

O'Dwyer's

Communications & New Media

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SPECIAL ISSUE: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

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Reputation in a post-Trump world • Crisis in an age of stakeholder engagement
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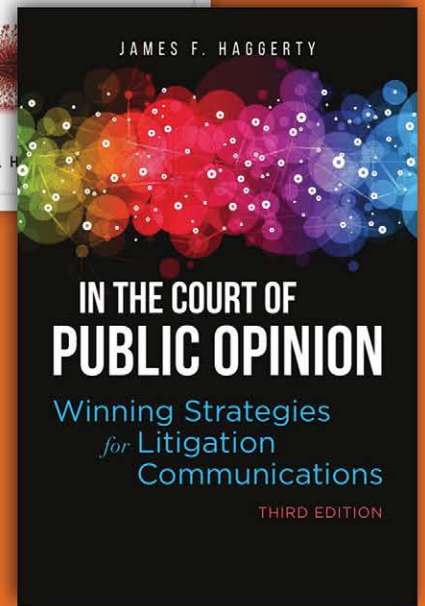
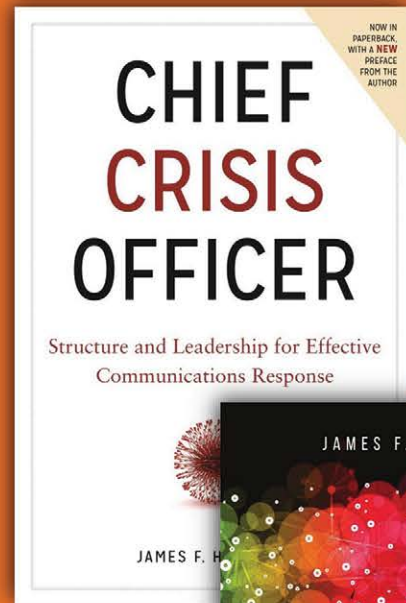
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Distrust from anti-vaxxers will be a big problem in 2021.

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Survey says three-quarters of firms saw little or no growth.

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July: Travel, Tourism & International

August: Financial, I.R. & Prof Services

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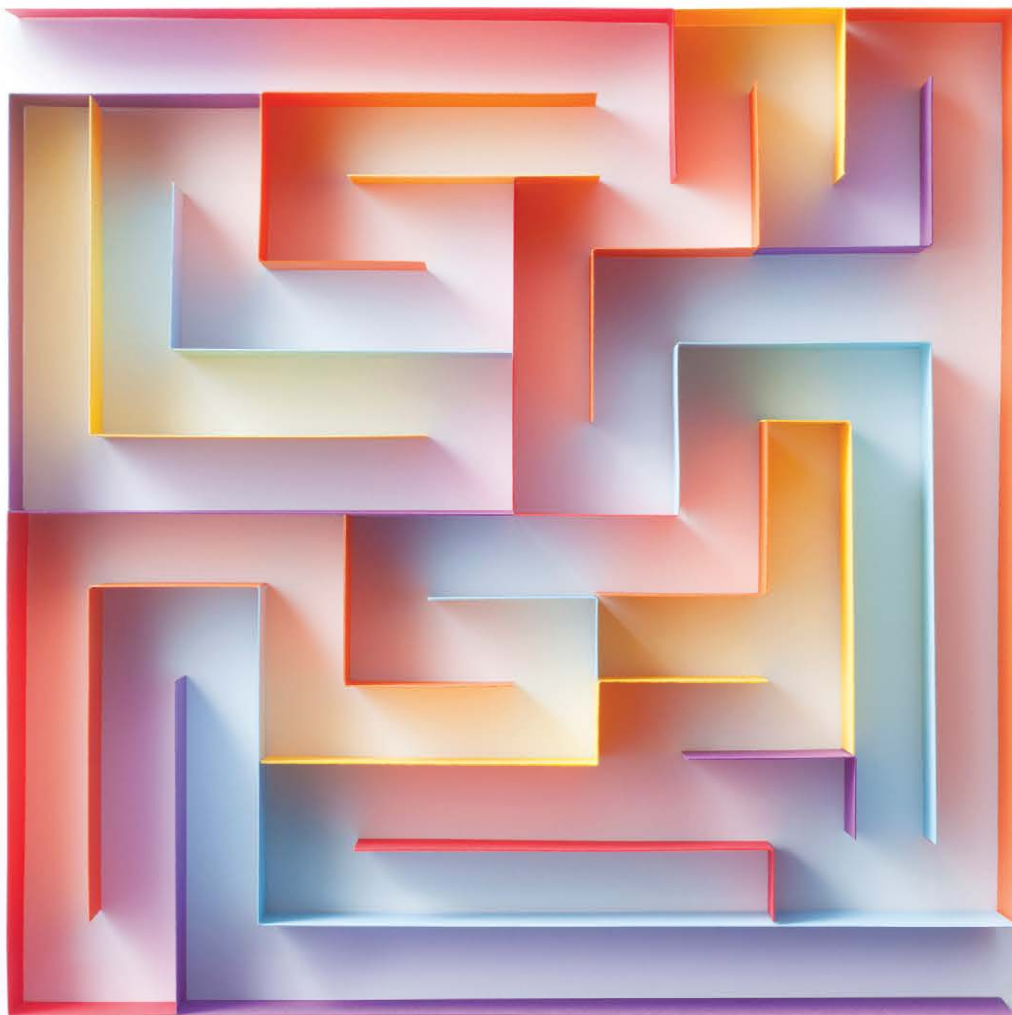
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How will the media cover a post-Trump world?

