Call it the emerging future of crisis thinking today:

**We’re the government, we’re here to help**

Government is not a monolith and all of its moving parts don’t march in unison. That’s an old story. What’s new is that there is greater vigilance, even activism, about policing the public interest and it has emerged with a multi-speed character. Witness the differing responses to the financial crisis by the SEC, the DOJ, Congress, the Treasury, the White House, etc.

A company in the crosshairs of one government entity may not even be bothered by another — or if it is, that comes months, even years, later. The DOJ’s approach to insider trading seems quite different from that of the SEC. The SEC is in a very public spat with a federal judge about standards of enforcement. Ditto the mortgage crisis. One federal judge looks favorably on a settlement and another decries it as conflicting with the public interest.

Have the outcomes been in the public interest? A major investment bank, which shall go nameless, bets against its own clients causing them significant losses — and gets a slap on the wrist? Wiretaps, previously used against mobsters, drug dealers, and gangs, are now deployed against Wall Street, raising privacy issues. And while the FBI was taping Galleon’s CEO in telephone conversations to go after $70 million in ill-gotten gains, where were the regulators, post-full heat of the crisis, when it came to protecting MF Global’s clients who still can’t find their $1.2 billion?

Trying to explain to a client this shifting policy-making, regulatory and law enforcement landscape couldn’t be more complicated. We certainly can no longer assume there is an off-the-shelf approach to communicating with those disparate constituencies. That has to be re-thought.

No one knows how this will all evolve. As time passes, regulatory complacency does tend to settle in, and the cycle starts all over again.

**Reacting at the speed of now**

I’m not sure precisely when the tipping point was where it now seems organizations move almost instantly when confronted by a crisis. Maybe it was watching BP dangle in the wind as the oil spewed out of the bottom of the Gulf, on TV, day after day. Maybe it was seeing Bear Stearns and Lehman virtually disappear overnight. It is clear that organizational leadership got a new religion. Just look at how quickly the Penn State Trustees moved in the Sandusky matter. The Citadel school in South Carolina did much the same when its sexual abuse scandal emerged. And HP, for better or worse, changes CEOs with an alarming frequency.

Has that been a good thing? It’s better than hiding, as PR professionals know, and even sometimes better than telling the truth slowly. But if it’s reacting without an overarching strategy — and in the face of a multi-speed government — I’m not sure it is, entirely.

The sense I get is that to some degree organizations are moving faster but perhaps a little too far in the direction of falling on their swords. Why? Because of the fear of how rapidly, and often how distorted, the story can become in the hands of the ever-morphing beast that is the news media — and most importantly, because of the power of social media, how exponentially can grow the forces of mass opinion and Occupy Wall Street-like action against an organization, or a consumer brand.

What this tells me is that we are only beginning to learn how to rethink crisis strategy in response to the changes occurring to the news media, online and off. The operative dynamic here is how the democratization of news has created a sense of mass intimacy between every “participant” in the story (meaning anyone who posts a comment to a story) with each other. That intimacy has become the new impetus and the glue for collective practical action, individual interest group, and “mass” (e.g., the Occupy Movement) online and off.

Now, explain all that to the CEO.

**Creating new systems**

I’ve always believed in the (conceptual) power of Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. Simply put, it says the act of observing something can change the thing you’re observing. What we have to do is recreate our analytical and decision-making systems in concert with our clients. If we can do that, we can start to think about how to manage the new generation of crises that will be coming at us. There are no case studies yet for what’s coming our way.

At this juncture, then, as communications professionals we must work more closely with not just the legal teams but also the governance, risk and compliance specialists. What the new, multi-speed government vigilance and activism (or lack thereof) means is all such advisors need to be looking at the same issues and as much as possible speaking the same language about solutions.

Who’s going to reset this strategic agenda for the organization? The Board of Directors. A visionary CEO could do it but the issues are complex enough and sufficiently cross-disciplinary that the Board is really the right place to ensure focus and prevent turf battles. A Board committee might also be the best way to define action steps and assure accountability.

Communications professionals are perhaps the best qualified to create that cross-disciplinary architecture for the next generation of crisis management solutions.

*Montieth M. Illingworth is President of Montieth & Company.*
Viewers say “bah humbug” to Best Buy ads

Best Buy’s new “Game On, Santa” holiday commercials have been making some shoppers see red.

By Abby Rose Dalto

The campaign, created for the electronics company by Crispin Porter + Bogusky, features women waiting up for Santa on Christmas Eve to rudely let him know that because they went to Best Buy, they have no need for his inferior presents.

Drew Panayiotou, Best Buy’s Senior VP-U.S. marketing, told Advertising Age the creative idea behind the commercials was “making Mom feel victorious” by letting her take pleasure in being the “chief gift giver.”

In one spot, a woman smugly tells Santa, “guess I didn’t leave any room for you,” when he comes across her children’s fully-filled stockings. She suggests he fill her dog’s stocking instead. In another, a woman mocks Santa’s gift for her husband “Daddy don’t want no cologne” and shows off the flat-screen TV that she bought instead.

In another, a woman eats the cookies left for Santa right in front of him, gulping down the milk with a smirk on her face. In perhaps the worst of the series, a woman actually meets Santa on the roof, mocks his “Ho Ho Ho” and then threateningly kicks a Santa decoration off the roof to the ground below.

Panayiotou said the success of the campaign would depend on whether the women in the ads were “having fun with Santa or beating up on Santa” but many viewers think the ads go a bit too far. The women in the commercials cross the line from playfully “razzing” Santa to full-on snark.

Critical commenters on Best Buy’s Facebook page have called the campaign “mean and nasty”, “extremely distasteful”, “ugly, horrible, ill-spirited” and “anti-Santa.”

Some viewers have complained that Santa is portrayed as pathetic and obsolete. Who needs Santa’s second-rate gifts when it’s so easy to one-up him just by going to Best Buy? Others have questioned what message Best Buy is actually sending to children about greed and gratitude. If Santa represents generosity and charity — he delivers presents to good and needy children in exchange for nothing more than cookies — what purpose does it serve to make him look bad?

Consumers are complaining about Best Buy’s new line of Santa “attack ads.”

You no longer have the luxury of a day, or even hours, when a crisis hits. In today’s hyper-connected, online world, a crisis can explode in a matter of minutes.

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**Power to the people: managing a social media crisis**

While reputation damage can now originate from many different channels, the art of handling and preventing a social media-induced crisis can be mastered with a few guiding principles.

By Kristie Coneys Kuhl

**Find your voice**

Identify who within your company should interact with customers via social media, and create a “brand voice.” What is your tone? What topics will you discuss regularly? How will your brand experience transcend social media to other outlets and interactions and vice versa? Once you have these items agreed upon, make sure employees across the organization are familiar with the expectations and social media policy. Many companies do not want employees addressing issues in social media, but some do. It is important that your social media policy reflects the corporate culture and is well understood by colleagues.

**Avoid a crisis**

My colleague, Gil Bashe, regularly reminds people to place yourself in the shoes of the other person before you respond. This is sound advice, and is needed more often than you may think — particularly in the age of social media. Your airline policy may be to refuse refunds for “nonrefundable” priced tickets, but insensitively offering travel vouchers to a woman who wants to cancel a flight because she has stage IV cancer is inviting social media backlash. US Airways did just that to a Washington, DC woman who was diagnosed with fatal breast cancer after purchasing vacation flights. This reputation crisis moved from social to traditional media quickly and could have easily been avoided.

**Expect sports-fan behavior**

Sports fans are passionate about their teams, but emotions expressed are not always positive. You will need to accept that even customers who love your product will complain about you — just as sports fans love their team but complain about management, coaching or individual performance. That’s okay. Social media allows real-time dialogue, not a lecture. Sometimes stand aside and let it pass.

**Know when to step in and out**

Communities tend to be self-regulating, and if a “troll” (an anonymous user who seeks to deface) begins to insult your brand, the moderator and brand evangelists will generally take action to shut him or her down. Companies should not provide trolls with additional ammunition. However, if you see a legitimate complaint, engage with the person — off-line. Don’t hold the conversation in public, invite the person to connect with you via email or phone. If the complaints are on Twitter, you can “direct message” (which is only seen by the recipient) your contact information.

**Disclose your identity**

Ethics violations are the third most common social media complaint. Never pretend, or allow your vendors or partners to pretend, that they are anyone other than themselves. In the age of citizen journalism, everyone is doing their due diligence to gather background, and those who aren’t transparent will pay dearly for their perceived dishonesty.

**Provide the facts**

Create a microsite that has frequently asked questions about the situation in one spot and then utilize your communications vehicles, including social media, to direct customers to the site. Keep it up-to-date and provide accurate timing for when additional information or statements may be forthcoming.

**Move on**

Once the facts have been addressed, continue to engage in good, positive interactions. The negative information will be cached and available via a Google search, but having more and more positive interactions via social media will push the negative further down the search list. It is analogous to having a glass of chocolate milk that you continue to add more and more milk. At some point, the glass will look like it is simply milk because the chocolate is so diluted. For example, one company was asked frequently about a labor issue it faced years prior. A search for the company on Flickr revealed that the site only showed photographs from the labor issue. Once the company knew that content on Flickr was the source of the questions, they began adding new data to the site, including pictures of the CEO speaking and staffers doing volunteer work. The search function then showed a more accurate — and current — picture of the company.

Social media is a great democratizer, leveling the playing field between individuals and large organizations. Communicators have discussed the importance of dialogue for decades, and it is easier today than ever before. This may scare some within your company, but that is all the more reason to engage in transparent dialogue with stakeholders.

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Penn State and Syracuse: a post-game plan for crisis

In the wake of the scandals at Penn State and Syracuse universities, administrators should be pulling their crisis plans off the shelves, dusting them off and taking a hard look at whether they are fully prepared to respond effectively if something similar happened on their campuses.

By Ashley McCown

T here are lessons to be learned from what happened at both schools and how the leadership responded. Institutions that ignore these lessons do so at their own peril. Here’s my game plan for colleges and universities to be crisis ready.

Get ahead of the story

Prosecutors in Pennsylvania went public with their investigation of Jerry Sandusky on Saturday, November 5. The investigation had been going on for two years — certainly enough time for the administration to have been better prepared with a sound strategy to honestly address the anticipated charges. Incredibly Penn State’s President issued a statement that day offering his unconditional support for Tim Curley and Gary Schultz. Those words came back to bite him. They left their posts the next day. They were arraigned on charges on Monday. The Board of Trustees did not issue their first statement until Tuesday, November 8. Who knows what was going on behind the scenes then. Maybe they were scrambling to figure out how to address the revelation that many people with knowledge of the suspected abuse did not do enough to stop it. But they could have and should have done that much sooner.

If the actions of a university president or chancellor are brought into question, the Board of Trustees needs to step up immediately, assert control, define a process of review and investigation and communicate quickly and frequently to assure all audiences that the proper steps were being taken. That process should be defined in the crisis communications plan and not figured out in the heat of the moment. And with a two-year investigation, there was time to do that.

By contrast, at Syracuse, when a tape surfaced on Sunday, November 27, of Laurie Fine saying she knew about her husband’s alleged sexual abuse, that evidence was enough for Chancellor Nancy Cantor to fire Bernie Fine that night and issue a statement to the Syracuse community.

Looking for skeletons in the closet

Beyond the abuse itself, part of what is so offensive about the Penn State tragedy is the culture of cover-up that was perpetrated by the University’s leadership including Coach Paterno. As more victims come forward, we have to wonder if Sandusky could have been stopped had someone confronted him and gone to the authorities sooner. The truth always comes out. And the truth is most crises can be anticipated and planned for if organizations are willing to take a hard look at simmering issues and deal with them, no matter the “cost.”

Schools should conduct a complete inventory of past allegations, even rumors about inappropriate activity on the part of any coach, staff, professor or administrator. If allegations were ignored at the time, it’s better to investigate them now and come clean. Seeing victims have the courage to confront their abusers and go public is empowering to other victims. Recently, a former Red Sox clubhouse attendant came forward and said he had been sexually abused by a clubhouse manager in the 1980s. While it may not feel that way, universities have a window of opportunity to proactively address past issues before the victims come forward. Once they do, what the school failed to do becomes part of the story. Always better to frame your bad news before someone else does.

Even if an investigation was done at the time and no wrong-doing was found, schools can go a step further and involve outside legal counsel to review the evidence and how the investigation was conducted to make sure nothing was missed. Practice, Practice, Practice. No doubt most universities conduct emergency drills for situations like fires, disease outbreaks and active shooters — especially in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings in 2007 and sadly, again in December. They should also conduct tabletop exercises for “softer” crises like allegations of sexual abuse to test decision-making, communication to all audiences and have back-ups for the crisis response team, especially if the head of the institution is part of the crisis and someone has to step in for him/her.

Work on special teams

Responding effectively to a crisis of this magnitude requires a team of experts. Outside counsel whether communications, legal, or grief provides expertise and objectivity that is essential to moving from reaction to action and to helping a university community heal. Better yet, schools should engage crisis experts now, absent a crisis so they can review the plans, participate in table-top exercises and get to know the institution. Penn State took over a week to hire a crisis communications firm. If they had a relationship with one already, you have to wonder how differently the early days of the crisis might have played out.

When talking about the benefits of crisis planning, I often say pay now or pay more later. We have all seen the price that Penn State, in particular, has paid. Is there any doubt that an investment in crisis planning is worth it?

Ashley McCown is President of Solomon McCown & Co. in Boston.
CPJ fetes journalism, Dan Rather at Waldorf banquet
By Jack O’Dwyer

CBS-TV’s Dan Rather left his job as a scapegoat in 2004 after he published a fake document about President George W. Bush’s military record. But he was a hero Nov. 22 when 900 of New York’s media elite feted him at the annual black-tie Waldorf-Astoria banquet of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

He was honored for “a lifetime of distinguished achievement in the cause of press freedom” by CPJ which is dedicated to helping journalists (mostly in foreign countries) who face assassination, arrest and other forms of persecution.

Journalists were told to “fight the power,” fight for “freedom of expression” and not to give in to intimidation or become obedient.

This message was given by reporter Eynulla Fatullayev, who was in prison in Azerbaijan in 2009 when CPJ gave him two awards.

Rather, who said in 2004 that he would not have used the questionable documents “if I knew then what I know now,” sued CBS for $70 million but the suit was tossed out of court. CBS had retracted the story.

Producer Mary Mapes was fired and three other producers were forced to resign. The documents allegedly backed up Rather’s claim that Bush did not complete required service in the Texas Air National Guard.

Rather raps big media
Rather, 80, who had a 44-year career at CBS, blasted the news industry as being driven by profits and punditry rather than the public interest, reported Joe Pompeo of capitalnewyork.com.

“We are living in an age when big money owns everything … including the news,” he said. “That cash bought a lot of silence for a long time,” he added. “Enough time for unchecked power to get this country tangled into messes all around the world.”

Rather was “correct”
Rather was introduced by lawyer James Goodale who said “All the facts in that particular program were substantially correct” and that Rather himself was “correct,” according to Pompeo’s report.

Attendees paid as much as $50,000 for a table and an additional $76,770 in dollars was raised by passing around white paper bags, reported Pompeo.

He thought the “opulent” scene in the Waldorf ballroom was “somewhat incongruous” since it was accompanied by “images of military and police crackdowns in autocratic regimes that flashed across two large TV screens flanking the stage.”

ABC News anchor Christiane Amanpour hosted the first half of the program and NBC’s Brian Williams the second half.

Press in trouble
Newspaper ad revenues plummeted from $49.4 billion in 2005 to $25.8 billion in 2010, or almost $24 billion. If even half of that $24 billion went to pay reporters at the rate of $50,000 yearly, that would represent the loss of 24,000 jobs. Online income remains relatively small — $3.04 billion in 2010.

Carnage is taking place in U.S. journalism although not in the form of murders, beatings and imprisonment. The effect is the same — far fewer journalists monitoring institutions.

Abramoff paid columnists to write puff pieces
By Kevin McCauley


Abramoff never offered to pay a reporter because “prudent lobbyists don’t like to hang out with them.” He also believes newspapers had no clue about the payments to their columnists.

Paying a columnist is a pretty straightforward process, according to Abramoff. The trick: the columnist has to get the item placed.

Abramoff regrets the payments. He thinks it’s terrible and shouldn’t be done “unless you are going to put a disclaimer at the bottom” of the article.

He believes lobbying payoffs to columnists are still going on. “During my time, other people did it, sure. I didn’t invent that, I didn’t come up with the idea. Others definitely do it and did it. I don’t know if they still do it. Why wouldn’t they? It’s not like it is easily catchable, and it’s not illegal,” he said.

Ironically, Abramoff wanted to hire a ghostwriter to write his book but couldn’t find anybody who could write in his voice.

After trying out two writers, Abramoff just sat down and wrote the book himself about his illegal activities and the shady side of lobbying.

Assets of CPJ at the end of 2009, latest Form 990 figure available, were $12,134,907 vs. $10,488,781 in the previous year. A 501/c/3 charitable organization, it had revenues of $2,577,996 in 2009 vs. $3,564,737 in 2008. Value of investments (publicly traded securities) rose to $10.1 million from $8.1 million. Payroll was $1,876,050.

Top CPJ staffers are executive director Joel Simon ($172,000 pay plus $8,200,000 of other compensation); deputy director Robert Mahony ($120,000 plus $6,300), and development director John Weis ($116,000 plus $12,900). Gypsy Kaiser is advocacy and communications director.

Journalists ‘everywhere’ concern CPJ
CPJ says on Form 990 that it works to “ensure that journalists everywhere are free to carry out their essential work to inform the public.”

CPJ says on Form 990: “Our full-time staff includes experienced journalists and human rights advocates who conduct in-depth investigations of press freedom abuses” and that staffers “use an array of advocacy techniques to publicize attacks against the press and to exert pressure on those responsible for abuses.”

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Don’t tweet your crisis into a corner

While social media has dramatically improved communicators’ outlets and response time to a crisis, there are many cases where it can actually worsen a situation. Communicators must maintain a mastery of ‘analogical’ crisis-solving techniques to properly prevent and deal with a PR nightmare.

By James MacGregor

Imagine the following scenario: a crisis erupts at a for-profit college. Federal agencies raid the campus. Yellow tape surrounds a dozen buildings. Uniformed agents fill moving trucks with file cabinets and computer terminals.

College administrators draft protestations of innocence and outrage. The college president schedules a press conference. Students and faculty ask only one question: “Will classes be held tomorrow?”

The answer, posted on bulletin boards and a Website: “Yes.”

With that — in terms of strategic communications — order is restored.

There are other questions — Why the raid? What’s next? Are my credits still good? What about my student loan? My job placement? All of that can wait for an hour, or a day, or a week, because the most urgent “first” question has been answered. Business as usual resumed. The company eventually cleared its name.

We tell this story with some frequency these days, because we are so often besieged with assertions that all crises are best managed (or, perhaps, can only be managed) through massive applications of social media. We don’t think so. Judiciously deployed, social media can be powerful tools. But overall, social media are more likely to cause or worsen a crisis than they are to prevent one. And once a crisis has arisen, the best remediation is likely to be very old-fashioned — direct, simple, helpful and, above all, personal.

Let’s acknowledge at the start: social media has changed the crisis-management/crisis-communications landscape dramatically. Twitter means everyone else knows about the problem before you do. YouTube means they not know about it, they’ve seen the unedited video. Blogs allow “citizen-journalists” to drown out mainstream media, in part because blogs come without obligations (self-imposed or otherwise) to accuracy or fairness in their reporting.

Google and Yahoo! mean every past misdeed will be retrieved for public scrutiny. Facebook means your own embarrassing statements will be out there too, along with those of family and friends. And e-mail not only helps speed all of the above on its way, it also means that your own internal communications will leak almost instantly to almost everyone.

There’s a corresponding litany of things you can do to prevent or deal with all this: Learn how and when to tweet yourself. Make and post your own videos. Hire a social-media monitoring service. Hire a search-engine-optimizer. Tell everyone to scrub their Facebook accounts. Use telephones and faxes and even snail-mail instead of e-mail. Some of this stuff works pretty well. Some of it doesn’t.

Here’s the problem: The first thing we hear generally forms our framing perception of a situation. Once formed, we see or hear everything new within the frame of that initial perception. That first perception happens very fast in our new social media environment, and, all too often, it’s incomplete, or distorted, or just plain wrong.

You cannot defeat a Twitter-formed perception with more Twitter. All that happens is more public visibility is given to the dispute about the first perception. To “break the frame” and allow new, more accurate perceptions to form requires stronger communication than what has already happened. Strength is not just strength of message — it’s also strength of communications delivery. Nothing has more impact than a real person, undiluted by media. Ideally, the person the listener trusts most in all the world would be speaking to him face-to-face with full knowledge of the listener’s personal needs and interests.

That’s not going to happen, but here are four things that can happen.

Go direct

Go direct to whatever audience is most involved/threatened/harmed/at risk. It could be customers or neighbors or employees or patients or investors or some other identifiable group. You’re unlikely to achieve face-to-face, one-on-one communication. The closer you can get to that, the better you’ll be received, and the more you’ll be believed. In-person groups are good. Personal phone calls are pretty good. Individual e-mails are barely acceptable. Mass messaging and public pronouncements do not play well. That includes press releases and press conferences.

Answer the first question

Most-involved audiences have something more at stake than “classes will be held” — such as “is it safe to go outside?” or “do I still have a job?” or “have I lost my retirement savings?” but sometimes the level of concern will be at the “should I be worried about this?” level. If there is something major at stake, give them the best answer you’ve got as quickly as you can. If the answer isn’t yet clear, it’s OK to say so, if you also say when you’ll be able to provide greater clarity. But if you don’t answer the first question, they won’t be able to hear anything else you have to say.

Be short, be simple

People only remember three things in any case, so make it the right three. Twitter is 144 characters. A Bloomberg screen is 80 words. Nobody reads long documents. Nobody pays attention to long presentations. “We’ll be closed till Monday” is about right. So is “if this costs you anything, send us the bill.”

Be pre-emptively good

Actions still speak louder than words. Good will dies pretty quickly if left unnourished. If something is broken, fix it before you’re ordered to. If someone needs a plane ticket or a babysitter, provide one. Once you do, you’re a friend, not an enemy. Legal liability can be sorted out later.

And what about a media plan? Hold off on that for a moment. If you do right by the people who are most affected, they’ll do your communicating for you. Maybe they’ll do it in person. Maybe they’ll use social media. However they do it, it will be far more favorable than anything you could have done by yourself.

James MacGregor is Vice Chairman of The Abernathy MacGregor Group.
PR survey respondents have identified integrated marketing communications as one of the top-five proficiencies needed through the next five years.

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The painful art of public speaking

The perspiration slowly slides down the middle of your back. Your knees knock and your hands shake. Will you get through this or will you pass out on the spot? Sound like your first date? No, it’s all happening because you’re about to give a presentation.

By Anthony Huey

Polls continue to rank public speaking as the number one fear in America, even over death! That’s right, more people are afraid to speak than to be eaten by a shark, burn, go blind, or dozens of other horrific things.

You call it fear but what you are really going through is an over-supply of adrenaline, a natural substance in the body. And when your system receives too much adrenaline, it creates fear and anxiety.

Even with more than 1,300 speeches, workshops and seminars under my belt, I still get a little nervous each time I speak. But early in my career I had a pivotal public speaking moment that has helped me control my nerves and use them to my advantage.

It was my first big speech, a luncheon keynote to a group of more than 800 professionals. It was going swimmingly right until two waiters collided in the back of the room. As 200 dishes loudly slammed, an audience member looking around me and I am safe.

This mental trick still works for me today. Nothing will faze me while I’m in my “bubble.” Whether it’s a cell phone ringing, door slamming, an audience member looking at me cross-eyed, or any variation of distraction; I picture an invisible bubble around me and I am safe.

Besides my “bubble” technique here are a few other tips to reduce fear and anxiety while speaking:

Be prepared. Studies show that nervousness can be reduced by about 60 percent if you are well prepared. This means reading your speech or presentation out loud at least five to 10 times. Do it in front of someone and ask for an evaluation. Reading silently to yourself is mostly a waste of time.

While breathing. About five minutes before speaking take in a very deep breath, then exhale slowly as you let all your muscles relax. Try doing it while standing.

Minor exercises. Go out in the hall and speed-walk for a few minutes. Exercise your legs and arms at the table while awaiting your turn. Get rid of that excess adrenaline.

Make sure your script or notes are properly prepared. I have a long list of rules about script preparation, but here are some of the more important ones:

• Print the notes/speech out using 16-point font so you can see it with ease.
• Print only two-thirds of the way down on the page.
• Double-space all sentences, triple space all major thought changes.
• Never carry a sentence over from one page to another.
• Number your pages in case you drop your 30-page speech on the way to the podium!

During your speech, don’t announce your anxiety. I cringe when a speaker starts out: “I am a bit nervous so here goes . . .” In my training, I videotape participants and show them over and over again that while they are nervous no one can tell it during the video replay. That’s an important point. As nervous as you are, shaking and sweating, you are probably the only one who knows it. That knowledge alone, gained through the videotape and critique session, is often enough to reduce nervousness by 30-40 percent.

Never draw attention to a “mistake.” If you stutter, stumble over your words or lose your train of thought, just keep talking. Odds are the audience may not have even noticed. Don’t apologize for skipping an entire section of your speech. If you act like you know what you’re doing at all times, chances are that the audience will believe you do. Maintain confidence and remember that most of your captive audience is just glad that you’re up there, and not them.

The power to verbally convince is a tremendous asset. It can move people to do unusual things. Think what Kennedy, Reagan, Clinton and Obama achieved by being excellent communicators. But most great speakers are made, not born. With a few tips and professional coaching you too can become a dynamic, convincing speaker. So no matter whether you’re giving a PowerPoint presentation to a small group or delivering the keynote at the next annual meeting, forget the fear and get into your bubble.

Anthony Huey is President of Reputation Management Associates.
PEOPLE IN PR

F-H partner exits for WU

Jill Friedman, senior VP and partner in Fleishman-Hillard’s St. Louis public affairs unit, has moved to Washington University in the city as Vice Chancellor for public affairs.

She took the reins Jan. 1, following the Sept. 30 retirement of Fredric Volkman after 31 years.

Friedman earned an MBA from WU’s business school in 1999 and is a former aide to late Missouri Gov. Mel Carnahan and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.). She joined F-H in 2001 and became a partner five years later.

Friedman leads PR, communications and marketing for the private research institution founded in 1853.

A 10-member search committee led by law school dean Kent Syverud decided on Friedman for the position.

Grimmer sells Articulate Communications

Laura Grimmer, who founded Articulate Communications ten years ago, has sold the New York-based technology/financial PR shop to Partner/Senior VP Audra Tiner.

The deal enables Grimmer to pursue her passion for cooking. She has enrolled at Soho’s French Culinary Institute and began classes for the six-month program in January.

Grimmer, Tiner

Grimmer, an avid mountain climber and long-distance runner, envisions a career in high-end catering, but told O’Dwyer’s “if the chance to cut carrots at Daniel pops up, I would jump at the opportunity.”

The former Associated Press staffer and New York GM at FitzGerald Communications said she’s had many buyout offers in the past, but after 17 years in the PR business the “time just felt right to sell.”

Tiner, who joined Articulate two and a half years ago, is a “strong leader and great business development person,” according to Grimmer, who said she knew early on that Tiner would be the one to take over the business.

Tiner, has counseled Articulate clients such as Sapient Global Markets, Portware, Detica NetReveal and Fix Protocol. Before joining the firm, the Boston native worked at SeeBeyond, Progress Software and Cambridge Technology Group.

Grimmer would not disclose the price for the soon-to-be 15 staffer, which has just opened a London outpost. It enjoyed a robust 2011 as fees jumped 30% to a record $2.5 million.

Tiner took the Articulate helm Jan. 1.

Edwards drives to GolinHarris

Pam Edwards, an automotive PR pro, has joined GolinHarris in Los Angeles as a Director in the Automotive Practice of the Interpublic unit.

She had been online business development manager and corporate communications manager at Volvo Cars North America. Ford Motor sold the Swedish auto company to China’s Zhejiang Geely Holding Group in 2010.

Edwards also worked at PCG Campbell, where she handled Volvo and Korea’s Kia. She also was on Ketchum’s Acura team.

At GolinHarris, Edwards handles Toyota Motor Sales, Yamaha Motor and NADAguides. She reports to Dan Zukowski, executive director of the auto practice.

Judy Johnson is Managing Director of GolinHarris’ western operations.

Lovallo to build NY office for Levick

John Lovallo, an agency vet who set up his own New York shop in 2005, has moved to Levick Strategic Communications as a Senior VP to establish a New York presence for the D.C. crisis specialty firm.

He founded Lovallo Communications Group in 2005 after Senior VP stints at Ogilvy PR Worldwide and Makovsky + Company. The move effectively merges LCG into Levick.

Lovallo said Levick is equipped to handle its stable of mortgage and financial sector clients as he works to build up corporate, financial and IR practice areas for Levick in New York.

He was an investment manager before entering the PR realm with Weber Shandwick.

Lippe Taylor adds duo

Lippe Taylor Brand Communications has added Eric Blinderman as Executive VP and Lori Rubinson as Chief Strategy Officer to the roster of the beauty & fashion shop in New York.

The firm describes Blinderman as a “card-carrying generalist.” Blindermann spent 14 years at Fleishman-Hillard, where he rose to chair its North American consumer practice.

He counseled a diverse client base that included Hasbro, Bayer Pharmaceuticals, Procter & Gamble, Gatorade and Yahoo.

Earlier, Blinderman led Weber Shandwick’s consumer practice in New York (Century 21, Bank of America, McNeil and Unilever) and spent three years at CJP Communications (The Hartford, Keep America Beautiful and Pitney Bowles).

Rubinson began her career in brand management at P&G, before moving to Clairol. She is former chief strategic officer at Marina Maher Communications and executive VP at Bratskeir & Co. Burger King, Revlon, and Chiquita Bananas have received counsel from Rubinson.

Rubinson, Blinderman

Rubinson joins LTBC from The Joey Company, where she spearheaded Church & Dwight’s Trojan condom brand’s effort to target women customers.

Jim Joseph, president of LTBC, expects Blinderman and Rubinson to help speed the shop’s transformation into an “integrated marketing powerhouse.”

JANUARY 2012 WWW.ODWYERPR.COM
The sound of silence: how inaction makes a crisis worse

Speed beats smart in a crisis situation. Action, context and empathy are a PR pro’s best weapons when taming a disaster, and today’s communicators would do well to learn how to engage with substantive commentary at a moment’s notice.

By James E. Lukaszewski

Take your pick: Katrina, British Petroleum, Jet Blue, Penn State. Wherever you find a serious situation happening, you’ll find PR people pontificating and bloviating, usually in the negative. The commentary is totally predictable, often rather shallow, and given with very little real knowledge of what is either helpful, useful or meaningful. These events should be an opportunity for PR practitioners to showcase their knowledge of the managerial or public issues crises create. However, most of the commentary states the obvious, misses the real meaning of events, and focuses only on communication gaps and gaffs. This causes management to scratch their heads, and to wonder why we are speaking at all.

During Katrina practitioners from around the country would send me draft articles or op-ed pieces they were preparing. All commented on how poorly this disaster was being handled by the federal government, the local government, the city of New Orleans, the governor of Mississippi, and on and on. Most of the op-eds sent to me sounded like compilations of editorial content from The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and the bloviators and bellyachers from the various chitchat channels. The same thing occurred during the BP spill in the Gulf.

To most, after reading their materials, I wrote back saying essentially the following: “I don’t really know you, or your experience, but I would feel more comfortable in reading your commentary if I’d known that you had actually been in a disaster; that you had been up to your armpits in dark, filthy water, without electricity, and with dead animals and human beings floating nearby. I would be more sympathetic if I had confidence that you understood the smell of disaster, the peculiar odors of tragedy and misery; that, perhaps, you had to comfort some of those who suffered extraordinary loss or harm. If this is the case, publish your piece and have a nice life. If not, avoid the mindless complaining that too many public relations practitioners tend to do, just to get their names in the paper.”

Nowadays, we graduate students from public relations programs with degrees or specialties in Crisis Management. I’m really curious what, aside from their student loan situation, is a crisis for a twenty-two year old? I handled my first dead body, a teenage boy at a southern Minnesota drowning scene when I was 14. I helped (very tangentially) deliver a baby when I was 16. I resuscitated firemen and rescue workers’ at plane crashes and fire scenes from the time I was 16 until I was 20 as a part of the Explorer Scout EX1 rescue program started by the Minneapolis Fire Department and the Viking Council of the Boy Scouts of America. I’ve been in those environments where people and animals were killed or seriously injured and where living systems were damaged or destroyed. These experiences change your perspective and help you focus on more meaningful information and commentary.

There are four general realities of every crisis:

• Bad news ripens badly and because it does, things will get worse before they get better.
• Speed beats smart every time. Waiting to act until an appropriate level of factual information is available is a foolish decision. The longer you wait to do something, the more likely it is that whatever you do will be insufficient, unfocused, off-point, outside the target zone, defensive and will need to be fixed almost immediately. My rule of thumb is that each day that a crisis persists, responders spend 50% of their energy and 25% of their resources fixing the bad decisions made yesterday. Having said that, the most worrisome decisions and poorest strategies are those which require waiting to do something until more is known. In crisis, doing something meaningful immediately is essential to your credibility, to the level of public trust that can be maintained. Even if mistaken and likely to be changed, action beats inaction every time.
• Silence is the most toxic strategy. Where there’s trouble, lawyers keep their clients from talking. Managers and leaders would rather avoid conveying negative news. The result is deafening silences when there should be robust conversations. The most predictable casualty of silence during these major adverse events will be the chief executive of the organization.
• Apologies are the atomic energy of empathy. If you want to stop bad news almost dead in its tracks, apologize. If you want to generally stop litigation, apologize. If you want to dramatically decrease the newsworthiness of almost any adverse situation, apologize. If you want to demonstrate that you truly care about the victims or victimization you caused, apologize. The healthcare industry, forced by their insurance carriers, has learned the power of apology or of extreme empathy. Thirty-two states have legislation preventing juries from considering voluntary apologies at car accidents when awarding damages. Twenty-three states have legislation exempting voluntary apologies by healthcare personnel from being considered by juries for damage awards or from adversely affecting professional liability insurance coverage.