Given that we're coming up on the end of the Trump era, it's completely reasonable to wonder what effects the incoming administration might have on our newsrooms. To put it bluntly: what the hell is the press going to talk about once their favorite villain is gone?

Back in early 2018, less than a year into Trump's presidency, *O'Dwyer's* reported that the tumultuous Trump presidency appeared to be driving a comeback in paid news subscriptions. Pundits and columnists began referring to this phenomenon as the "Trump Bump": Americans dismayed by the specter of a Trump White House were stricken with a newfound urgency to be informed and politically engaged, resulting in a surge in cable news network viewers, online news traffic and, notably, subscriptions at national broadsheet papers, reinvigorating readership at flagging publications we'd been told for years had one foot in the grave.

Fast-forward three years and this growth hasn't ebbed. The *New York Times* in November reported that it now counts seven million subscribers, effectively double the number of paying readers the *Gray Lady* had when Trump assumed office. The *Washington Post* now boasts almost three million digital subscribers, which accounts for a 50 percent year-over-year growth in the paper's subscriptions business and more than three times the digital subscribers it had in 2016. News Corp. flagship the *Wall Street Journal* topped two million digital subscribers at the beginning of the year and reported more than 2.35 million digital subscribers in November, more than double the 967,000 digital subscribers it claimed in pre-Trump 2016.

The conventional wisdom is that a Trump presidency is great for ratings. The press loves a disaster story—which is to say, we love a disaster story—and boy have the last four years provided plenty of material. CNN anchors fill entire newscasts grousing about him, but it isn't a coincidence that network also just witnessed the most-watched month in its 40 year history to become the number-one network in cable news for November. The fact is, a President that supplies one crisis after another has been a boon for the news media. But alas, all "good" things come to an end. Trump wasn't wrong in Sept. when he tweeted that the "fake" media companies are "going to miss me, very badly!!!" Indeed, what are they going to talk about when the crisis casino shuts down? And most importantly, who's going to listen?

Presumably, subscriptions will slow, clicks will disappear and ad budgets will wither. It's not like the news media industry is in a great position anyway; the success stories above are exceptions to the rule. Newsrooms have been on shaky ground for years, lost in a sea of layoffs and buyouts as ad revenues continue to be siphoned by platforms like Google and Facebook. According to a June report by the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, more than one in four of our nation's newspapers—or about 2,155 publications—have disappeared since 2004. And simultaneously coinciding with Trump's departure has been the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only hastened journalism's demise, as companies in every sector financially impacted by the disaster scale back their advertising budgets. The fact is, newsrooms are shuttering at a faster rate than ever, even though the coronavirus crisis has, ironically, driven a spike in TV viewership and traffic to digital news websites. We're consuming more news than ever. Many of us simply don't want—or can't afford—to pay for it.

So, what will the media do once Public Enemy No. 1 has left the building? How are they going to stave off the viewer fatigue that will inevitably set in once the networks start covering boring Joe Biden? Presumably, they're going to have to find something else to talk about (lord knows they ignored plenty of worthwhile world events while covering Trump 24/7).

My guess is they'll use their nonstop Trump coverage as a model to focus on other crises. Thankfully—for the media at least—the coronavirus provides a coverage springboard. Not only has COVID-19 been the greatest public health crisis of our lifetimes, it's also among the most covered news items in recent history. Arguably, the crisis presaged Trump's downfall when, as *O'Dwyer's* reported in March, COVID mentions in the news cycle surpassed Trump, a figure who's consistently dominated media coverage since 2016.

My other guess is we'll see a lot of action in the conservative media landscape, now that the political pendulum has swung the other way and conservative outlets will now effectively pick up the anti-establishment mantle that CNN has carried for the last four years. That opposition is going to be led by Fox News, of course, but it's now joined by challenger alternative right-wing outlets such as Newsmax and One America News Network which have been building market share by surpassing Fox on the nutjob meter with a nonstop supply of conspiracy theories and pro-Trump content (see more on pg. 32).

Finally, Trump isn't going anywhere. He still wields enormous power online and is going to remain the central figure of the Republican party for the foreseeable future. There's a good chance we'll see a court case soon, given the legal battles that await Trump after he leaves the White House, which will inevitably be pitched as a Trial-of-the-Century event by the networks. And, of course, there's the possibility of another Trump presidential run in 2024. So, I'm betting that Trump will be the gift that keeps on giving for at least the next several years. In the meantime, in other words, we can expect the same old story. ○

— Jon Gingerich

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Vaccine skeptics present major PR obstacle for 2021

A new survey found that nearly one in five anti-vaxxers said nothing could convince them to take a COVID-19 vaccine, but nearly the same number admitted they'd have a change of heart if someone whom they know took the vaccine without issue, potentially shining a light on how healthcare PR pros might combat misinformation among those who still harbor mistrust toward vaccines.

By Jon Gingerich

An end might be in sight for the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the FDA's recent authorization of COVID-19 vaccines developed by Pfizer and Moderna.

Unfortunately, the distribution and success of these vaccines have been compounded by widespread misinformation and an ongoing culture of skepticism toward the safety and efficacy of vaccines, one so prevalent that the World Health Organization last year named vaccine hesitancy as one of the top 10 health threats currently facing the world.

A recent survey by multichannel demand generation provider SYKES, however, shines a light on how healthcare communications professionals might find ways to manage misinformation and build trust among those who still harbor mistrust to-

ward vaccines.