As management advisors, public relations practitioners need to focus on more substantive commentary in these urgent situations. Your mother may have taught you that if you can’t say something nice, it’s better to be still. When it comes to commenting on crisis situations, we recommend that you ask yourself at least four questions before you launch forth:

• Does your comment add meaningful understanding to those most directly affected by the circumstance or situation?
• Can you offer genuine insight rather than the predictable mindless commentary so prevalent in these situations?
• Are you about to say something management can take into account as they work through the problems they are facing?
• Does what we’re about to say really, truly matter?

Otherwise, do what your mother taught you.

James E. Lukaszewski, ABC, APR, Fellow PRSA, is President of the Lukaszewski Group Division of Risdall Public Relations, based in New Brighton, Minnesota.
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Online reputation management, the new crisis

The rise in threats to online reputation has rendered many of the crisis communications approaches of five years ago obsolete.

By Brent Franson

Traditional public relations alone can’t solve crises anymore. The reputation-checking technologies available to consumers are just too powerful. In this era, online reputation management (ORM) needs to become a part of crisis communications.

Strong online reputation

In ORM, prevention is the best medicine. If a company has a good reputation to start with, mistakes are less likely to escalate into crises. The key to developing such a reputation is to project consistent messages across all online channels. The top search results, the company website, conversations on Twitter and Facebook, reviews of the business or its products, news articles about its activities, discussions by bloggers — all of this needs to tell a different side of the same, positive story.

Building a good online reputation, therefore, depends on cultivating reputation equity among key stakeholders on key technology platforms. Part of this process involves traditional PR, but it also involves a strong commitment to community and customer: conflict resolution mechanisms, protocols for quickly resolving any stakeholder issues, and meaningful, sincere outreach in each of the major online venues where stakeholders are likely to congregate.

All companies make mistakes, but it’s how a company recovers from them that makes or breaks its reputation. A commitment to solving the problems of the company’s stakeholders leads to loyalty, and loyal stakeholders come to the company’s defense by posting positive reviews (80 percent of customer reviews are positive, according to Forrester Research) and spreading direct or indirect word-of-mouth endorsements via social media, blog postings, etc.

Monitor landscape, respond fast

Even when companies have built a base of loyal stakeholders, they need to monitor their online reputations carefully to make sure unforeseen issues don’t side-sweep them. Thankfully, the same technology that makes the online world a reputation minefield for businesses also provides easy tools to monitor what’s going on. There’s no excuse to not know what’s being said about your business online.

Also keep in mind that online reputation is not always connected to fact. Internet users are human, so even though they use the Web to validate messages, they don’t always draw the right conclusions. Example: Whole Foods Market and Monsanto squared off over the issue of the regulation of genetically modified food in 2011, with the USDA forcing a settlement. Whole Foods lost the battle for regulation, but even worse, a search for “Monsanto Whole Foods” brings up a series of sensational (and incorrect) blog postings about Whole Foods being bought out by Monsanto.

When a reputation issue comes up, it needs to be addressed expeditiously — and appropriately. Let’s consider a hypothetical franchise business facing reputation problems. Not every problem requires the same solution. A negative trending hashtag on Twitter, for instance, probably signifies a widespread issue, perhaps a product problem, because of the volume of tweets required to form a trend. The company would do best to quietly fix the product, use Twitter to contact disgruntled customers, and then offer refunds/replacements.

In contrast, facing prominent blog attacks appearing in the search results, the company would need to change the online conversation by controlling a wide range of online properties. SEO won’t solve this kind of problem, because it’s not about controlling the top spot — it’s about controlling the messages on the top page. Enter ORM firms, who have developed technology and expertise specific to this task.

ORM solutions and practices allow a company to prioritize positive information — an “insurance policy” of sorts against future crises. The Web has changed the nature of the crisis, and now ORM offers solutions to cope and recover. ORM is a long-term process and requires a good deal of subtlety and sophistication. This is the new landscape of crisis management. So as the Web becomes even more ubiquitous, companies that learn to develop strong online reputations will succeed at the expense of those that don’t.

Brent Franson is Senior Director of Advanced Client Solutions of Reputation.com, and President of ORMA (Online Reputation Management Association).
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Economics key for political PR in 2012

If you’re a PR rep handling a candidate for public office, here’s a few tips that can make your candidate look well informed about the economy.

By Wes Pedersen

Prime them with an answer to this question by the media: Ben Bernanke, the head of the Federal Reserve Board, leaves as expected when the new year begins, who would you recommend as his replacement? And why? A follow-up question might naturally be: If you win this race, who will be your economic advisers? Are any of them serving in that role now as you’re on the stump? Why did you choose them? Did any of them choose you?

Answers to such questions can make or break a candidate. The problem is, some of the best known economists have been just plain God-awful in the past several years. Most of them failed totally to recognize the Great Recession that was barreling down on the country. Most have been fumble-mouthed on the massive problems of the banks here and the economic woes of countries around the world.

Here, we encounter the core problem: Do you, as a PR practitioner, have enough knowledge about the economy to guide your candidate? Probably not. But if your shop is of any consequence at all, you should have someone aboard who has been monitoring economic developments with great care. He or she (or they) is essential in an election where economics is the overriding issue in every city in the country and in every country abroad.

Now here’s a secret: Some economists have been misleading America, giving out incomplete or flawed information. Their estimates of the number of workers without jobs, for example, have been too low, with critical categories of the unemployed ignored.

By leaving out the numbers of underemployed and search-exhausted workers who have given up their fruitless hunts for jobs, they come up with estimates of nine or so percent of the country looking for paychecks. The true number is more than twice that. Nearly half of the population is living at or around the poverty level.

It smells of collusion between the federal officials who want to keep the numbers of unemployed low and the economists who dope out the numbers and use them to predict the state of the nation’s economy. By the same token, the men and women who write on finance in the nation’s press have all too often swallowed whatever economic analyses were handed to them by the numbers crunchers in Congress, the federal agencies, and the White House.

The economists, meanwhile, are doing their best to duck criticism for their massive failures. Perish the thought that they should be reminded that they lacked the vision, and the consumers’ sense of things going wrong, to predict the failure of the national economy or to recognize the strong holding power of the continuing Great Recession.

You may feel well informed on national and global affairs but it’s time for and your clients to remember that unless we declare a new war the one truly crucial issue this time is the economy.

Wes Pedersen is a retired Foreign Service Officer and Principal at Wes Pedersen Comms. and Public Relations in Washington, D.C.
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Curation services your agency should offer

By Pawan Deshpande

Survey after survey shows marketers are putting content at the top of their priority lists. A recent MarketingProfs survey found nine out of 10 B2B marketing organizations, regardless of company size or industry, have used content as a form of marketing in 2011 and my own company, HiveFire, found in our survey that 82% of B2B marketers now use content marketing — making it even more popular than search marketing (70%), events (68%) and public relations (64%) and over two times more popular than print, TV or radio advertising (32%).

Content marketing is not just another fad for PR pros to watch come and go. More and more marketers are putting money behind content marketing programs. MarketingProfs found that some 60% of the surveyed marketers plan to increase spending on content marketing over the next 12 months. What can public relations do to get a piece of that budget pie in 2012? A lot.

One of the easiest, most effective ways is by offering services associated with content curation — the process of finding, organizing and sharing content online. Such services not only contribute to clients’ thought leadership and social media programs — and ultimately, results — they can also bring in additional revenue.

Curation strategy

A content curation strategy should be developed in the same way as a more general PR strategy: with the audience and key messages in mind. This begins with topic identification — finding a topic that the core audiences will want to read about, but that is neither too broad nor narrow and has enough regular content already being produced on it. Counsel can be key here because clients often don’t know the media outlets as well as their PR teams and they sometimes are too close to the material to know what will be compelling to the market at large. The strategy can evolve from there by helping clients identify the sources and influencers to follow using existing media monitoring lists, Twitter lists and measurement programs, as well as advising clients on how the curated properties will integrate with the larger communications program.

Daily curation services

Much like daily news scanning, content curation is a process that many clients prefer to hand over to agency partners. And similar to how media monitoring tools help PR pros streamline that, technologies exist that can help them keep the curation process to about 20 minutes a day. By curating content on behalf of a client, public relations teams alleviate the content marketing burden from them. In addition, agencies demonstrate their industry knowledge, and can leverage content from the curation process for other PR programs. From a revenue perspective, daily curation services make perfect sense because it’s a recurring activity that provides an on-going revenue stream.

Content bureau

Curated content provides a steady stream of ready, relevant content, but is only the foundation of the strategy. In order to maximize a client’s key messages and thought leadership platforms, original content is still critical. PR professionals can provide critical help with this aspect of the process, from drafting blog content and building editorial calendars, to conducting third-party interviews with influencers or creating multimedia in the form of slideshows and videos. Clients — and the audiences visiting their sites — will be thankful.

Awareness building

Simply creating a great destination site is no guarantee that traffic will flock to it. PR can be key in transforming a curated site into a go-to industry destination. Issuing a press release announcing the property and requesting other relevant sites to link to the new site are some basic tactics to help spread the word. There is also tremendous opportunity to recruit industry influencers to contribute content, post content across a client’s social media channels to drive users back to the site and utilize features like Disqus to encourage active dialogue on the content.

Measurement

Like any good PR agency will tell you, measuring success is a critical part of any program. The same holds true for curation. As an offering, this starts by setting goals: what metrics matter — traffic, engagement, other — and what qualifies success? Once the goals are in place, it is critical to regularly assess the program against those. If agencies are following the many curation best practices available, the results should speak for themselves. Metrics will help the client understand the value of the curation efforts — and the investment in the agency overseeing it.

Pawan Deshpande is CEO of HiveFire.

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Working with management and external legal and financial advisors, we develop and implement effective communications programs that help stabilize companies during uncertain times. Properly executed, these plans can help maximize the window of time within which management and its advisors can successfully address the issues fundamental to sustained recovery.

Properly executed, these plans can help maximize the window of time within which management and its advisors can successfully address the issues fundamental to sustained recovery.

The Abernathy MacGregor Group is a strategic communications firm that operates in six disciplines: crisis communications, corporate restructuring and bankruptcy, investor relations, transactions, communications, IPOs and corporate and financial public relations.

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The firm’s bankruptcy and restructuring practice — which includes restructurings both within and outside of Chapter 11 protection — has advised on some of the largest and most complex restructurings in corporate history. Working with management and external legal and financial advisors, we develop and implement effective communications programs that help stabilize companies during uncertain times. Properly executed, these plans can help maximize the window of time within which management and its advisors can successfully address the issues fundamental to sustained recovery.

Atomic mixes top flight PR and media relations with social media, events, guerilla programs, video and search engine optimization, enhanced with the sophisticated use of custom communications analytics for strategy building, creative planning and detailed program results measurement. Many Atomic clients achieve increases of 100% or more across numerous measures of PR program impact compared to pre-Atomic baselines, often on lower budgets than before. Atomic PR has powered numerous breakthrough campaigns for progressive consumer, technology and entertainment brands from exciting start-ups like Mint.com, LivingSocial, Dropbox, Fusion.io and Smule, to larger brands and leading publicly traded companies including IMAX, SONY, Verizon, Intuit, LinkedIn, Polaroid and Pioneer.

Atomic has offices in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, London and Munich. Atomic is part of Grayling, a leading global agency with 73 offices in 40 countries across the world.


BOARDROOM COMMUNICATIONS

1776 N. Pine Island Rd., Ste. 320 Plantation, FL 33322
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www.boardroompr.com

Don Silver, Chief Operating Officer

Boardroom Communications is one of Florida’s top PR agencies offering statewide coverage. The firm’s experienced staff of public relations professionals and former journalists routinely handle several high-profile crisis projects and public affairs campaigns each year. Examples include: investigations; hostile takeovers; litigation; product recalls; criminal charges; safety and environmental compliance; accidental deaths; project approvals; legislative campaigns.

Whether you’re developing a crisis communications plan or responding to an urgent threat, Boardroom’s trusted and respected staff will help you evaluate the situation, mitigate the risks and deal with your most important audiences, i.e. media, employees, stakeholders, customers, government and others. We immediately consult with your executives to assess the situation and develop an appropriate strategy. Our team monitors traditional media, blogs and social networking sites and handles all inquiries. Call or email us if you are faced with a “Bet-the-Ranch” situation where a capable, seasoned team can help guide you to a satisfactory resolution.

CHARLESTON I ORWIG

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www.charlestonorwig.com

Lyle Orwig, CEO

Mark Gale, President and Partner

Amy Richards, Director, Reputation Management

CharlestonOrwig is a strategic communications consultant on reputation management, especially as it relates to sustainability, corporate social responsibility and public issues. The agency manages public, media, stakeholder and government perceptions in support of business objectives by elevating reputations, often in the face of activist, government and media pressures. Whether formulating a communications strategy around a food recall, an environmental sustainability program or a community relations initiative, CharlestonOrwig puts its public relations, reputation management and strategic planning expertise to work for clients in many categories.

While the CharlestonOrwig staff are experts in crisis management and crisis communications, the most important value offered to clients lies in developing strategies that will help prevent crisis through work that improves relationships with stakeholders and critics alike.

CONE COMMUNICATIONS

855 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116
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www.coneinc.com

Jens Bang, CEO

Mike Lawrence, Chief Rep. Officer

Jennifer Sheehy Everett, Vice President/Crisis

Cone Communications has been managing sensitive issues for diverse clients nationwide...
for more than 30 years. Our deep history in issue and crisis management demonstrates that the most effective crisis management comes through preparedness. We offer clients a variety of critical crisis preparedness services, including risk assessments and scenario planning; issue monitoring, analysis and response support for traditional, online and social media; development of crisis communication plans; desktop crisis drills; spokesperson training; and Internet-based crisis counsel and tools.

When a crisis does strike, Cone is available 24/7 to help clients respond with the speed required in today’s online world. We have extensive experience developing communication strategy and positioning for clients navigating crises — always with an eye toward preserving, protecting and enhancing organization and brand reputation.

Cone Communications is flexible in the depth of service we provide crisis clients. For some clients, we serve as the communications arm of their response team. And for others, we are an experienced “sounding board,” reacting to their response plans and ongoing efforts. We’re at the ready, whatever the need.

COYNE PUBLIC RELATIONS

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212/938-0166

Thomas F. Coyne, CEO
Rich Lukis, President
John Gogarty, Executive Vice President

Coyne Public Relations has established itself as one of the leading independent full-service public relations firms in the country representing an impressive collection of international corporations, top national brands, high-profile events and first-class organizations. No agency possesses a better combination of unbridled creativity, limitless enthusiasm, strategic approach, impeccable integrity and client service than our nationally recognized firm.

Coyne PR’s teams of PR professionals have extensive experience developing, executing and supporting crisis communication plans for clients in the following categories: Electronics, Energy, Entertainment, Executive leadership, Food and Nutrition, Healthcare, Restaurant, Toys & Juvenile, Travel.

DAVIES

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John Davies, CEO
Robb Rice, EVP
Taylor Canfield, EVP
Lisa Palmier, SVP
Joshua Boisvert, VP
Sasha Boghosian, Director
Caitlin Bidwell, Office Manager

Davies redefines crisis. Winning today is tied directly to your ability to rapidly reach out, engage others, and do so while everyone watches. To minimize damage, we quickly reset strategy, redefine your message, and counsel your messengers. We protect your brand integrity by getting your story out quickly and concisely. Our clients confirm how important it is to share their story the right way — highlighting the benefits across all mediums and inoculating against opponents. We’ve turned more than 500 crises into non-events — often transforming them into opportunities. Many firms simply offer advice and sit on the sidelines. Davies has the audacity to act, unafraid to join the fight and win. To prevent a crisis or make it win, we’re standing by at DaviesPublicAffairs.com.

Since 1983, Davies has consistently ranked among the top strategic communications firms and is the third largest environmental PR firm in the United States.


FINEMAN PR

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Michael Fineman, President

Founded in 1988, San Francisco-based Fineman PR unites large-agency talent, small agency responsiveness and strategic planning. Practice areas include Brand PR, crisis communications, issues management, community relations, social media and multicultural outreach. Fineman PR is nationally renowned for its expertise and high profile work in crisis communications, offering battle-tested experience and strategic skills to guide companies through contentious times.

Agency President Michael Fineman is ranked among the nation’s top crisis counselors. Given the urgent nature of crisis work, agency representatives are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to act on any situation.

High profile crisis work has included: communications for a preeminent outdoor leadership school when its students suffered a grizzly bear attack in the Alaskan wilderness, the Avian Influenza threat for a large poultry producer, attacks against clients by animal activists, a college falsely accused in the Santa Barbara fires, community relations defense against the dissolution of a healthcare district, mitigating a book smear campaign against a spiritual organization, a school outing that resulted in student fatality, the 1990s Odwalla food safety incident, redemption of packaged salads accused by media of high bacterial counts, and refuting allegations against a Truckee, Calif., rental housing developer after a tragic explosion.

FINN PARTNERS

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Jessica Berk Ross, Senior Partner (DC)
Shelly Holmes, Senior Partner (LA)

While we live in a world — and media environment — that seems to thrive on bad news and the crisis du jour, the Finn Partners approach to crisis management blends both communications and risk management. Finn Partners takes a holistic approach to crisis communications—considering all audiences and stakeholders—from employees, to customers, to media, to regulators, influencers and the public. Our objectives are always to ensure that we defend and preserve reputation, restore trust and mitigate concerns about the future whether the crises are local, national or international in scope. We work with clients to navigate the dynamic and evolving wildcard of how social media networks can create, drive or quell a bad news story or crisis situation.

While a crisis situation is often completely unexpected, we help our clients to assess potential threats and as well as the best ways to prepare for a crisis response and manage an array of complex situations. This dramatically improves the process for dealing with threats after they have occurred, and allows for faster assessment, response to the situation, and can shorten the timeline of the arc from crisis point to the period of recovery so brand and daily operations can either maintain momentum — or renew/recalibrate faster.

GOURVITZ

COMMUNICATIONS

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Paul Gourvitz, President

Broadcast Public relations was invented for crisis communications. Whether it’s Exxon, BP, a Wall Street firm, a product recall, everyone needs the correct image on TV. If you can’t tell your story the way you want, why should you expect the media to tell it
your way? Everyone at Gourvitz comes from a news background: CBS, CNN, Comcast, NBC, ESPN. Paul Gourvitz, president of Gourvitz Communications started as a page at NBC. And at Gourvitz Communications there is no consultancy fee. You tell us your problem and we will tell you how to solve it. And if you are not satisfied, you don’t pay. We can deliver video content from the middle of the ocean, from the bottom of a trona mine or in the middle of a hurricane.

We still use the traditional tools such as B-roll, Satellite and radio media tours and integrated marketing. But we have added the Interactive Media Tour (IMT) and the digital delivery of content to TV websites and Newspapers. Its not what you do, but how you do it and who you do it with. East Coast or West Coast, all you have to do is call or email us.

Hennes Paynter Communications is one of the few agencies in the U.S. focused exclusively on crisis communications. Since 1989, the firm has served corporations, educational and health institutions, government entities, nonprofits and small businesses “on trial” in the court of public opinion. Services include media training, crisis communication plans, crisis drills and litigation communications.

Bruce Hennes is one of Ohio’s best-known crisis specialists and media trainers. He is an in-demand speaker at law firms, universities, bar and trade associations on the subject of crisis communications. He also frequently trains government, safety and education officials to communicate effectively during extreme crisis situations that threaten public safety.

Barbara Paynter has 20+ years experience helping big-name clients resolve crisis and reputational issues. She heads up the firm’s SWAT Team of battle-tested, seasoned professionals.

Nora Jacobs, a three-time Silver Anvil winner, has decades of experience with consumer and industrial products, healthcare, biotechnology, education, chemicals and plastics.

In 2010, Hennes Paynter won the Gold Award for Crisis Communications from PRSA Cleveland for its work on behalf of a community institution caught up in a scandal. In 2009, the firm won the chapter’s “Best in Show” for its work with another agency on the national peanut butter recall.

PROFILES OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS FIRMS

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Michael Murphy, Global CEO

Insightful, decisive & practical. Our team of board level crisis & issues management specialists has unrivalled experience and expertise protecting brands and managing corporate reputations for some of the biggest names in the private and public sector.

When handling complex issues and uncertainty, crisis management in today’s world demands nothing less than razor sharp clarity.

When your business or brand has a problem, you want to know you have the best people, with live crisis experience and up-to-date contacts working on your behalf, who can help you Prepare, Respond and Recover.

From emerging issues to helping in an emergency, we have a team of experts with decades of experience in reputation management, politics and public policy, journalism, and digital available 24/7, 365 days a year. With the resources and support of one of the world’s largest network of offices, no matter where your problems are, we can quickly access local, on-the-ground, support.

What’s more, our media trainers will make sure your spokespeople are on-message and confident on camera.

We don’t just handle emergency situations; our team also advises organizations when they face significant and complex regulatory, political, or social issues, which could commercially impact their ability to operate. We have also represented high profile individuals and public figures.

HENNES PAYNTER COMMUNICATIONS

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Bruce Hennes, Managing Partner

Barbara Paynter, APR, Partner
Nora Jacobs, APR, Vice President

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JOHNS HOPKINS UNIV.
Continued from page 36

degree program that can be completed online or at our Washington, D.C. Center. The program teaches applied knowledge from the perspective of social scientists who study effective communication and leading practitioners who use it. Students complete 10 classes in the cutting-edge curriculum that integrates digital technology with strategic communication and strong writing skills. Combining the study of best practices with what research shows is effective gives our graduates a competitive advantage in the workplace. The thesis requirement is the pinnacle of our master’s degree programs. Upon completion of this milestone, students in the Communication Program earn a traditional Master of Arts degree, an established and recognized credential that gives them the flexibility to excel in the workplace or further their education at the doctoral level. You can learn more about the program and apply online at communication.jhu.edu.

KAPLOW

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Liz Kaplow, CEO
Evan Jacobs, CFO

Kaplow is an independent, award-winning full service agency dedicated to changing the conversation. For twenty years, Kaplow has helped best-in-class companies tell their stories in the beauty & wellness, fashion, retail, lifestyle, and emerging technologies industries. Kaplow exists for a singular reason: to emotionally connect our clients’ brand stories with consumers who matter. We create programs that integrate a mix of traditional and social media to reach and influence consumers where they live.

Kaplow is creating the communications agency of the future, redefining the PR practice in the changing media landscape. At Kaplow, Kdrive, pushes PR beyond the edges of traditional media to build word of mouth buzz, fueling the conversations where they occur. Kstudio, Kaplow’s content creation and distribution center, uses video development to allow a brand to act as its own storyteller. Kaplow controls the media message and uses our stories to help people fall in love with our clients’ brands.

L.C. WILLIAMS & ASSOCIATES

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Kim Blazek Dahlborn, President
and CEO
Mary Moster, Senior Vice President

Crisis communications requires speed, sensitivity and strategy. L.C. Williams & Associates (LCWA) has successfully guided clients — from Fortune 500 companies to non-profit organizations — through some of their worst-case scenarios, including product recalls, lawsuits, Chapter 11 bankruptcies, government regulations, restructuring and reorganization initiatives, employee and labor relations challenges, workplace accidents, natural disasters, environmental crises and more.

A new area of concern for companies is how and when to respond to extremely negative chatter and vitriol expressed by bloggers and those on social media networks. LCWA counsels clients on how to best minimize the impact of such online criticism.

Our trained crisis communications professionals are available 24/7 to help prepare executives and manage communications to targeted audiences and media. We train appropriate spokespeople to handle a variety of crisis situations. We also work with clients to anticipate potential crises — a practice we call “prefense” planning — and prepare them for media interviews.

LINDEN ALSCHULER & KAPLAN

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Lisa Linden, CEO
Steven Alschuler, President
Lloyd Kaplan, Chairman

When a high profile crisis hits, the future operations of a business, the survival of venerable institutions, and the careers and reputations of leading individuals can all be on the line. Whether sparked by litigation, government investigations, financial issues, scandals involving senior executives, environmental hazards, regulatory or political scrutiny, bankruptcy or a range of other issues, the outcome of the breaking crisis can be influenced significantly by its communications strategy — as it disseminates key messages during the crisis and beyond.

LAK’s approach to each situation melds our experience in legal and business issues, media relations, targeted and internal communications, politics and community relations, and our extensive track record as strategists for companies and organizations in myriad industries. Our clients include public and private companies, national associations, pre-eminent not-for-profit organizations, high-profile individuals, healthcare institutions, law firms and property owners, among many others.

THE MARCUS GROUP, INC.

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www.MarcusGroup.com

Alan Marcus, President & CEO
Denise Gassner Kuhn, Executive Vice President & COO
Tom O’Neil, Executive Vice President

Since its founding more than 40 years ago, The Marcus Group has garnered a reputation as problem solvers. Its skilled crisis managers help clients before, during and after a crisis, including developing communication continuity plans for hospitals, utilities, manufacturing plants and various other companies. The Marcus Group — an award-winning boutique agency specializing in advertising, crisis management and public relations — has solved a host of communication challenges and manages the reputations of some of the most well-respected companies. We help clients with integrated, multimedia plans that leverage key mediums to effectively communicate with their audiences. In a 24/7 news cycle with constant online chatter, The Marcus Group counsels companies on how to utilize digital and social media tools for communication when a crisis strikes.

MARX LAYNE & COMPANY

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Michael Layne, Managing Partner

Marx Layne professionals have years of experience handling crisis communications issues. We are frequently retained by leading national law firms to help them guide their clients through the media frenzy that often erupts during a company’s most trying times.

Critical issues from industrial accidents, death on the premises, food-borne illness and environmental pollution, to boycotts, strikes and corporate fraud have all been expertly handled by our senior executives.

During crisis events, Marx Layne crisis counselors are on-call 24/7/365. Our team members are experienced in working with legal advisors, police departments and municipalities while keeping company executives apprised at all times of the crisis situation as it unfolds.

We also train company spokespersons in the development of key speaking points and delivery of messaging. Using the latest media technology, our

Continued on page 40
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the trust and confidence of regulatory authorities and all other stakeholders who can influence the future of your product and your company.

MCS has developed corporate and product crisis communication plans to support large pharmaceutical companies, biotechs and other healthcare organizations in managing a range of issues, including product recalls, manufacturing and labor issues, lawsuits, trial data controversies, management changes and corporate restructuring.

Our experts can help ensure that your company follows the new 3 Rs of crisis communication: Rapid Response Required.

For more information go to www.mcspr.com

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**MONTIETH & COMPANY**

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Montieth M. Illingworth, President
Arthur P. Garner III, Senior Advisor

Montieth & Company is a special situations communications and management advisory consultancy. The firm’s Issues & Crisis Management and Litigation Communications practices are distinguished in the industry for providing strategic counsel and tactical solutions that help its clients prevail in the face of their most critical challenges.

Montieth & Company has advised on a wide range of matters including the Madoff Fraud, the DOJ’s insider trading investigation, and a diverse variety of legal and regulatory issues and events. The firm has also advised on business disputes, EEOC and product liability cases, class action litigation, and shareholder activism, amongst other types of matters. It works closely with the management and legal teams on integrating communications considerations into the entire course of litigation through to trial and appeal and in engaging with all core constituents.

Montieth & Company maintains relationships with news media, print and electronic, throughout the U.S. and all the world’s major capital markets. The firm is headquartered in New York, NY, and operates globally through affiliates in London, São Paulo, Berlin, Zurich, Hong Kong and Seoul.

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**MSLGROUP**

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David Chamberlin, SVP
Director of Issues & Crisis Management

MSLGROUP Americas, part of MSLGROUP, Publicis Groupe’s strategic communications, public relations and events network, has more than 800 employees in 19 offices spread across the US, Canada and Latin America. MSLGROUP is one of the world’s top PR and events networks. With more than 3,000 people, its offices span 22 countries and cover virtually every discipline required for clients to engage creatively with their audiences. Adding affiliates and partners into the equation, MSLGROUP’s reach increases to 4,000 employees in 83 countries. The group offers clients strategic advice, insight-guided thinking and big, compelling ideas — followed by thorough execution. www.mslgroup.com

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**MM AARRXX LLAAYYNNEE & CCOO..Comms. Strategies, Inc.**

For more than 25 years, MCS has developed corporate and product crisis communication plans that are in place before, during and after a crisis.

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**MARCUS LAYNE & CO.**

Continued from page 38

executives tap into the power of social media to monitor sentiment and provide direction on how to protect and manage the client’s brand. Additionally, we understand how to leverage social media tools as part of an arsenal to respond rapidly, whether the crisis occurs in Detroit or in any other region of the nation.

From privately held entities to Fortune 500 companies, Marx Layne has a twenty-year history of successfully developing proactive, comprehensive crisis communications plans that are in place before, during and after a crisis.

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**MCS HEALTHCARE PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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For more than 25 years, MCS Healthcare Public Relations has prepared our healthcare industry clients to effectively communicate during a crisis. Now with the emergence of social media, events can go global in seconds as amateur reporters begin to shape the story. The timely dissemination of critical information is more vital than ever to securing...
Nicolazzo & Associates is a nationally-known, award-winning strategic communications management firm that provides high-level professional counsel and services to a diverse, national, and international client base. A boutique organization founded more than three decades ago by Richard E. Nicolazzo, the firm practices a proprietary counseling model designed to leverage an organization’s core strengths to enhance brand and enterprise value. Services include crisis communications management, strategic planning and communications, investor relations, media relations and training, management consulting, merger and acquisitions communications, corporate restructurings, issues management, litigation support, labor/employee relations, community relations, market research, executive speechwriting, and branding.

The Company provides crisis and strategic communications counsel to major regional, national, and international organizations, including legal, financial/accounting, healthcare, education, retail, insurance, corporate, and other entities that encompass the professional services marketplace. Representative major clients served include: Amica Insurance, Aviva USA, Babson College, Bain Capital, Caturano and Company (now McGladrey), Children’s Hospital-Boston, Deloitte, Donoghue Barrett & Singal P.C., Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP, Ernst & Young, FleetBoston Financial Group, Foley Hoag LLP, Jackson Lewis LLP, Jordan Hospital, KPMG, Lahey Clinic, LibbyHoopes P.C., MelLife Healthcare, Nortek, Inc., Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Ropes & Gray LLP, Saints Medical Center, Sun Life of Canada, Tufts Medical Center, UCL Unico, UniFirst Corporation, Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP, and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

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Rachael Ufer, Vice President, Business Development & External Relations

Ogilvy Public Relations is an integrated communications leader operating in more than 80 markets around the globe. Over the past 30 years, branding — along with building and protecting reputations and our dedication to client service — has been at the heart of everything we do.

We blend proven PR methodologies with cutting edge digital innovations to craft strategic programs that give clients winning and measurable results whether marketing, public education, issues management or crisis communications.

We provide strategic public relations counsel to a variety of clients across six core practices: social marketing, public affairs, healthcare, consumer marketing, corporate and technology.

Reaching across all practices and regions, Ogilvy PR has been at the forefront of pioneering ways to tap and realize the power of social media and word of mouth marketing. Through our 360° Digital Influence offering, we identify the digital channels that can most effectively reach our audiences — and then provide roadmaps to engage and influence them.

PIERPONT COMMUNICATIONS

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www.piercom.com

Phil Morabito, CEO & President
Susan Gramatges, COO

Pierpont Communications is a nationally-recognized full service communications firm, providing expertise in public relations, investor relations, public affairs and marketing to its diverse client base. Pierpont’s impressive history of success in crisis management spans more than two decades, assisting clients of all sizes in the prevention and management of brand-threatening situations.

Successful crisis management begins with prevention and preparation, not reaction. One way Pierpont ensures its clients are prepared for difficult situations is through proactive planning and expert execution. When a crisis breaks, our team of professionals works quickly to minimize reputation damage and maximize control over the situation. However, our work doesn’t stop when the crisis is resolved; one of the most critical elements of crisis response is working to leave behind a strong, positive brand reputation.

With experience managing crises involving the President, Fortune 500 companies and budding entrepreneurs, Pierpont has the unique skills to navigate any communications need.

REVIVE

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Brandon Edwards, Founder &

When healthcare organizations face a crisis, there’s no time for a learning curve. The complex regulatory and legal environment, combined with a labyrinth of business relationships not found in any other industry, demands deep industry expertise and crisis experience to yield effective strategies. Revive has unparalleled Health Services crisis experience, focused on hospitals, health systems, and provider organizations.

Named “New Agency of the Year” in 2010 by The Holmes Report and “Best Agency to Work For” in 2011, Revive is among the 15 largest health care PR firms in the country. Revive has earned a special expertise in managing “life events” for Health Services contract issues, litigation support, crisis communications, union organizing and strikes, M&A, new service lines, and affiliations. With a specialized focus and expertise, Revive tackles the convergence of healthcare and wellness by working with clients who provide solutions to the issues that face healthcare providers, employers, and consumers alike.