While nearly two-thirds of Americans surveyed (63 percent) reported that they plan on getting the COVID-19 vaccine once it's made available, more than a third (37 percent) indicated they would not, according to the survey, despite recent vaccine trial data showing that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are more than 90 percent effective.

More than a third (38 percent) of respondents said they're worried about vaccines' safety and an additional quarter (26 percent) said they're worried about their effectiveness in preventing COVID-19. Americans also said they're concerned about the vaccines' cost (13 percent) as well as their effect on any underlying health issues (12 percent).

Despite their hesitations, however, the survey discovered a silver lining among

Americans hesitant to take a vaccine: nearly a quarter (22 percent) of vaccine skeptics admitted they might take the COVID-19 vaccine if people whom they know take it and develop no issues as a result.

Moreover, an additional 19 percent of vaccine skeptics said they'd take the COVID-19 vaccine if it's required for work or international travel, and 14 percent said they'd take it if it was free or affordable. Nine percent said they'd take a vaccine if it meant an easing of mask requirements or social distancing measures.

On the other hand, nearly one in five vaccine skeptics (19 percent) said nothing could convince them to take a COVID-19 vaccine because they don't believe vaccines are safe. An additional two percent said their religion prohibits them from taking vaccines.

Among those who reported they wouldn't be getting a COVID-19 vaccine, a majority (18 percent) said they get most of their COVID-related news from local TV programming. This was followed by local radio news (17 percent), social media (15 percent), online searches (12 percent) and national cable TV (11 percent). Local and national newspapers bottomed out the list (both at five percent, which was about the same percentage of those who said they aren't consuming any COVID-related news at all).

Nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of those who said they wouldn't be getting a COVID-19 vaccine said they similarly didn't get a flu shot this year.

Among all the respondents surveyed in the SYKES report, a majority (54 percent) believe employers should require non-remote employees to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and also think K-12 public schools (59 percent) and colleges/universities (61 percent) should require all students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

More than half of all respondents (58 percent) also believe the U.S. government should be responsible for footing the bill for the COVID-19 vaccine.

SYKES report, "American Perceptions of COVID-19 Vaccines," surveyed 2,000 U.S. adults in November. Surveys were conducted using third-party survey platform Pollfish. ○



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PR industry growth slipped 6% in 2020

More than three-quarters of North American PR agencies have experienced a net decrease in fees this year or no growth at all, according to a recent Gould+Partners survey.

By Jon Gingerich

The COVID-19 pandemic roiled the marketing and communications world, with more than three-quarters of North American PR agencies reporting a net decrease in fees this year or no growth at all, according to an industry survey conducted by PR merger and acquisition consultancy Gould+Partners.

The Gould+Partners survey polled more than four-dozen PR agencies on their 2019 actual net revenues (fees plus mark-ups) as well as their estimated 2020 net revenues and planned 2021 fee revenues.

The survey found that more than half (56 percent) of PR firms reported a decrease in net revenues this year. An additional 21 percent showed flat or zero growth in 2020. Overall, less than a quarter (23 percent) of the firms participating in the survey reported any growth in 2020.

Tracking agencies' 2019 actual net revenues against their 2020 projected fee revenue revealed a net decrease of six percent, according to the survey, the first such year-

over-year loss recorded by Gould+Partners' annual survey in the last seven years.

But not all the news is bad. Gould+Partners Managing Partner Rick Gould told *O'Dwyer's* that the industry's average six-percent dip in growth this year was actually less than initially expected. Moreover, the survey also shows that nearly three-quarters of firms (73 percent) anticipate a rebound in 2021. More than half of that number (44 percent) even expect next year to yield higher net revenues for their agencies than 2019.

According to Gould, growth in the PR industry had, until COVID hit, been on a steady keel, peaking at nearly 10 percent (9.8 percent) in 2013, and revealing consecutive year-over-year gains between 4.8 percent and 7.8 percent each year for the following six years.

Barring 2020's decline, the Gould+Partners survey now projects a year-over-year industry net growth of 5.6 percent in 2021, which accounts for a net decrease of only

0.8 percent from pre-pandemic 2019.

"What I am finding most encouraging is that 44 percent of the firms projected an increase in net revenues in 2021 over the robust year we had in 2019," Gould told *O'Dwyer's*. "I attribute this to the most successful firms making an increased effort to expand their pipeline, to go after new business as well as creating new billable services organically. That is a huge turnaround from 77 percent of the firms showing either a decrease in their fees in 2020 or a no growth/flat fee level."

"It is indicative of the natural optimism and confidence that most PR firm owners have as a mindset," Gould continued. "They got blindsided by the pandemic in 2020 and will come back rebuilding, recovering and prospering by the end of 2021."

Gould+Partners' "New Revenue Spot Survey" was based on responses from 52 PR agencies located in ten regions across North America. The survey was conducted in November. ○



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Recapping 2020 in the world of PR

A review of some of the PR highlights and lowlights covered by *O'Dwyer's* in 2020.

By Kevin McCauley

2020 rocked the communications community as the COVID-19 crisis triggered cuts in client spending, restructuring of PR/ad firms, layoffs and the shift to working from home.

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, many firms enlisted in the battle against racial inequality by rolling out or strengthening their diversity, equity and inclusion programs.

The hotly contested presidential election and the never-ending tweets and taunts of Donald Trump provided the soundtrack to the tumultuous year.

Here are some of the highlights and lowlights covered by *O'Dwyer's* in 2020:

Harold Burson, co-Founder of Burson-Marsteller and one of the most influential figures in PR history, dies at 98. BCW CEO Donna Imperato said Burson lived a giant life as a master of influences and was a true pioneer of PR and strategic communications. "He was the wisest person I knew, with the highest level of integrity, humility and kindness," she said.



Harold Burson

Niel Golightly, Global Communications Officer at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, joins Boeing on Jan. 1 as Eniro VP-Communications. The former US Navy fighter pilot held top PR jobs at Royal Dutch Shell, Ford Motor. He resigned in July due to an employee complaint about an article that he wrote in 1987 as a Navy pilot questioning the ability of women to serve in combat.

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles names Simon Sproule Chief Communications Officer effective Feb. 3 to succeed Golightly. He was VP-marketing and marketing at Tesla and corporate VP at Nissan and Microsoft.

W2O acquires 21GRAMS, New York-based healthcare advertising firm, to "accelerate its vision of becoming the premier analytics-driven, technology-enabled healthcare marketing and communications company of the future, according to CEO/founder Jim Weiss.

Carol Wilson joins BCW as Executive VP-Inclusion and Diversity for North American operations as it pushes for a more open and collaborative workplace. At the Diversity Best Practices advisory firm,

Wilson counseled more than 200 member organizations on diversity and sustainable change programs.

Teneo lands a \$840,000 six-month contract to manage the communications department of Neom, the \$500 billion mega-city that is supposed to be the centerpiece of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's plan to diversify the economic base of Saudi Arabia.

Edelman's 20th annual Trust Barometer shows growing inequality is killing the dreams of people throughout the world as they feel the economic system is rigged against them. More than half (56 percent) say capitalism is doing more harm than good.

Climate change is the greatest issue facing brands today, according to a "Brand Pressure Index" report by High Lantern Group that analyzed 300 social topics. Labor insecurity, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, data security, trade barriers, racial inequality and misinformation also scored high on the list.

Jennifer Cunningham, one of the most powerful women in New York politics, quits SKDKnickerbocker to travel and explore new opportunities. The SKDKnicker partner is former political director of the powerful 1199 SEIU union and a long-time friend of Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Hope Hicks returns to the White House as Counselor to the President, reporting to first son-in-law Jared Kushner. "There is no more move devoted to president Trump's gendy than Hope Hicks," said Kushner. She was chief communications officer at Fox Corp.



Hope Hicks

SKDKnickerbocker acquires Sloane & Co from MDC Partners to give the public affairs shop a robust financial PR capability. Both entities are affiliated by Mark Penn's Stagwell Group.

Craig Bucholtz joins General Motors as Senior VP-global communications. The Procter & Gamble Chief Communications and VP-Communications, personal health

and oral care, took over for Tony Cervone, who retired April 1.

UK-based Huntsworth goes private via \$520 million deal engineered by American private equity firm Clayton Dubilier & Rice. The private equity firm said health-care-oriented Huntsworth is well positioned to capitalize on "demographic/economic growth, an increase in product launches, development of more specialized drugs and the emergence of new marketing channels."

Porter Novelli recruits McKinsey & Co's David Bentley in March for the CEO slot. Bentley, who was VP-digital at the management consultant, takes over for Brad MacAfee, who left the Omnicom unit in December.

COVID-19 takes toll on Interpublic's financial targets as CEO Michael Roth yanked full-year financial projection of three percent organic growth for 2020. "In light of significant microeconomic uncertainty resulting from the severity of the COVID-19 crisis, and the unknown magnitude and duration of its impact, it is appropriate to withdraw the company's previously issued financial performance targets for full-year 2020," IPG said in a SEC filing.



Michael Roth

Publicis Group rolls out a \$550 million cost reduction program as CEO Arthur Sadoun predicts the COVID-19 crisis will trigger the "greatest recession in living memory." The cuts are designed to help the ad/PR combine "to adapt to the new context and be recovery-ready."

Chevron's Dave Samson joined Edelman as global corporate affairs vice chair on May 1. It's a new position. Samson was GM-PA at the oil giant and an alum of Oracle, Ketchum, Levi Strauss and IBM.

Weber Shandwick cuts and furloughs staff due to across-the-board client spending cuts due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cutbacks follow moves to slash expenses, freeze salaries and trim executive pay. CEO Gail Heimann said of the layoffs: "It is something I hoped I would not have to do; it is a wrenchingly hard decision to make. And I know it is indescribably hard for those to whom we are saying good-bye."

Rubenstein readies for New York City's reopening as it develops messaging for the Coalition for NYC Hospitality & Tourism Recovery as it launched in May to promote

— Continued on next page

the Big Apple when it opens for business in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The launch was a bit premature.

Environmentalists score a major victory at Chevron's May 27 annual meeting as 53 percent of



shareholders voted in support of a resolution requiring the energy giant to issue a report on its climate change-related lobbying efforts. The board urged stock-

holders to reject the measure.

Edelman cuts 390 people, which represents seven percent of its global staff, and ordered pay cuts from five to 20 percent to deal with the impact of COVID-19. CEO Richard Edelman called the cuts "gut wrenching," especially in light of his March statement that there would be no job losses due to the virus. That pledge was based on Edelman's willingness to take the firm down to zero profit, but the company in June was "beyond the threshold of loss-making."

WPP launches \$30 million three-year program to combat racism and invest in Black and ethnic talent. The money will flow to external organizations and internal inclusion efforts. WPP also pledged to only participate in industry events or panels where people of color are represented.