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words, “danger” and “opportu-
nity.”
Our approach takes a differ-
tack. Our thinking on crisis
management draws inspiration
from the Chinese, whose sym-
bol for crisis — wei-ji — is
actually the combination of two
words, “danger” and “opportu-
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We have assisted companies
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recalls, to legal issues. We
understand that speed and clari-
ty of initial communications are
essential to minimizing damage
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- Thomas L. Harris, Author, Choosing and Working with your PR firm

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The crisis communications team at The Vandiver Group, Inc. includes (L to R): Sr. Account Executive, Shelley Lester; Account Executive, Claire Eckelkamp; Director, Andy Likes and President, Donna Vandiver.

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Based in Boston, Solomon McCown & Company provides strategic communications and crisis management services to mission-focused businesses and organizations. We leverage all of our assets — our strategic thinking, considerable experience, successful alliance building and commitment to results — to help clients achieve the recognition, definition and protection they need to meet their goals. We believe that at the core of advancing an organization’s mission is protecting it. Crisis management is a defining strength of our organization. Our nationally-recognized senior team of crisis managers comes from journalism and politics. We have developed crisis plans for corporations, institutions, and mission-focused organizations, and have played a key role in many sensitive and complex issues including those involving public agencies and non-profits, public health issues, labor negotiations and strikes, bankruptcies and business failures, accusations of sexual harassment and abuse, state and federal investigations, and workplace violence. We excel at working with in-house and outside legal counsel and corporate communications teams to devise communications strategies to dovetail with the legal strategy.

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Elliot Sloane, CEO

Sloane & Company is an industry-leading strategic communications firm specializing in corporate and financial public relations, investor relations, transaction support, public affairs, crisis and litigation support. Differentiating us from the crowd, the key to the firm’s success is bringing a fluid and experienced capital markets orientation to all our assignments. Over the past ten years, the firm has earned a reputation for providing strategic counsel to “C” level executives of Fortune 500 public companies, as well as large and mid-sized private businesses and associations. Our clients include leading consumer products, pharmaceutical, technology and financial companies.

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Defining public relations

By Fraser Seitel

At the risk of Jack O’Dwyer firing me, good for the PRSA! The Public Relations Society of America (which really shouldn’t be worried about Jack’s prying eyes) has called for a redefinition of “public relations” in the context of the 21st century.

It’s a timely exercise, particularly in an era when the practice of public relations has become more valuable, more powerful, and more accepted by society. That’s not to say that most people understand what “public relations” is or isn’t. They don’t. Presumably, many still harbor the view that public relations is populated by snake oil salesmen, whose purpose is to “spin” information such that their side is right, regardless of fairness, propriety or truth.

So shining a spotlight on a redefinition of the practice of public relations is a real good idea.

Here’s how I’d suggest the PRSA attack its assignment:

• First, consider the history.

From its modern beginnings, practitioners and scholars have attempted to define public relations.

In 1914, Ivy Lee explained the philosophy of the strange art form he practiced with clients as revolving around “truth”.

“Because sooner or later the public will find it out anyway. And if the public doesn’t like what you are doing, change your policies and bring them into line with what the people want.”

The emphasis on “truth” and “policy” were — and remain — key to the practice of public relations.

In 1923, Edward Bernays defined the function of his fledgling counseling business as providing: “information given to the public, persuasion directed at the public to modify attitudes and actions, and efforts to integrate attitudes and actions of an institution with its publics and of publics with those of that institution.”

Not bad; most important, the emphasis on persuasion to influence attitudes and action.

In 1975, the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education assigned 65 practitioners to study 472 definitions and came up with one unifying description of the function; an 88-word, kitchen sink sentence that, while waaay tooooo long, still contained meritorious elements.

“Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communications, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsive to public opinion; defines and emphasizes the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools.”

In 1988, the PRSA formally adopted the following simple definition:

“Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.”

In considering a new definition, the PRSA should first consider these offerings of the past.

• Second, consider the enduring essentials.

Public relations practiced 100 years ago and public relations practiced today remains a product of common elements that the PRSA must consider in any definition. For example:

The practice of public relations carries out two essential functions: 1) publicity, i.e. marketing and 2) counseling.

The essential “skill” or “knowledge” of public relations professionals is communication; both in delivering messages and listening and acting on feedback.

The most essential principle of public relations practice is always to “tell the truth.”

The essence of public relations counsel is to “do the right thing,” i.e. public relations must be ethical.

Positive public relations begins with sound performance, i.e. without proper action, achieving positive public relations is virtually impossible.

These essentials were the case 100 years ago when Ivy Lee and Eddie Bernays pioneered the field. And they remain key to defining modern practice.

• Third, don’t throw the baby out with the bath water.

PRSA arbiters must be careful in their new definition not to impute undue deference to social media.

Certainly, social media elements — led by Facebook and Twitter — are important new means at the disposal of public relations professionals. But that’s all they are: means to an end, not an “end” in themselves.

For example, while it’s true that social media should be used to “facilitate” the understanding and acceptance of an organization’s message, that message must still be “managed” by the organization.

The role of public relations professionals remains — even in the age of social media — helping manage management’s message so that it is embraced by target publics. That function hasn’t changed.

Similarly, while it’s true that everybody today, thanks to the “Net, is a “publisher,” the role of public relations hasn’t changed in this new environment. Specifically, the practice of public relations remains one of “influencing” the content of others, not necessarily in imposing content on others.

This, after all, is the time-honored practice of media relations — attempting to influence the interpretation by a third-party reporter of the goodness of a client’s product or action. Few “imposed content” news releases get printed verbatim. Whether one uses Facebook or Twitter or a blog or The New York Times to influence someone else’s opinion, the function of the public relations professional remains the same as when Bernays tried to get the newspapers to ratify the acceptance of women smokers, so that his cigarette client could sell more product.

To help jumpstart the PRSA’s effort toward redefining what we do, here is a textbook definition of public relations, submitted by one aging practitioner:

“Public relations is a planned process to influence public opinion, through sound character and proper performance, based on mutually satisfactory two-way communication.” ©
Fueling PR firm growth in ’12

By Richard Goldstein

I remember not too long ago, it seemed the merger market for PR firms was hot and heavy. I thought this area slowed down. During 2011 there was definitely an uptick in the merger market. It does seem there is still tremendous interest in larger agencies acquiring smaller firms. Crossing industry lines for a moment—the acquisition of CPA firms is as lucrative as ever. There are more buyers than sellers. Even more interesting is smaller firms are in great demand. By smaller I mean about $1.5M to $2M in billing. I have even noticed larger firms interested in firms as small as $500,000 in fee billing.

The question is why a merger? For CPA firms I believe it is in part infrastructure, difficulty and cost of attracting new clients.

It is very difficult for a smaller CPA firm to keep up with high rent, especially on the west and east coast, higher malpractice premiums, the competition for talent, both industry and professional regulation, technology changes, and the voluminous changes in the tax laws and accounting pronouncements, especially the potential move to international accounting standards.

As overhead started to rise, it became more and more difficult to raise margins to cover costs.

However, there may be an even more significant reason for merger. CPAs that I speak to are concerned with their second tier management being able to sustain firm growth and fund partner retirement. I trust this can also be an issue in the PR industry.

Thinking about selling, or buying? Here’s what you may need to know.

Scanty preliminary reviews

After the name of the new firm, its mission and titles of all individuals are agreed upon; compare the books for three years, salary and benefits, lawsuits pending, pension and profit sharing plans, billing formulas and client contracts. Decide who will be the managing partner. Be sure there is synergy.

Failure to conduct an acquisition review

Don’t make the mistake of accepting the financial statements of the firm with which you are buying or selling to. Pay for an acquisition review, which will show your company is selling to a credible firm. The worth assigned to firms will determine how much cash you get. You may try and do it yourself, but you just do not have the experience to maximize the price.

Not looking closely at overhead

While the operating expenses of the old firms are not that important, the overhead commitments are. Look at long-term leases, copiers and computers. Also, look closely at fixed debt such as loans and profit-sharing plan commitments. The fixed loan and lease commitments have been known to nix a merger.

Lack of attention to current contracts

Analyze elements of the merging firm, including fee arrangements, longevity, policy on mark-ups of production costs and potential increased fees. Run a Dun & Bradstreet report on selected clients.

Insufficient capitalization

To avoid the danger of cash shortfalls, you must make sure that future billings and collections will be sufficient to meet payroll and overhead. Consider an initial capitalization of at least two months’ billing. This will give some room for slower collections due to a start-up lag.

Termination issues

The shareholders or other agreement should include details that relate to a possible termination form the new firm. Many mergers just do not work out. Avoid confusion and legal complication by providing for this possibility. Provisions should include life insurance and disability buyouts, rights of first refusal on your stock or other equity, a non-competition clause, buyout agreements and a demerger clause. Better make sure you have a good lawyer when it comes to these issues.

Avoid being submerged

Even if you are not the managing partner in an upscale merger, you still want to be a valuable member of the management team. Maintain your high level and don’t get submerged to staff status. This also holds true for the staff you bring to the merger. The merger should give everyone an additional client base. Although most staff gets excited with a merger or acquisition, there is uncertainty that exists and a dynamic within the group that must be achieved.

Owners must work closely with all staff to further the socialization of the new firm. Once the merger or acquisition is done, let the public know about it. You went through months of negotiations, due diligence reviews and high level meetings. Now the public must know about the company and its new capabilities.

Organic growth

Many PR agencies are budgeting for increased growth in 2012, either through merger and acquisition or organic growth. Organic growth is internal growth: new clients or increased work with existing clients, for example. Will there be organic growth in 2012?

According to a survey conducted by Al Croft, publisher of Management Strategies, 68% of respondents expect their 2011 operating profits will be up an average of 29%. 39% expect their operating profits to be in the 15% - 20% range with 28% looking for 11% - 15% profit by the end of the year. Two respondents indicated that “Profits will be so good I’m ashamed to admit it.”

Caution

Increased growth may also require an increase in working capital. Many firms seem to overlook this factor. Your working capital is used to pay short-term obligations such as accounts payable and the current portion of long-term debt. If your working capital dips too low, you may run out of cash. Even a very profitable PR firm can run into trouble and lose ability to meet short-term liabilities.

By way of example, assume a PR firm is planning 15% growth in 2012. Current assets at December 31, 2011 was $200,000 and its current liabilities $150,000; accordingly, working capital is $50,000. Assume further that the firm wants it target working capital ratio to be 2 to 1. (A general rule of thumb is to have a current ratio of 2.0. A current ratio under this may indicate an inability to pay current financial obligations with a measure of safety.)

Based on the above facts, our PR firm will need to increase working capital by $100,000 to fuel a 15% growth rate. If your growth rate is 15% a year, in twelve months our PR firm will need $172,500 of working capital. This will keep the ratio at 2.0.
Sorrell should eye PR’s No.1 detractor, PRSA

By Jack O’Dwyer

Martin Sorrell, CEO of WPP, the biggest ad/PR conglomerate, has emerged as PR’s No. 1 spokesperson, a role that has been abdicat-
ed by leaders and staff of what should be PR’s most visible booster — PR Society of America. The Sorrell style — regularly engaging in free-
wheeling banter with the press — is the opposite of that of PRS elected leaders and president Bill Murray who don’t even present themselves to rank-and-file members for questioning and who are currently enforcing a PR trade press boycott.

PRS’s last press conference was in 1993.

WPP has a special duty to take a close look at PRS because Mickey Nall, the head of its Atlanta office, is 2012 chair-elect and WPP PR units have at least 95 members of PRS including 43 at Hill & Knowlton. This gives WPP “clout” with the Society.

H&K PRS members include executive VPs Claire Koeneman and Hope Boonshaft, executive managing director Harold Costello, and five senior VPs — James Cox, Jennifer Lee Eidson, Heather McNamara, Jennifer Temple and Phyllis Tucker.

Burson-Marsteller has 19 members including chair Harold Burson; U.S. PA practice chair Michael Lake, and directors Michael Bleiber, Jeffrey Krakoff, David Rosen, Suzannah Wesley, Mary Ritti and Jennifer Sarver.

 Ogilvy has 13 PRS members; Cohn & Wolfe, 11, and Public Strategies, 9.

Sorrell: future of PR “bright”

Sorrell, who released a statement Dec. 1 that “The future of PR and PA is bright and different and better than at any time in the past,” in that same statement championed the value of “third party endorsement,” words that almost never appear in U.S. PR literature.

“If we can get someone to write or say something good in editorial content, particularly in a trusted newspaper or magazine or on a respected TV channel, this will be more effective than placing a paid-for ad next to the content,” said the Sorrell statement.

He’s dubious about the value of “social media,” a topic that is the subject of endless webinars/seminars in the U.S. “There are questions,” he wrote, “about whether social networks are effective in delivering commercial messages. Do friends or fans appreciate commercial intrusion when they are effectively writing modern-form letters to their friends or fans?”

Credibility is PR’s problem

Another problem with PR and SM is that PR has virtually no credibility among consumers. That was established by the “Credibility Index” study published in 1999 after three years of planning and two years of fieldwork among 2,500 members of the public. About 5,000 pages of materials were created. Professors from Harvard and Columbia Universities were key players and head of the study was Ronald Hinkle, Ph.D., formerly with the National Security Council. The PRS and Rockefeller Foundations donated $150,000 to fund the study that found “PR specialist” ranked 43rd on a list of 45 believable information sources.

PR pros had long before positioned themselves as “advocates” and anything from an advocate is going to be taken with a grain of salt. Advertising people did not rate at all in the study, as one PR pro pointed out.

PR can bring attention to a subject but today’s consumer will prow the web looking for what all sorts of experts say. Wikipedia and other sources will be explored. Whatever people are saying to each other on social media will be no match for expert opinions found on the web: Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., often serve as tip sheets for knowledgeable articles.

Study devastated PRS; PR staff lacking

Leaders and staff of PRS, instead of mounting a campaign to show that PR can be responsive to the press and public, lapsed into shock.

No Society publication ever printed the table of 45 nor were PR Newswire or Businesswire used to announce the results.

The 1999 board, headed by Sam Waltz, announced a month before the study was released (just before the July 4 break) that O’Dwyer Co. reporters were taking up too much staff time with questions and leaders and staff would no longer answer them.

There was only one PR person on the staff of 40+ PR director Richard George. Patrick Jackson, 1980 president who led the revolt against New York dominance, had decreed that staff should be almost 100% association professionals. His press policy (“duck ‘em and screw ‘em”) also continues to be followed.

Betsy Kovacs, VP from 1980-94, only employed one experienced PR pro during her term, Donna Peltier, who worked from 1984-94. It took Kovacs four years to appoint Peltier. She was not allowed to lunch with reporters without Kovacs present. We had three such lunches in the ten years.

PRS: hospital without doctors

PRS, hung out to dry by its own study, had virtually no one to counteract it. Waltz headed a small PR firm.

In addition to the Credibility study, George was hit with three other major negatives about which he could do little or nothing.

The College of Fellows published in August 1999 a two-year study of 16 PR executive recruiters that found that APR had virtually no impact in the job market and was even “a negative,” had “no relevance,” or was “a sign of naivété.”

The O’Dwyer Co. reported in detail charges of the Exterior Insulation Finishing Systems industry (EIFS) that the firm of PRS treasurer Lee Duffey was engaged in a negative campaign bankrolled by the brick industry that employed a front group called the Stucco Home Owners Coalition.

Such charges had enough documentation that the nominating committee of PRS decided not to nominate Duffey as chair-elect although the six previous treasurers had automatically moved up to that post.

With normal succession thrown into a tizzy, PRS then took the unprecedented step of nominating two members who were not even on the board — Kathy Lewton as chair-elect and Michael McDermott as treasurer. Lewton defeated Duffey who opposed her on the Assembly floor and Joann Killeen defeated McDermott by one vote.

The parliamentarian ruled another vote should be taken since several votes were missing. This was the first year electronic voting devices were used and they may not have been used properly. However, PRS lawyer Arthur Abelman over-ruled the parliamentarian and Killeen was deemed elected.

George, facing four negative issues by Continued on next page
himself and unable to deal with the O’Dwyer Co. which was covering them in detail, quit in October 1999 just before the national conference.

His predecessor, Steve Erickson, had done the same thing in October 1996. He had only joined PRS in June 1995 but became exasperated with the board’s anti-press policies. He left after a shouting match between him and COO Ray Gaulke and 1996 president Louis Morales witnessed by several members.

The best PR director was Libby Roberge (Aug. 2001-June 2003) who not only talked to us but sent 150 member directories to the press and released new and renewal membership stats (5,903 were added in 2002 but 5,769 left, a renewal rate of 70.5%; 5,324 joined in 2001 while 5,273 left).

Two other PR hires, Janet Troy (2004-2008), and Joseph DeRupo (2007-09), were not even members of the Society. Troy told the Bergen Record in 2004 that she was “flabbergasted that this organization with all these offerings existed and I was clueless to it.”