Ray Jordan, who held top PR jobs at Amgen, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer, joins biotech firm Moderna in June as it develops the first COVID-19 vaccine to post positive post trial results. He is Moderna's chief corporate affairs officer.

Ketchum CEO Barri Rafferty leaves the Omnicom unit to head the corporate communications department of Wells Fargo & Co. The 25-year Ketchum veteran was the first woman to head a Top 5 PR firm.



Barri Rafferty

Ruder Finn signs a \$1.7 million one-year contract to develop a website and social media campaign for Saudi

Arabia's Neom mega-city. The contract has RF stationing staff in Saudia Arabia. It includes a COVID-19 provision calling for RF "to use all reasonable endeavors to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among its personnel, the employer's worksite and any person at the employer's worksite."

WPP revamps its PA offering and sells a 49.99 percent stake to management of Finsbury, Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener. The new entity Finsbury Glover Hering debuts in 2021 with 700 staffers in 18 countries.

Hill+Knowlton Strategies works with the World Health Organization to make certain its science and public health messaging is credible to ensure there is trust in the Switzerland-based groups' advice and that its guidance is followed. President Trump, a critic of the WHO, vowed to pull the US out of the group.

Edelman helps Kodak deal with its PR crisis triggered by its internal communications team sending out a media advisory without an embargo time about the following day announcement of a \$765 million loan from the US to launch Kodak Pharmaceuticals, a COVID-19 initiative backed by president Trump.

Finsbury hires Vickee Jordan Adams, Wells Fargo's Senior VP, Consumer Banking, Stakeholder Relations. She joins the firm as a Partner and co-lead of the financial services sector in January when it becomes Finsbury Glover Hering.



Vickee Jordan Adams

Michael Caputo takes a leave of absence from his top spokesperson job at the Dept. of Health and Human Services following an unhinged rant on Facebook Live, in which he lambasted career government scientists for acting as a "resistance unit" to Trump.

Former New York Governor David Paterson joins Kivvit, the PA and strategic communications shop. Paterson said he worked with lots of PA firms during his time in government but none of them impressed him more than Kivvit.

PR pro Harris Diamond steps down as COO of Interpublic's flagship McCann Worldgroup ad agency after an eight-year run. He helmed Weber Shandwick for nearly 17 years.

Interpublic rebrands the Constituency Management Group, a global group of 28 marketing services firms and brands anchored by Weber Shandwick, Golin, Octagon, Futurebrand and Jack Morton, as IPG DXTRA. CEO Andy Polansky called IPG DXTRA a symbol of how "we work across our best-in-class agency brands to intentionally bring forward highly relevant, specialized services to our clients."

Finn Partners lands a \$25,000 monthly retainer contract to supply PR and social media services to The Hong Kong Tourism Board as the city looks to rebuild its tourist trade after China tightened control over the former British colony in July.



Edelman joins Team Neom as the independent firm scoops up a \$75,000 monthly pact to provide strategic counsel, media relations, stakeholder engagement and content development to the Saudi Arabia mega-city.

Current Global launches "Accessible by Design" initiative, ensuring that all content and campaign be crafted to be inclusive to people of all abilities, such as those with sight, hearing, speech and cognitive impairments.

Doug Band, President/co-Founder of Teneo and ex-confidante to President Clinton, steps down to spend more time with his family and pursue other interests including teaching and investing. The departure of the 48-year-old follows a devastating article in Vanity Fair called "Confessions of a Clintonworld Exile" that outlined his messy split with the former president and his family.

The California Dept of Public Health plans to award a \$40 million contract for a COVID-19 vaccine media campaign. The campaign, slated for mid-January, is to provide Californians and key groups with timely, accurate and actionable information about the vaccination.

Omnicom names Emily Graham, Chief Equity and Impact Officer and Senior VP, Diversity and Inclusion Communications to oversee its OPEN 2.0 plan to achieve systemic equity across its agencies. She was chief diversity officer at OMC's FleishmanHillard and earlier held posts at MWWPR and Burson-Marsteller.

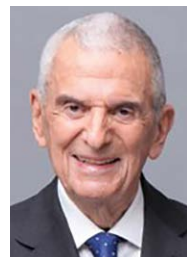


Emily Graham

Stagwell Group and MDC Partners iron out a definitive merger agreement to form what CEO Mark Penn calls a \$2 billion "transformative" marketing services company with 8,600 employees in 23 countries.

The merger, which will be completed during the first-half of 2021, will create a roster of PR/PA firms that includes Finn Partners, KWT Global, Hunter, Allison + Partners, Sloane & Co and SKDKnickerbocker.

Howard J. Rubenstein, founding Chairman and President of PR powerhouse Rubenstein Associates and a crisis strategist who managed the reputations of everyone from Abe Beame to George Steinbrenner to Donald Trump, died on Dec. 29 at the age of 88. ○



Howard Rubenstein

It's time for the tech industry to take crises seriously

Tech companies like Twitter and Facebook have long been reluctant to apologize when they screw up. Can we expect this to change in a post-Trump era?

By Curtis Sparrer

Far too many tech companies don't have a crisis communications playbook. Which is counterintuitive, because tech companies are particularly vulnerable to crises.

Technology may drive economic growth, but many U.S. citizens don't trust it, or, at the very least, have a love/hate relationship with its applications.

No matter that technology is an integral part of our lives, the "ick" factor looms large over Big Tech's essential services, from fears of bias in artificial intelligence to worries of being spied on 24/7 and resentment that algorithms decide what we see on social media. Fan favorite Disney may be given the benefit of the doubt if there's a breach of some sort, but that good will doesn't extend to tech companies.

Consumers don't have a "soft spot" for Facebook, Twitter or the smaller players they haven't heard of. In fact, it's typically the opposite. We may be addicted to Facebook and Twitter, but when something goes wrong, the inevitable pouncing is quick to begin.

Besides general negative sentiment, there are several specific crises that tech companies may encounter and that can affect a significant negative impact on their reputation and their bottom line. Some of the more common are:

- Hackers breach a network and access corporate and/or customer confidential information.
- Product or service liabilities are exposed.
- Anti-trust suits can follow.
- Fraudulent sales and marketing practices lead to litigation.
- Executive personal misbehavior makes headlines.
- Social media is flooded with customer complaints.

A detailed crisis communications plan is a must-have for every tech company, no matter its size. What follows are five recommendations tech companies should consider in their crisis communications planning.

Lesson 1: be proactive, not reactive

What continues to surprise our agency is that many tech companies are still unprepared for managing a crisis that is bound to go public.

A little preparation goes a long way.

Things will go wrong. Crises will happen. Have your PR agency or internal team develop a step-by-step crisis communications plan before you are hacked or find yourself on the wrong side of the social or political divide.

Go through each scenario (i.e., if we're hacked, we will ...) and decide on specific courses of action—and who in your organization will be responsible for carrying out that action. Assigning responsibility is key; you don't want to be scurrying around while in the midst of a crisis wondering who the lead is on the response effort. Make sure your plan includes social media engagement (see below).

Lesson 2: accept responsibility

You may get away with mishandling or ignoring a crisis one time—or maybe even several times—but eventually you will be faced with a crisis that can't be ignored. Even the emperor was called out eventually for not wearing any clothes.

Companies have always been reluctant to apologize when they screw up. Especially tech companies like Twitter and Facebook. When things do go wrong, don't take to Twitter and rail against your evil competition for causing the crisis. Taking responsibility takes courage, but it's always the better path forward. Your clients, employees and the public at large will applaud you for doing so.

Take the time to assess the situation, and then implement the necessary steps to mitigate the crisis. If an apology is appropriate, then apologize. It's also a great time to remind the public of your company's long-standing integrity and commitment to the common good.

Lesson 3: social media is your frenemy

Social media is your best friend when all's right in the world. But as we've all witnessed, social media feeds off bad news and details of your crisis can go viral in nanoseconds. Social media monitoring is always important but even more so during a crisis. Have engagement strategies and tactics in place for activation when a crisis happens. Check on the activities of the nay-sayers and have at the ready predefined advocates and thought leaders who can rapidly provide content that can counter false claims with known facts.

In addition, scrutinize the brand's entire set of stakeholders, paying special attention

to any red-hot issues that are gathering attention. Which leads to ...

Lesson 4: engage in authentic two-way communication

For tech companies, listening and responding appropriately to the public and your stakeholders are essential. Active listening—via social media and digital media outlets—will keep you informed as to your stakeholder's concerns. Make sure your stakeholder group extends to employees and brand managers. Take note of what happened when Facebook and Salesforce didn't acknowledge employees' concerns over corporate decisions. Facebook's employees held a virtual walkout and Salesforce's employees held an actual walkout.

Active listening will also help inform your communications team on how to respond when a crisis hits. Do your stakeholders tend to respond to direct statements? Or do they prefer humor? Ongoing two-way engagement will give you the answer.

Lesson 5: trust and integrity are key

Crisis in today's world is bound to happen. Being prepared is certainly key, but if your brand isn't considered trustworthy or viewed as having integrity, you could apologize 24/7, but it might not help alleviate the situation.

Consumers want to feel aligned with the brands that they interact with—yes, even their tech brands. Recent studies show that trustworthiness is the top trait that makes consumers feel aligned with a brand. Integrity is next. Being recognized as trustworthy and having integrity provide you with some capital when something does go wrong. Your fans will rally to your side and give you that much needed benefit of the doubt.

Having a communications plan in place is the most effective method to offset the perils of a crisis. It's not the time to be learning on the fly. To ensure the plan is vigorously and expertly executed, engage the assistance of a public relations crisis management professional.

Curtis Sparrer is Co-Founder and Principal at Bospar in San Francisco. ●



Curtis Sparrer



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CSR: A new frontier for crisis communications

The events of 2020 have underscored the importance for companies to communicate their corporate social responsibility initiatives to the communities they serve—or crisis can follow.

By Lucy O'Brien

As the past year has made abundantly clear, the public is increasingly looking to companies and organizations to speak out on critical social, political and environmental issues.

The Black Lives Matter protests last summer showed how a thoughtful statement can go a long way, while remaining silent can turn out to be a statement in and of itself. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis reinforced the importance of community stewardship, with organizations of all kinds expected to be public-facing and compassionate as their stakeholders—be they customers, employees, vendors, donors or regulators—face moments of extraordinary hardship.

All of this demonstrates that having a plan in place to decide when and how to communicate company values and commitments is a matter of crisis communications risk management.

Such a policy fits well into the rapidly growing area of Corporate Social Responsibility, broadly defined as the way companies integrate social, environmental and economic concerns into their values, culture, strategy and operations.

As companies are increasingly recognized as members of the communities in which they operate, they must see that their long-term success depends on continued good relationships with these communities. It's not just about shareholder value and short-term profits anymore.