Cedric Bess, a 2000 graduate of Florida International University and president of the PRS Student Society, served from 2002 to March 9, 2007 when he quit suddenly without waiting for a replacement. He captured the attitude of the PR dept. of PRS when he mistakenly e-mailed this reporter the following in response to a question: “Can’t I just e-mail (O’Dwyer) a smart remark to piss him off?”

**WPP should investigate**

Sorrell’s Dec. 1 statement says that “what we call PR and public affairs” totals $1.3 billion or almost 10% of WPP’s $16 billion in revenues.

WPP has a lot of ponies in this horse race and should not stand idle while certain slow horses block the track.

The firm should assign one of its 153,000 employees to visit our offices and explore the history of PRS and its current impact on the field.

At a minimum, PRS should be forced to start employing a large group of PR professionals at h.q. who will have the time to mount a PR for PR campaign.

PRS could have done a lot in 1999 to offset the results of the survey. It could have confessed that the industry had veered too close to being just advertising and other one-way messaging.

It could have opened a midtown New York “PR Information Center” that took questions from the press and public. The Center could serve as a library for use by the public and business people, helping needy businesses to find the right PR firm.

Instead, the Society collapsed into itself, wiping out its Ethics Code in 1999 and creating a new Code with no enforcement capability. The cost was $93,229 in 1999 and $104,018 in 2000, or a total of $197,247. That sum should have gone towards a PR for PR program.

Rosanna Fiske, 2011 chair, has made talking about ethics and diversity the cornerstones of her administration. But these are two of the weakest links in the PRS chain since the Society (90 FTC 324; 1977 FTC LEXIS 49) from its earliest years acted as a “conspiracy” to deprive clients of “free and open competition” in the sale of PR services (barring members from pitching each other’s accounts and forbidding contingency fees) and only two African-Americans have served on its board in 65 years.

Better would be promoting the marketing know-how PR firms have developed in a dozen major specialties (healthcare, tech, etc.) as documented by the O’Dwyer Co.

**Reporters get “duffed” by Sorrell**

The WPP CEO is referred to in the U.K. press as a “straight talker” who does not hesitate to “duff” (rough-up, beat up) any reporter who gets too aggressive.

For instance, mediamonkeyblog reported Oct. 28 that Sorrell, “known for his unique style of hijacking interviews by duffing up hacks who may or may not have a valid question,” told a BBC News reporter, “With all due respect, you are talking to your navel” (after the reporters asked whether a recession was imminent).

Reporters have thick skins and can take it. They much prefer being “duffed” to being snubbed.

If Sorrell can engage in repartee with reporters, than so should U.S. PR pros and executives.

Sorrell himself well understands how politics can undermine PR. He spoke eloquently to the Institute of PR in 2008 about the “turf wars” that occur in client companies, saying “You could argue that most of the communication we coordinate for our clients is aimed at internal audiences rather than external ones. To express it a little more brutally, probably the biggest block to progress for our clients is internal politics.”

A glance at PRS reveals that accredited members, many from the South, seized control in the mid-1970s and won’t let anyone else serve on the board or hold office.

Their policies are blatantly anti-press (current boycott), anti-New York (New York chapter ousted from headquarters in 1992 and only one New York annual conference in 23 years), and anti-communications.

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WPP has acquired Glover Park Group, the Washington-based Democratic public affairs operation with more than 140 people. GPG, which has revenue in the $60 million range, is to operate as a standalone operation.

Founding partners and former advisors to Vice President Al Gore Carter Eskew, Chip Smith and Mike Feldman are to remain in charge for the “foreseeable future.”

Joe Lockhart, the other founding partner and Clinton White House spokesperson, exited for Facebook during the summer.

GPG works for clients such as Verizon Wireless, Visa, Korea, Toyota, Churchill Downs, Pfizer, News Corp., BNSF, American Postal Workers Union, United Federation of Teachers and ADP.

It also counseled solar power company, Solyndra, the bankrupt solar power company that has been in the news due to its $540M federal loan guarantee.

GPG has offices in New York, Los Angeles and Boulder.

PR pioneer Dukes dies at 79

Ofield Dukes, a respected Washington, D.C., PR counselor and pioneering African-American practitioner in the industry, died Dec. 7 at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, where he started his career in journalism and returned earlier this year. He was 79 and suffered from a prolonged illness.

“Ofield was the best communications strategist in Washington,” said Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) in a lengthy statement. “His legacy will last throughout Washington and our country.”

Dukes was on the staff of Vice President Hubert Humphrey during the Johnson administration and set up his long-running PR firm, Ofield Dukes & Associates, in 1969 with Motown Records as his first client in the capital.

Soap manufacturer Lever Brothers, the predecessor to Unilever, was client No. 2.

“I had a love affair with my work,” he told the Black PR Society in New York in 2002, crediting his success to his mother, “the epitome of Christianity” who was “bursting with enthusiasm.”

Dukes’ agency ran continuously for 42 years as he made a mark in D.C. in and out of PR by endeavors like organizing the first Congressional Black Caucus dinner and founding the Black PR Society of Washington. He claimed to have advised every Democratic presidential campaign since 1972 and often ran professional development seminars for PR pros on multicultural PR and marketing.

His federal government PR work included campaigns for the U.S. Census Bureau, Dept. of Defense and U.S. Treasury, while private sector clients were CBS Records, AT&T, Anheuser-Busch and Don King Productions.

Later in his career he helped Howard University produce a PR curriculum and he taught the practice at American University.
Nat Strategies says Pakistan pact is dead

National Strategies has declared null and void a $35,000 a month contract inked that was supposed to go into effect Oct. 1, 2010 with the Committee Supporting Democracy and Justice in Pakistan.

The 15-month pact was to “foster fact-based, accurate discussion of U.S./Pakistan relations among American opinion leaders.” Nat Strategies’ k-global unit was to lead the effort.

The Washington-based firm had envisioned travels to Islamabad to better familiarize itself about issues facing Pakistan and to build relationships with movers & shakers. It also planned to support a U.S. visit by President Zardari to the U.S.

Nat Strategies, on Nov. 30, informed the Justice Dept. that it “never performed any services nor received any payments” from the Committee. It deemed the agreement null and void.

The original Justice Dept. documentation, it explained, was made “in anticipation of memorializing” the agreement.

Paul Johnson, k-global chief and former Fleishman-Hillard regional president, told O’Dwyer’s: “We stopped work in March. We were never paid.”

Zardari currently is in Dubai for medical treatment but rumors swirl that the military is poised to move against him.

He is slated to appear Dec. 19 before the country’s Supreme Court to explain why Pakistan’s now former U.S. ambassador, Husain Haqqani, a key Zardari ally, penned a memo in the aftermath of the American raid that killed Osama bin Laden looking for U.S. support to prevent a military coup.

Fiji signs up with Qorvis

Qorvis Communications has scooped up a $40,000 a month pact from Fiji to promote business and investment in that Pacific state. The contract is for a year.

Fiji’s government, which was installed following a military coup in 2006, has just announced an economic plan that reduces/drops taxes for 99% of taxpayers and eases rules for foreign investors. It promises elections in 2014 in a move back to parliamentary democracy.

The government, which is not recognized by the U.S., has been criticized by its neighbors for cracking down on human and labor rights.

Fiji, on Dec. 6, distributed — via PR Newswire — news of a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute that criticized Australia’s effort to isolate Fiji, both politically and economically. The report found that Fiji is advancing by forging fresh partnerships with China and other Asian nations.

The Australian government funded that think tank report. The Qorvis contract gives the firm the right to use Fiji’s name in marketing materials, press releases and on its website.

NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT FILINGS

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

The Franklin Partnership, Washington, D.C., registered November 4, 2011 for Libya Al Hurra Foundation, regarding informing policymakers in Washington, D.C. including members of Congress, Congressional Committee staff, Administration officials, the Departments of Defense and State, White House, and related agencies, and non-governmental organizations and other interested groups about the Foundation’s work in Libya on humanitarian support, civil works projects, and infrastructure development.


Law Office of Bart S. Fisher, Washington, D.C., registered November 10, 2011 for Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan, regarding representations (including petitions) which will be made to U.S. government agencies regarding sanctions against the Republic of the Sudan.

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.


Altrius Group, LLC., Washington, D.C., registered December 5, 2011 for National Confectioner’s Association, Washington, D.C., regarding US sugar policy and the 2012 Farm bill; sugar reform efforts, including the SUGAR Act (S.25); the Free Sugar Act (S.685/H.R.1739); and the Free Market Sugar Act (H.R.1385).

Alcalde & Fay, Washington, D.C., registered December 6, 2011 for ATF Group, Miami, FL, regarding the Farm Bill and Sugar Act.


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Plus, you’ll have access to all the news and commentary posted daily on PR’s #1 website, odwyerpr.com, which has over 10 years of searchable content and O’Dwyer’s exclusive database of RFPs for PR services.

O’Dwyer’s magazine, now in its 25th year, examines a different area of PR each month. Issues include practice-area specific feature stories as well as profiles of PR firms with strengths in the focus area. The agency profiles constitute the ideal starting point for companies beginning their search for PR counsel.

2011 Editorial Calendar:
January, PR Buyer’s Guide/Crisis Comms.
February, Environmental PR & Public Affairs
March, Food & Beverage
April, Broadcast Media Services
May, PR Firm Rankings
June, Multicultural/Diversity
July, Travel & Tourism
August, Prof. Svcs. & Financial/Investor Rels.
September, Beauty & Fashion
October, Healthcare & Medical
November, Technology
December, Sports & Entertainment

O’Dwyer’s 2011 Directory of PR Firms gives you quick access to large, medium-sized, and small PR firms and even experienced freelancers who work out of their homes.

1,600 firms are listed, including 300 in 42 countries. 7,000 clients are cross-indexed.

O’Dwyer’s directory is the only place you can look up a company and determine its outside counsel.

Listed firms have expertise in:
- Public Relations
- Social Media
- Branding
- Investor Relations
- Employee Communications
- Internet PR
- Product Publicity
- Crisis Communications
- Integrated Marketing
- Corporate Advertising
- Lobbying
- Proxy Solicitation
- International PR

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ASSOCIATIONS/CLUBS/SOCIETIES


American League of Lobbyists, 311 South Wacker Dr., #5800, Chicago, IL 60606. 312/542-9000. www.marketingpower.com. Dennis Dunlap, CEO.


Assn. of Strategic Alliance Professionals, 960 Tumpike St., #3A, Canton, MA 02021. 781/562-1630 (membership svcs.) info@strategic-alliances.org; www.strategic-alliances.org. Art Canter, Pres. & CEO.

Entertainment Publicists Professional Society, P.O. Box 5841, Beverly Hills, CA 90209. 888/399-EPPS (3777); fax: 310/452-9005. www.eppsonline.org. Marilyn Finegold, Admin. Dir.


Institute for PR, P.O. Box 118400, 2096 Weimer Hall, Gainesville, GA 32611-8400. 352/392-0280. www.instituteforpr.org. Frank Ovaitt, Pres. & CEO.


International Assn. of Online Communicators, Rowan University, 37 Bozorth Hall, 201 Mullica Hill Rd., Glassboro, NJ 08028. iaoc.news@gmail.com; www.onlinecommunicators.org.


National Hispanic Media Coalition, 55 S. Grand Ave., Pasadena, CA 91105. 626/792-6462. info@nhmc.org. Alex Nogales, Pres. & CEO.


### ASSOCIATIONS

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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)</td>
<td>33 Maiden Lane, 11th flr., New York, NY 10038. 212/460-1400.</td>
<td>Arthur Yann, VP, PR.</td>
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<td>Washington Women in PR</td>
<td>Washington Square, P.O. Box 65297, Washington, DC 20035. <a href="mailto:info@wwpr.org">info@wwpr.org</a>; <a href="http://www.wwpr.org">www.wwpr.org</a>.</td>
<td>Kimberly Korb, Exec. Dir.</td>
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<td>Communications Concepts Inc., #720, Springfield, VA 22153-1648; 703/643-2200. info@ApexAwards; <a href="http://www.ApexAwards.com">www.ApexAwards.com</a>.</td>
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<td>Jack Felton Golden Ruler Award</td>
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<td>PRWeek Awards</td>
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<td>Public Relations Professional of the Year Award of PR Society of America</td>
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<td>ReBrand 100 Global Awards</td>
<td>P.O. Box 6791, Providence, RI 02940. 401/277-4877. <a href="http://www.rebrand.com">www.rebrand.com</a>.</td>
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**W. Howard Chase Award, Issue Management Council, 207 Loudoun St. S.E., Leesburg, VA 20175. 703/777-8450. www.issuemanagement.org. Teresa Yancey Crane.**

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Beauty Bias, by Deborah Rhode, Oxford University Press, May 2010, 238 pages.


Best Practice Measurement Strategies, Melcrum Publishing Ltd., 70 W. Hubbard, #403, Chicago, IL 60610. 1-866/Melcrum. info@melcrum.com.


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Capturing Consumers, by Peter Francese, American Demographics, P.O. Box 68, Ithaca, NY 14851. 607/273-6343. 192 pages.

CEO Capital, by Leslie Gaines-Ross, John Willey & Sons, 288 pages.


Corporate Greening 2.0: Create and Communicate Your Company’s Climate Change & Sustainability Strategies, by E. Bruce Harrison, PublishingWorks, 2008, 256 pages.


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For Immediate Release: Shape Minds, Build Brands, and Deliver Results with Game-Changing Public Relations, by Ronn Torossian, BenBella Books, 2011, 296 pages.


Getting Your 15 Minutes of Fame and More!, by Edward Segal, John Wiley & Sons.


How to Create Winning Employee Publications, by Patrick Williams, Joe Williams Comms.


How to Win in Washington, Blackwell Publishers, c/o AIDC, P.O. Box 20, Williston, VT 05495, 800/488-2665, #27, 161 pages.


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<td>A Journalistic Approach to Good Writing: The Craft of Clarity</td>
<td>by Robert M. Knight, Iowa State Univ. Press</td>
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<td>The Lost Art of the Great Speech: How to Write One—How to Deliver it</td>
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<td>Managing a PR Firm for Growth and Profit, Second Edition</td>
<td>by A.C. Croft, Amazon.com or from the author, 140 Cathedral Rock Drive, Sedona, AZ 86351. (928/284-9054) <a href="mailto:alcroft@npgcable.com">alcroft@npgcable.com</a></td>
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<td>by Peter Drucker, Peter, Harper Business, 256 pages.</td>
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<td>by Austin G. Anderson, 1986, American Bar Assn., 750 N. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60611, 312/988-5555, 204 pages.</td>
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<td>by Bruce Marcus and Sherwood Wallace, 1700 2nd St., #202, Highland Park, IL 60035, 847/296-4200.</td>
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<td>by Maureen Chase and Sandy Trupp, Aegis Publishing Group, 796 Aquidneck Ave., Newport RI, 02842, 800/828-6961, 150 pages.</td>
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<td>Harris, Thomas, McGraw-Hill Trade, 336 pages</td>
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<td>Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, 2003, 176 pages</td>
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**Write Right: 26 Tips To Improve Your Writing Dramatically**, by Roger A. Shapiro, AuthorHouse, Bloomington, Ind., July 2005, 86 pages.


**Your Attention, Please: How to Appeal to Today’s Distracted, Disinterested, Disengaged, Disenchanted, and Busy Audiences**, by Paul B. Brown and Alison Davis, Adams Media, 224 pages.


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Video Redefined. D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, our headquarters and HD studio are in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC.


Marsha Friedman, CEO.

Hedquist Productions, P.O. Box 1475, Fairfield, IA 52556. Jeffrey Hedquist, Pres. 641/472-6708. jeffrey@hedquist.com; www.hedquist.com.


Yvonne Goforth-Hanak.

With a radio media tour (RMT), your spokesperson conducts interviews with stations from the convenience of... wherever! As long as there’s a landline phone, the location works. When you need to deliver an exact message, we can produce an Audio News Release (ANR) that typically runs from 30 to 60 seconds. We then place it to air on targeted networks.

Liv Davick

Liv Davick, a Publicity and Production Boutique, Inc. specializes in all of your broadcast public relations and social media needs. Our expertise includes satellite media tours, radio media tours, audio news releases, public service announcements (PSAs), Internet media tours (IMTs), Spanish smts/rmts/anrs, integrated marketing, ground tours, aircheck and airings’ monitoring services, and video production and distribution.

All pitching, booking, and follow-up is done in-house, and we handle all of your production needs for your satellite and radio media tours. We offer the highest-quality, most personalized servicing with unparalleled organization and a strict attention to every detail. We provide superior results in everything we do, are available to our clients at all times, and work within every budget.

KEF Media

La Red Conectado

Liv Davick, a Publicity and Production Boutique, Inc. 88 South Broadway, Suite #1206, Millbrae, CA 94030. 650/689-5479 and 661/600-2254. Liv Davick, President, liv@livdavick.com and Shana Davick, Vice President, shana@livdavick.com; www.livdavick.com.