This doesn't mean simply releasing a one-time statement of company values in the face of societal tumult; rather, it's about backing up those statements with a "surround-sound" approach that infiltrates every mission statement, employee handbook, internal communication and external public relations campaign.

Words that aren't followed up with actions will be perceived as shallow virtue-signaling and can create a crisis all on their own.

For example, many pointed out that some of the large corporations releasing statements in support of the Black Lives Matter movement had an astounding lack of diversity within their own workforce, especially in their leadership and boardrooms.

Statements can't be released on a whim but must instead be rooted in a sturdy foundation of company culture. Compa-

nies should adopt a CSR policy that serves as a framework for conduct and communication within the company and the many communities it serves.

An important new aspect of CSR is that the general public now looks to companies to speak out on social issues even when the issue does not directly relate to the company's business. This means that a company's values must be so deeply integrated into its culture that it can be absolutely sure of where it stands when a social issue is dominating front page news.

To those in the crisis communications field, this should sound very familiar. The core of any effective crisis communication program lies in anticipating possible crises and preparing a plan for an efficient, effective response so that a company can avoid having a situation grow out of control.

In the same way, a company should have a proper grasp on exactly where it stands on issues of community or societal concern, whether it should address an issue publicly, and how quickly—and through what platforms—it should reach out to its affected communities.

This isn't meant to be taken cynically; avoiding a crisis isn't the single most important reason to institute a CSR policy. In fact, many companies are already giving back within the communities they serve or have leadership that takes a firm position on issues of social justice. But when these actions and positions lack the firm foundation of a CSR policy, any response to current events may be delayed or haphazard.

Just like other areas of crisis communications planning, it's crucial to have a communications plan in place with an efficient approval process for statements and other media activity. Therefore, a CSR policy must not only make a company's values explicit and concrete, but also guide when and how the company speaks out when a social issue is grabbing headlines.

That means knowing the answers to these key questions ahead of time:

- Who decides when an issue has escalated to the point that a statement is needed?
- Who drafts the statement?
- Whose approval is needed before releasing the statement?

As with any good crisis communications plan, a CSR policy should be supported by representatives from many different ar-

eas of a company, from senior leadership to corporate communications to the legal team. This ensures that the policy will have the resources it needs to succeed and that the words in the policy are backed by substance.

Support from the CEO or other executive leadership will boost the credibility of a CSR policy—and therefore the principles guiding a company—in the eyes of employees and the general public. Continued action supporting CSR initiatives, whether through donations, volunteering or other community-building activities, further builds this credibility. This constant activity ensures that, if and when a company speaks out about a social issue, the words don't come off as hollow, cliché or virtue-signaling pablum.

Finally, as with a good crisis communications plan, a good CSR policy must be flexible and open to constant improvement. This means an ongoing cycle of assessing current CSR activities and identifying new targets and goals, creating a plan to efficiently and effectively improve and then evaluating to ensure that the policy is working.

Crisis communications plans are often in danger of being forgotten in a binder that collects dust on the shelf, leaving companies vulnerable to chaos and confusion when the inevitable crisis hits. Similarly, CSR policies that don't go beyond an empty mission statement drafted and forgotten will be weak and ineffective.

This past year has eliminated any doubt that having a sturdy CSR framework in place is a matter of risk mitigation. As the public looks to companies to speak on fast-paced current events, a streamlined crisis communications-style approach must be incorporated to make sure that companies say the right thing at the right time. If no such plan is in place, companies risk reputational damage for tone-deaf comments, empty statements or radio silence.

Lucy O'Brien is a Senior Account Executive at PRCG | Haggerty LLC., a leading crisis and litigation communications firm headquartered in New York. ○



Lucy O'Brien

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The power of trust in times of crisis

The catastrophic events of 2020 illustrate how easily trust is lost during a crisis, and why establishing and maintaining trust is paramount for protecting brands' reputations.

By Donovan Roche

The year 2020 was one for the ages. If an unprecedented pandemic was the only crisis to befall us, that would've been enough. But we also endured racial injustice and protests, political discord from a never-more-divided nation and job loss mounting to an economic recession.

The common thread connecting everything—COVID-19, civil unrest, our government and the election results—is a massively overwhelming lack of trust: in our scientists, our law enforcement, our leadership, our media and even our fellow man.

Of course, the thought that America is suffering from a “trust crisis” is nothing new; the buzz term has surfaced often over the past few years, particularly with respect to consumers' lack of trust in the corporate world. In fact, one Gallup poll found that two-thirds of adults worldwide believe corruption in business is widespread. But the perfect storm of national and global crises we experienced, and continue to, have shown just how pervasive the trust problem is.

Iconic investor Warren Buffett once said, “Trust is like the air we breathe—when it's present, nobody really notices. When it's absent, everyone notices.” Indeed, whether a government, business or individual, the currency of trust is the most valuable asset we have. It's hard to earn, challenging to maintain and incredibly difficult to regain if lost.

As we embark on this very uncertain year, let's look at some key pillars for building trust during a crisis. If you incorporate these into your go-forward communications strategy, you will be poised to increase confidence in your constituents while safeguarding your brand's reputation.

Speak the truth

Silence might be golden, but not during a crisis. If people don't hear from you, particularly those impacted by the crisis, they will grow concerned from lack of information and begin to develop their own story. By being consistent in your communications, you not only drive the conversation, you also instill trust in your audience.

Consider this: A Business Insider study found that Dr. Anthony Fauci and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo were the most trusted coronavirus communicators in the country. Why? Because every time you turned on the TV, you would see one

or the other addressing the pandemic's constantly changing evolution.