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Your Message-On-Air and Online
• Guaranteed Placement ANRs on-air and online through Radio Health Journal and Viewpoints. Reach over 850 stations in major markets. Streaming and iTunes placement included.
• Radio Media Tours – Benefit from our contacts at major stations and networks.
• La Red Conectado – Guaranteed placement Spanish language ANRs.
• Custom Feed Radio News

Continued at top of next page
RADIO

Media Tracks Communications continued


 • Podcasts – Customized production: writing, hosting, voiceover, music, RSS, and directory placement.

 • PSAs – Distribute your public service message to thousands of U.S. stations.


 Robb Wexler, Pres.

 Strauss Radio


 New York, NY 10018. 212/302-1234; newyork@straussradio.com.


 Richard Strauss, Pres.

 Celebrating our seventeenth year, Strauss Radio Strategies, Inc. (SRS) is the nation’s premier public relations, communications, and media relations firm specializing in radio and television. Not just another “crank it out booking service,” SRS works closely with its clients to develop campaign-specific strategies and tactics that get results. Collectively, our staff brings more than 137 years of broadcast experience and judgment to our clients.

 We specialize in booking radio tours with national news networks, nationally syndicated shows, statewide, regional, and local radio outlets in each of the nation’s nearly 300 radio markets. SRS can also target your television SMT to local stations, national broadcast and cable networks, and syndicated programs. We can manage your SMT and provide a complete solution including the booking of all of the interviews, studio rental and equipment, satellite uplink, make-up and catering services, and all of the technical and production needs to make your SMT the most successful it can be.

 Moreover, we script, produce, and distribute targeted audio news releases to the nation’s largest radio networks with the best “guaranteed-placement” in the industry. In addition, SRS provides audio actuality pitching and placement systems, radio promotions, public service announcements, podcasts, video podcasts, radio advertising production and placement, live remote broadcasts and customized broadcast e-mailing to our customized database of 12,000+ radio outlets, stations and show contacts.

 Among the hundreds of clients we have worked with, we routinely work with political groups such as the DNC and the DCL; advocacy groups like the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and ACLU; award-winning PR firms like Burson-Marsteller, Edelman, Hill & Knowlton, and Ketchum; non-profit clients like the International Diabetes Foundation (IDF), the American Jewish Committee (AJC) and the Pew Trusts; government agencies like the Dept. of Energy and Dept. of Labor; associations such as the US Conference of Mayors, National Urban League, and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF); large-scale events such as the Clinton Global Initiative and the major auto shows; fortune-500 companies like Google, Capital One, Nike and General Motors; and we have worked on dozens of local, state and federal political campaigns. SRS is also a GSA Schedule contractor.

 When your campaign calls for radio or television, SRS delivers the best results in the industry. You’ll enjoy working with our friendly staff of experienced public relations professionals.

 Contact us today to discuss a customized solution for your next broadcast outreach campaign!


 See full listing under Video.

 Tobin Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 1268, White Plains, MD 20695-1268. 301/392-9173. mt@tobincommunications.com; www.tobincommunications.com.

 Maury Tobin, Pres.


 Ed Lamoureux, Sr. VP

 zcomm, 7830 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814. 240/395-0225. rise@zpr.com; www.zpr.com.

 Risë Birnbaum, CEO.

 RESEARCH

 (MKTG. RESEARCH)


 Cogent Research, 125 Cambridge Park Dr., Cambridge, MA 02140. 617/441-9944; fax: 617/441-9966. info@ cogentresearch.com; www.cogentresearch.com. Christy White, Principal & Co-Founder.


**SATELLITE MEDIA TOURS**


**AKA Media Inc.,** 142 East Ontario, 16th fl., Chicago, IL 60611. 800/996-9432. www.akamediainc.com; info@akamediainc.com. Andrew Krause, Executive Producer, CEO.

Why do the world’s most amazing brands trust us to tell their stories? It’s simple. Your audience wants to be inspired. Good storytelling is how you get there. Our producers, editors and web designers develop and execute video, radio, web, TV and social media campaigns – that’s what we do. Follow us on Twitter @AKAMEDIAINC or Facebook/AKAMEDIAINC.

- Video, Radio, Web, TV and Social Media Campaigns
- Satellite Media Tours (SMTs)
- Social Media News Releases (SMNRs)
- Web Video Production and Distribution (Viral Videos)
- Internet Media Tours (IMTs)
- Expert Celebrity Treatment
- Digital Video Distribution (Video Sharing)

Continued at top of next page
### SATELLITE MEDIA TOURS

**AKA Media Inc. continued**
- Broadcast B-Roll Packages (B-Roll)
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- Internet Press Kits (IPKs)
- Corporate Storytelling (Image, Sales, Marketing, Web Videos)
- Video Editing, Graphics and Effects (Highlights Reels)
- Webcasting (Live Video Streaming to Facebook)

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media News Releases help you share your story with influential bloggers and websites. Our clients use SMNRs to launch web campaigns, promote live webcasts and share viral video. We use a traditional media relations approach to personally research and engage each and every blogger or website on a one-to-one basis.

### SATELLITE MEDIA TOURS

With celebrity Satellite Media Tours, behind-the-scenes adventures, premier events and locations, our latest demo reel speaks for itself.

### 2012 PR BUYER’S GUIDE

Connect and Twitter Parties
- Web Videos, Webcasts and Event Coverage
- Video, Audio and Multimedia New Releases
- B-roll Packages
- PSAs
- Corporate Videos (sales, product launches, branding, training and highlight reels)

AGC offers creative solutions for all business categories from healthcare and food to hi-tech and entertainment.

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**AKA Media Inc. continued**

**Broadcast Direct Communications, Inc.**, 130 Shore Road, Suite 185, Port Washington, NY 11050. 516/570-2369. info@broadcastdirectmpr.com.

Irene Minett, Patricia Ruth Kresner.

Broadcast Direct Communications, Inc. specializes in media relations for:
- Satellite Media Tours
- Radio Media Tours
- In-Market Tours
- The Web

As television, radio and web professionals, we offer media strategy, creative writing and pitching, strong media relationships and over 30 years of experience in broadcast public relations.

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**Caplan Communications LLC, 1700 Rockville Pike, Suite 400, Rockville, MD 20852. 301/998-6592. Aric Caplan, Pres. ccinfo@caplancommunications.com; www.caplancommunications.com.**

Via satellite from anywhere in the USA, our SMTs reach your targeted audiences.

**Specialties:**
- Canvasses key states. Reaches target audiences.
- Champions issues in the public interest using advocacy PR campaigns.
- Represents nonprofit advocacy groups, NGOs and authors.

In 2006, *O’Dwyer’s* magazine honored Caplan Communications with “O’Dwyer’s Award for Public Communications Excellence.”

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**DNA**

**Dietrich Nelson & Associates**

**Electronic Public Relations**


If budgets and deadlines are tight you need experienced pros, call DNA. With 20 years experience we offer expert advice, strategic planning, quality production and distribution for all your broadcast and Internet PR needs. Our services include satellite media tours, Internet and viral video production and distribution, Internet media tours, webcasts, radio tours, corporate videos and many other services. Call or email for ideas, quotes and testimonials from our satisfied clients.

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**Caplan Communications LLC**

**FULL-SERVICE BROADCAST PR**
- SMTs
- RMTs
- IMTs
- VNRs/B-roll packages
- ANRs
- Corporate, Network and Broadcast TV Productions
- Satellite Events

**Clients:** PR Agencies, TV Networks, Consumer Brands, Non-profits and Celebrities.

From concept to final report, individualized strategic thinking to achieve maximum exposure for your story.

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From concept to final report, individualized strategic thinking to achieve maximum exposure for your story.
D S Simon Productions continued

E-mail: news@dssimon.com

Satellite Media Tours are among the most effective ways to deliver a specific, controlled message to viewers through spokesperson interviews on local newscasts. We help you craft a segment that will appeal to television producers while allowing you to communicate your key messages.

Video Redefined. D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, our headquarters and HD studio are in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC.


Once again Gourvitz Communications is providing its public relations clients with a new, cost effective and unique way of getting media coverage. It’s called an Interactive Media Tour. And what makes it different from what is currently being called an Internet or blogger tour is that it actually includes video and is a digital delivery to only major Internet sites. In just two years, GSH, a division of GCI, has not only set the standard for this service, it is the standard. And the co-op SMT business, created and invented by GCI, is now doing more business than ever before.

The key is using only major talent, booking mainly big markets, and having every co-op available to view live on Ustream.TV. GCI’s core business is still SMTs/RMTs. Now more than ever before TV stations, want, need and will do satellite interviews if you give them a good spokesperson, a compelling story, sprinkle in some b-roll, use two cameras and create a set. B-rolls are now being done again with a unique angle to TV station websites, newspaper chains and blogs. There is very little actual TV placement for a b-roll. GCI shoots and edits everything in HD and now has added a fourth edit bay to accommodate its clients’ needs for comp sizzle and in-house video reels. And when GCI says it’s 24/7, it means 24/7.


Satellite Media Tours, or SMTs, as we affectionately call ‘em. Efficient, cost-effective and a great place to start your TV coverage.

Once you sign up for an SMT, we cover every detail from the strategy behind the news angle to the reporting. During a typical morning tour, we can usually accommodate between 18 and 35 live or live-to-tape interviews.

We also have a full calendar of Co-op SMTs!

Liv Davick, a Publicity and Production Boutique, Inc.

Liv Davick, a Publicity and Production Boutique, Inc., 88 South Broadway, Suite #1206, Millbrae, CA 94030. 650/689-5479 and 661/600-2254. Liv Davick, President, liv@livdavick.com and Shana Davick, Vice President, shana@livdavick.com; www.livdavick.com.

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All pitching, booking, and follow-up is done in-house, and we handle all of your production needs for your satellite and radio media tours. We offer the highest-quality, most personalized servicing with unparalleled organization and a strict attention to every detail. We provide superior results in everything we do, are available to our clients at all times, and work within every budget.
Planned Television Arts (PTA) continued...ago! We’re proficient at promoting experts, authors, CEOs, non-profits, and topics focused on books, entertainment, health, business, consumer and advocacy.

RM Broadcast Communications Inc., 20 West 22nd St., #1510, New York, NY 10010; 212/924-1006. russell@rcmbroadcast.com; www.rcmbroadcast.com. Russell Check, Pres.


See full listing under Video.

VideoLink, Inc., 1230 Washington St., Newton, MA 02465; 800/452-5565; fax: 617/340-4201. kendra.dennis@videolink.tv; www.videolink.tv. Kendra Dennis.

VideoLink, Inc (videolink.tv) offers High Definition live and on-demand video production services and transmission services, studios, post-production, web-casting and a fleet of satellite trucks. VideoLink also offers ReadyCam, a custom, remotely operated studio that can be installed in your office. Located in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Manchester NH and Irvine CA.

zcomm, 7830 Old Georgetown Rd., Bethesda, MD 20814. 240/395-0225. rise@zpr.com; www.zpr.com. Risë Birnbaum, CEO.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)


Monument Optimization helps organizations achieve their goals online through an analytics-based approach to search engine marketing and online reputation management.

SOCIAL MEDIA

AKA Media Inc., 142 East Ontario, 16th fl., Chicago, IL 60611. 800/996-9432. www.akamediainc.com; info@akamediainc.com. Andrew Krause, Executive Producer, CEO.

Why do the world’s most amazing brands trust us to tell their stories? It’s simple. Your audience wants to be inspired. Good storytelling is how you get there. Our producers, editors and web designers develop and execute video, radio, web, TV and social media campaigns – that’s what we do.

Follow us on Twitter @AKAMEDIANC or Facebook/AKAMEDIANC.

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SATellite MEDIA TOURS

With celebrity Satellite Media Tours, behind-the-scenes adventures, premier events and locations, our latest demo reel speaks for itself.


What came first, the TV news story or the tweet? In a crisis, your ability to listen and respond effectively can be hampered without the proper tools. Critical Mention provides real-time searching, viewing, alerting and reporting on global broadcast coverage. Our comprehensive and industry leading CriticalTV platform lets you monitor your organization, client, competitors, industry news and more. Edit and download broadcast quality files minutes after your segments air. Social media coverage is not complete without Critical Mention.

D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, our headquarters and HD studio are in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC.

Consumers are increasingly getting their information through online video and social media. An Internet Media Tour (IMT) is a comprehensive, targeted approach to promoting a campaign or initiative to the online world. IMTs are growing in popularity as a communications tool among both marketers and the media web sites and bloggers.

D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, our headquarters and HD studio are in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC.

Digital Park is the new media division of rbb Public Relations, three-time "PR Agency of the Year". Employing best practices, Digital Park delivers measurable business results for strategic social and interactive programs to consumer, corporate and B2B clients. Services include:

- Online Reputation Management
- Web Site Assessment & Development
- Search Engine Optimization with iPR, a proprietary SEO Syndication Tool
- Social Media Marketing and Monitoring
- Blogger Relations & Blog Creation
- Podcasts & Vodcast

Check out Digital Park’s blog at www.rbبدdigitalpark.com.

rbb Public Relations is an award-winning marketing public relations firm with a national reputation for delivering results on par with the largest national firms, but with the individual attention of a boutique agency. The firm’s capabilities encompass a variety of practice areas, including B2B, consumer products, financial and professional services, travel & leisure, health and fitness, and food and beverage.


Social media has become an increasingly important part of the media landscape. Now, b-to-b companies are looking for ways to incorporate social media into their marketing arsenal. Feintuch Communications offers b-to-b companies a comprehensive methodology and hands-on implementation for strategically moving into social media. Programs include content creation, publishing a calendar for tweets and Facebook updates, uploading attention getting videos to YouTube and researching and following key players in target markets to build an audience. We create and place online profiles in relevant online communities, engage bloggers and target the latest social networks—all tying back to your PR/marketing objectives.


JSH&A Ltd., 2 TransAm Plaza Drive, #450, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181. 630/932-4242; fax: 630/932-1418. jonnii@jsha.com; www.jsha.com.

Known for its innovative, cross-media PR strategies, JSH&A’s Social LIF™ approach drives fully integrated campaigns that launch brands and support marketing promotions both online and offline.

While the social media landscape rapidly evolves, the digital team at JSH&A is leading the way with breakthrough programming. The Hershey’s S’Mores Snacktivity Suite at BlogHer drew crowds and chatter. Celebrity Twitter Parties, such as Alexia’s tweet fest with chef Tyler Florence, created conversation with consumers. A Master Lock video series for teens on Facebook and YouTube successfully launched an innovative lock targeting the school locker set. Facebook contests for recipes, tool tips, and shared experiences generated fans for JSH&A clients such as Hershey’s, Jim Beam Global Brands, Dremel Rotary Tools, Master Lock, ConAgra, Life Fitness and Purina.

At JSH&A, our digital team works with clients to customize social and new media marketing initiatives to ensure programs are strategic and align with business objectives. JSH&A Social LIF™ services include: social media monitoring, digital business intelligence research, content marketing, establishing a digital presence on key social networks, integrating location-based services such as foursquare, influencer and ambassador programs, local-market

Continued at top of next page
## SOCIAL MEDIA

JSH&A, Ltd. continued

events and home parties, and more. The results can be seen in the customized JSH&A measurement models and the growth of a brand’s loyal customer base.

As a member of the IPREX network, JSH&A offers best-in-class PR & New Media capabilities for clients around the globe.

**Quinn & Co.**

**Quinn & Co. Public Relations, 520 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018. 212/868-1900; fax 212/465-0849. www.quinnandco.com; @Quinnandco; fquinn@quinnandco.com. Florence Quinn.**

Quinn & Co. was the PR firm for Queensland’s groundbreaking **THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD** campaign, a viral marketing phenomenon that generated blockbuster worldwide attention. In addition to conceiving and running campaigns that include large digital-media components, we handle the daily social-media needs of many of our clients in our core areas of Food, Wine & Spirits, Real Estate and Travel. We bring our signature creative to every thing we do to develop dynamic and highly effective integrated PR programs that help clients achieve goals, reach target audiences and ultimately drive business. Our in-house digital media team keeps us operating in the forefront; we attend conferences and have been written up in books on social-media best practices.

**JSH&A, Ltd.**

**SHneider ASSOCIATES, Member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, 2 Oliver St., Suite 901, Boston, MA 02109. 617/536-3300; fax: 617/536-3180. launch@schneiderpr.com www.schneiderpr.com. Joan Schneider, Pres. & Creative Dir.; Phil Pennellaure, COO/Partner; Julie Hall, Exec. VP/Partner.**

The intersection of earned, owned and paid media is where consumers are making important decisions about your brand, service, program or project. At SA, we integrated social marketing and digital influence into our traditional public relations efforts in 2004.

As Social Businesses continue to rethink and refine the way they listen to and collaborate with their customers, incorporating social marketing is an integral component of every campaign we develop for clients in consumer food and retail, consumer technology, home products, professional services and public affairs.

We apply core components of listening, engagement, measurement and evaluation, while constantly scanning the horizon for new ways to influence consumer behavior—whether it’s crowd-sourcing, social loyalty benchmarking, mommy blogger engagement, professional community cultivation, location based social programs, digital couponing or augmented reality.

At SA, we help clients navigate the ever-changing social landscape, coupling social efforts with important legacy marketing tactics to strengthen campaigns. Schneider Associates is a full-service public relations and integrated marketing firm specializing in Launch Public Relations®, a proprietary method of launching products, services, companies, organizations and communities. Learn more at www.schneiderpr.com.

**Stephanie Schwab Consulting,** 29 Highland Ave., #202, Yonkers, NY 10705. 646/543-5511. stephanie@stephanieschwab.com; www.stephanieschwab.com. Stephanie Schwab.

**SOFTWARE PRODUCTS**


**Vocus, Inc.,** 12051 Indian Creek Court, Beltsville, MD 20705. 301/459-2590; 800/345-5572. www.vocus.com.


## SPEAKERS SERVICE (TALENT)

**All American Speakers Bureau,** 4717 Knights Arm Dr., Durham, NC 27707. 919/403-7004. Greg Friedlander. greg@allamericanspeakers.com; www.allamericanspeakers.com.


**Authors Unlimited,** 31 E. 32nd St., #300, New York, NY 10016. 212/481-8484. Arlynn Greenbaum, Pres.

**Eagles Talent Connection,** 57 West South Orange Ave., South Orange NJ 07079. 973/313-9800. info@eaglestalent.com; www.eaglestalent.com. Esther Eagles, Pres.


**IMG Speakers,** 304 Park Ave., S. New York, NY 10010. 212/774-6735; fax: 212/246-1596. speakers@imgworld.com; www.imgspeakers.com. Lisa Reiter.


**The Leigh Bureau,** 92 E. Main St., #200, Somerville, NJ 08876. 908/253-8600. info@leighbureau.com; www.leighbureau.com.

**Mastermedia Speakers Bureau,** 14 Laurel Dr., Easthampton, MA 01027-2577. 800/453-2887. tonycolao@prodigy.net; www.mastermediasmokers.com. Tony Colao, Pres.
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Speakers Guild, P.O. Box 1540, Sandwich, MA 02563. 800/343-4530. Phil Franko, Pres. info@speakersguild.com; www.speakersguild.com.

Speakers On Healthcare, 10870 NW Laurinda Ct., Portland, OR 97229. 503/345-9164. info@speakersonhealthcare.com; www.speakersonhealthcare.com.

Special Events

Aspen Marketing Services, 1240 North Avenue, West Chicago, IL 60185. 800/848-0212. clang@aspensms.com; www.aspensms.com. Cathy Lang, COO.


Corporate Events, 7431 114th Ave. No., #102, Largo, FL 33773. 727/548-7200. corporateevents@tampabay.rr.com; www.corporateevents@tampabay.rr.com.


Entertainment Consultants, 530 Light St., Baltimore, MD 21202. 410/547-1800; fax: 410/547-2497. showtime@entcon.com; www.entcon.com.


P.W. Feats Inc., Special Events, Design & Production, 3 East Read St., Baltimore, MD 21202. 410/727-5575. contact@featsinc.com; www.featsinc.com.


IEG, Inc., 350 North Orleans St., Suite 1200, Chicago, IL 60654. 800/834-4850. ieg@sponsorship.com; www.sponsorship.com.


Lipari Production Group, 244 W. 54th St., Ste. 711, New York, NY 10019. 212/247-3311. info@lpagny.com; www.lpagny.com. Chris Lipari, Owner.


MVP Collaborative, 1751 E. Lincoln Ave., Madison Heights, MI 48071. 248/591-5100. info@mvpcollaborative.com; www.mvpcollaborative.com. Dan Sundt, VP.

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB


The National Press Club, a private club for journalists and communicators, has been “Where News Happens” for more than a century. Each year, the Club hosts over 250,000 visitors at more than 2,000 events that are conveyed to global audiences in print, television and online. Our journalist members work with the NPC staff to create an ideal facility for news coverage – from a full service broadcast operation, to fiber and wireless connectivity, to audio-visual services.
SPECIAL EVENTS


PMTV, 681 Moore Rd., #100, King of Prussia, PA 19406. 610/768-1770. info@pmtv.com; www.pmtv.com.

Paula Wolf Events & Entertainment, 1165 N. Clark St., #613, Chicago, IL 60610. 312/981-2600. Lombardo@pwe-e.com; www.pwe-e.com. Adam Lombardo.


VISTA Satellite Communications, 73-104 SW 12th Ave., Miami Beach, FL 33044. 954/838-0900. traffic@vistasat.com; www.vistasat.com.

Workhouse Publicity, 133 W. 25th St., #3W, New York, NY 10001. 212/645-8006. info@workhousepr.com; www.workhousepr.com. Adam Nelson, CEO.

SPEECHWRITING


Joan Detz Speechwriting, 73 Harvey Ave., Doylestown, PA 18901. 215/340-9752. jdetz@joandetz.com; www.joandetz.com.

Peter Haas/Business Writer, 59 E. 54th St., New York, NY 10022. 212/727-1402; fax: 212/727-2654. phaas@aol.com.

2012 PR BUYER’S GUIDE

John McHugh, 28870 Forest Lake Lane, Libertyville, IL 60048. 847/362-8389; fax: 847/860-1930. johnmcc@aol.com.


TV PRODUCTION

Accent Media, 1657 Strine Dr., McLean, VA 22101. 703/356-9427. jackjorgens@accentmediainc.com; www.accentmediainc.com. Dr. Jack Jorgens, VP.

AKA Media Inc., 142 East Ontario, 16th flr., Chicago, IL 60611. 800/996-9432. www.akamediainc.com; info@akamediainc.com. Andrew Krause, Executive Producer, CEO.

Why do the world’s most amazing brands trust us to tell their stories? It’s simple... Your audience wants to be inspired. Good storytelling is how you get there. Our producers, editors and web designers develop and execute video, radio, web, TV and social media campaigns — that’s what we do.

Follow us on Twitter @AKAMEDIAINC or Facebook/AKAMEDIAINC.

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SATELLITE MEDIA TOURS

With celebrity Satellite Media Tours, behind-the-scenes adventures, premier events and locations, our latest demo reel speaks for itself.

Cover Edge Television News Service, 4325 Dean Martin Dr., #375, Las Vegas, NV 89103. 800/822-6397. bookings@coveredge.com; www.coveredge.com. Rich Travis, CEO.


See full listing under Satellite Media Tours.

Effectively deliver your messaging through compelling TV and video production. With an award-winning production team, state-of-the-art editing facilities, HD studio and in-house media relations team, D S Simon Productions strategically delivers your key messaging to both internal and external audiences. We deliver high quality HD TV production for use by broadcast and online news outlets.

D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, our headquarters and HD studio are in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington DC.

www.dssimon.com
E-mail: news@dssimon.com
High Definition live and on-demand video production services and transmission services, studios, post-production, web-casting and a fleet of satellite trucks. VideoLink also offers ReadyCam, a custom, remotely operated studio that can be installed in your office. Located in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Manchester NH and Irvine CA.

### VISTA Satellite Communications
73-104 SW 12th Ave., Dania Beach, FL 33004. 954/838-0900. traffic@vistasat.com; www.vistasat.com.

### Alan Weiss Productions

### TRANSLATION SERVICES


### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media News Releases help you share your story with influential bloggers and websites. Our clients use SMNRs to launch web campaigns, promote live webcasts and share viral video. We use a traditional media relations approach to personally research and engage each and every blogger or website on a one-to-one basis.

**SATellite MEDIA TOURS**

With celebrity Satellite Media Tours, behind-the-scenes adventures, premier events and locations, our latest demo reel speaks for itself.

**ALLIED VAUGHN**


**AP Images**

450 West 33rd St., New York, NY 10001 212/621-1997; assignments@ap.org; www.apimages.com.

Discover why media outlets, corporations and PR companies around the world rely on AP Images.
AP Images continued

Assignment Services. We will take any PR project, sponsored event, tradeshow or product launch and capture it with your vision and needs in mind. Whether the job is large or small, mainstream or offbeat - you get the benefit of our knowledge, access and integrated services for an end-to-end project solution.


ACG is a high-quality, results-oriented multimedia production company specializing in electronic and digital P.R. and marketing services. Staffed by innovative and relationship-focused experts, we customize your project needs with the most cost-effective solutions to increase your brand awareness and to maximize your audience reach. ACG’s “one-stop-shop” approach provides you with the attentive services of a boutique: from creative consultation and media coaching through production and results reporting, every project receives the full focus of our attention.

ACG’s outstanding range of services include:
- Video Production and Distribution
- Media Training
- TV Satellite, Radio and Online Media Tours
- Integrated Media Tours™
- Social Media Campaigns, Blogger Connect and Twitter Parties
- Web Videos, Webcasts and Event Coverage
- Video, Audio and Multimedia New Releases
- B-roll Packages

• PSAs
• Corporate Videos (sales, product launches, branding, and highlight reels)

ACG offers creative solutions for all business categories from healthcare and food to hi-tech and entertainment.


Broad Street Productions, 28 W. 22nd St., 12th flr., New York, NY 10010. 212/780-5700. newyork@broadstreet.com; www.broadstreet.com.

Broadcast Productions, 4 Beechwood Dr., Robbinsville, NJ 08691. 609/443-1199. Dick Cunningham, Pres. dick@broadcastproductions.tv; www.broadcastproductions.tv.


CarpeVM

Seize Your Market. Say It With Video.

Carpe VM, 234 5th Ave., Suite 505, New York, NY 10001. 646/867-1856. info@CarpeVM.com; www.CarpeVM.com. Charles DeBenedittis, President.

We are a Video Marketing company in New York City.

More than video production alone, we start with strategy and scripting. From there, we can include everything from branding to eye-catching graphics and animation.

And leverage the web with tracking and analytics.

At Carpe VM, we bring a unique combination of boutique style creative services at a value price point.


Coastal Media Group, P.O. Box 8751, Calabasas, CA 91372. 818/880-9800; 888/570-LIVE, www.coastalmediagroup.com. Bob Adler, Pres./CEO.


Crews Control, 8161 Maple Lawn Blvd., #120, Fulton, MD 20759. 301/604-1200; 1-800-545-CREW. info@crewcontrol.com; www.crewscontrol.com. Andrea Keating, Founder/CEO.


See full listing under Satellite Media Tours.


See full listing under Satellite Media Tours.

D S Simon Productions effectively
D S Simon Productions continued

Delivers your messaging through compelling video. With an award-winning production team, state-of-the-art editing facilities, HD studio and in-house media relations team, D S Simon Productions strategically delivers your key messaging to both internal and external audiences. Equipped with mobile editing, we can facilitate even the quickest of turnarounds on projects.

Video Redefined. D S Simon Productions is an award-winning broadcast PR and social media video firm specializing in Satellite Media Tours, Internet Media Tours, B-Roll production and distribution, Corporate and Web Video, Video Players, Ground Tours, Co-Ops and Radio. Established in 1986, we are headquartered in New York with offices in Los Angeles and Chicago.


B-roll works great with an SMT or as a stand-alone tactic. Big celebrity events, new product launches, anything out of the ordinary are great candidates. We’ve filmed flash mobs on Bourbon Street, created behind-the-scenes videos for computer games and even groundbreaking FDA announcements.

Don’t forget to call us for corporate packages, online video (we can use the b-roll footage), public service announcements and more!


See full listing under Webcasting.


Newscast US, 526 West 26th St., Suite 515 New York, NY 10001. 212/206-0055; toll free 866/734-NEWS; contact@newscastus.com; www.newscastus.com.
## VIDEO


Synaptic Digital connects brands with their audiences across an evolving media landscape through the power of video. It is the premier content creation and multichannel distribution platform for brands, organizations and their agencies globally. Clients rely on our news expertise, video services, interactive news releases, satellite media tours, digital media centers, and thenewsmarket.com, the world’s largest content exchange, to manage their messages across on-air, online, social media and syndication networks. Our underlying CODE for success is: Create Once, Deploy Everywhere.

**Take One Productions**, 17581 Irvine Blvd., #107, Tustin, CA 92780. 877/825-3146. info@takeonedigital.com; www.takeonedigital.com.


VideoLink, Inc. (videolink.tv) offers High Definition live and on-demand video production services and transmission services, studios, post-production, web-casting and a fleet of satellite trucks. VideoLink also offers ReadyCam, a custom, remotely operated studio that can be installed in your office. Located in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Manchester NH and Irvine CA.


Share. Post. Tweet. Tell a Friend. Washington Independent Productions produces video that make people be inspired. Good storytelling is how brands trust us to tell their stories? It’s simple. Your audience wants to be inspired. Good storytelling is how you get there. Our producers, editors and web designers develop and execute video, radio, web and social media campaigns — that’s what we do.

Follow us on Twitter @AKAMEDIAINC or Facebook/AKAMEDIAINC.

• Video, Radio, Web, TV and Social Media Campaigns
• Satellite Media Tours (SMTs)
• Social Media News Releases (SMNRs)
• Web Video Production and Distribution (Viral Videos)
• Internet Media Tours (IMTs)
• Expert Celebrity Treatment
• Digital Video Distribution (Video Sharing)
• Broadcast B-Roll Packages (B-Roll)
• Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
• Internet Press Kits (IPKs)
• Corporate Storytelling (Image, Sales, Marketing, Web Videos)
• Video Editing, Graphics and Effects (Highlights Reels)
• Webcasting (Live Video Streaming to Facebook)

**Social Media**

Social Media News Releases help you share your story with influential bloggers and websites. Our clients use SMNRs to launch web campaigns, promote live webcasts and

Continued at top of next page
AKA Media Inc. continued

share viral video. We use a traditional media relations approach to personally research and engage each and every blogger or website on a one-to-one basis.

SATELLITE MEDIA TOURS

With celebrity Satellite Media Tours, behind-the-scenes adventures, premier events and locations, our latest demo reel speaks for itself.


Have employees all over the world who want to hear your CEO speak? Got a major event coming up? We’ll set up a streaming webcast, and everybody can watch live.

Looking for more action? Need a virtual press conference? Try a webinar so participants can submit questions, take polls, and even help answer questions along the way. We can archive the webinar or webinar so people can watch later or even create a short online video for your YouTube channel.


Murray Hill Studios is a full-service production and post production facility in New York City providing high-speed web video streaming services and traditional broadcast production to the Entertainment, PR, Educational, Political, Corporate, Financial, Legal, and Medical industries. Our services include high-speed Internet webcasts, in-studio and location shooting, international and domestic broadcast transmission, satellite and Internet media tours, Skype integration for interviews, editing and many more. Please visit us at murrayhillstudios.com.

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB


The National Press Club, a private club for journalists and communicators, has been “Where News Happens” for more than a century. Each year, the Club hosts over 250,000 visitors at more than 2,000 events that are conveyed to global audiences in print, television and online. Our journalist members work with the NPC staff to create an ideal facility for news coverage – from a full service broadcast operation, to fiber and wireless connectivity, to audio-visual services.

Online Video Service, 815 First Ave., Suite 157, Seattle, WA 98104. 206/632-5360. onlinevideo@atpoint.com; www.onlinevideo.com. Tim Treanor, Chmn./CEO.


PrecisionIR Group, 601 Moorefield Park Dr., Richmond, VA 23235. 804/327-3400. info@precisionir.com; www.precisionir.com.

Synaptic Digital, 708 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017. 212/682-8300. info@synapticdigital.com; learn-more@synapticdigital.com.

See full listing under Video.

VIDEO LINK


VideoLink, Inc (videolinktv) offers High Definition live and on-demand video production services and transmission services, studios, post-production, web-casting and a fleet of satellite trucks. VideoLink also offers ReadyCam, a custom, remotely operated studio that can be installed in your office. Located in Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Manchester NH and Irvine CA.

At Point, Inc., P.O. Box 361, Roseland, NJ 07068. 973/324-0866; fax: 973/324-0778. services@atpoint.com; www.atpoint.com. Mick Gyure.

At Point provides the services of developing websites and managing the Internet operations of businesses, both small and large, that do not have the experience or the resources in-house to perform these functions. Clients receive personalized and high quality customer service, solutions that fit their budgets, and the assurance of At Point’s reliability.


Genex, 800 Corporate Pointe, Culver City, CA 90230. 424/672-9500. losangeles-info@genex.com; www.genex.com.


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To teach young people about water conservation in drought-stricken Australia, we created the “Tank a Day” challenge. Every school day for a year, BlueScope Steel gave schools a tank of rainwater. They had to make the water last for everything from watering lawns to cleaning.

The kids rallied to the cause. BlueScope rose in reputation rankings. And the campaign won almost every PR award imaginable. Of course, the real rewards are that the tanks are saving about 90 million liters of water a year and a whole new generation of Aussie kids now know how to conserve water.

For help creating your own success story, contact Rachel Ufer at 212-880-5280 or rachel.ufer@ogilvy.com.

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Worldwide