Of course, you must be more than just consistently visible to build trust. You also have to be comfortable delivering difficult news—that's the nature of the game—and being direct with your audience, even if you're telling them something they won't want to hear. Trust begins with the truth.

Recall that President Trump said he made the decision to not tell the American public the gravity of the coronavirus because he didn't want the country to panic. Whether you believe his intentions were pure or not, from a trust and how to handle a crisis standpoint, this was the worst thing he could do. Withholding the truth or making the situation seem less severe than it is doesn't help those impacted by the crisis, it robs them of the ability to properly prepare and behave, which ultimately breeds distrust.

It's not about you

When bad things happen, and people are put on the defensive, the natural tendency is fight or flight. One way or the other, they want to protect themselves—not show vulnerability, take accountability or demonstrate concern for others. As counterintuitive as it may seem, this is exactly what one should do when a crisis hits to build trust. Rather than thinking of just themselves, or their brand, leaders need to show responsibility for the broader universe of those affected by the crisis, from employees and customers to society as a whole.

How the National Basketball Association and its commissioner, Adam Silver, responded to the COVID-19 pandemic was a monumental undertaking, but it serves as a textbook example of keeping all stakeholders in mind with your crisis response. When a player tested positive for COVID-19 on March 11, the NBA set out to develop an innovative way to safely resume the season. The answer was to hold all games in one location—the bubble, hosted at Disney World in Orlando—and follow strict precautions, including daily testing and not allowing any visitors, from family members to fans. Not only did the NBA come up with a creative solution to address the crisis, they collaborated with and deftly communicated to all stakeholders—teams, players and fans—throughout the three-month season, finishing with a

remarkable zero COVID-19 positive tests.

Another good though very different example is when Starbucks had to confront a charge of racism in 2018 when two black men were kicked out of one of its Philadelphia stores for not purchasing anything. The event was captured on cell video—as so many incidents that escalate into crises are—and it quickly went viral on social media. Following a lackluster apology, which led to employee dissonance and public protests, Starbucks President and CEO Kevin Johnson



Donovan Roche

recognized the need to take full responsibility for the incident. He posted a heartfelt video apology to the brand's website and shared the same sincerity on multiple TV news interviews. Most importantly, Starbucks closed 8,000 stores across the U.S. to conduct racial bias training. While this cost the brand more than \$12 million in lost sales, the action showed that Starbucks was committed to addressing the real problem head-on, and not at one store but holistically throughout its organization. This level of follow-through is the most effective way to build trust.

Humanity hits home

One of the biggest mistakes a crisis communicator can make is to get so wrapped up in delivering the message that they forget to be human. At the end of the day, all people—whether an employee, customer or the public at large—want to know that you care about their wellbeing and, following a crisis, you are focused on making it right.

One of the hardest hit industries impacted by COVID-19 was travel and hospitality. When President and CEO of Marriott International Arne Sorenson had to inform employees of how the crisis would affect their jobs, he elected to speak to them directly via video, against the better judgement of his advisors. It was the right move. In the anguished message, Sorenson doesn't just display empathy, he is on the verge of tears. No employee—or any of the many YouTube viewers, for that matter—

— Continued on page 23



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Messaging city hall: crisis PR for the public sector

Best practices when providing communications support to municipal leaders and local governments.

By T.J. Winick

2020 was a calendar of one crisis after another: COVID-19, racial justice demonstrations in the streets and election-related chaos. Cities and towns across America this year found themselves overwhelmed and, in many cases, on their own when it came to providing direction during a rapidly evolving pandemic. Operations plans that would, in ordinary times, be developed over weeks or months needed to come together in hours or days. At the same time, municipal officials had to communicate clearly and often about safety protocols and new processes for accessing essential services such as schools, public transportation, food pantries and shelters that would continue to function and be available to residents who relied on them.

Forced to navigate the uncharted waters of a global pandemic, many municipalities turned to outside crisis management and communications firms for support to help them lead and convey a sense of calm and control to a multitude of stakeholder groups including families with school-age children, small business owners, and senior citizens.

The sheer number of communications required to ensure an informed citizenry at the time when wide-spread closures were occurring for the first time were staggering. They included—but were by no means limited to—press releases pertaining to COVID testing and case counts, letters to local organizations informing them of municipal regulations, website and social media content and scripts for phone banks. All those and much more were needed so that residents were aware of what actions their local leaders were taking to keep them safe and so they knew who to contact in the event they needed information or assistance.

These aren't your typical firm-client relationships, where you balance a scope of work with other ongoing accounts, each with an allotted amount of staff and time. This is an all-hands-on-deck, 24/7 crisis response for the duration of an intense partnership. Both parties needed to be comfortable with that reality when agreeing to work together. While some of issues-management projects may be short-term, others such as COVID response or a major emergency such as a natural gas explosion or a bridge collapse can persist for weeks or even months.

Having worked side by side with one of

Massachusetts' largest cities during the onset of COVID, our firm would like to offer the following best practices when providing communications support to city or town governments.

The state of the state. Any guidelines or orders mandated by the municipality will be superseded by state and/or federal orders. Therefore, it's critical that you follow as many public information channels as possible so you're familiar with the very latest news, regulations and mandates your client may be subject to. Don't assume municipal employees or elected officials are consuming news 24/7. In many cases, they'll be overwhelmed with the challenges in front of them.

Being familiar with the issues under consideration and the decisions being made at higher levels of government will help you provide proof points to justify your recommendations. Consider sharing daily news clips of how other municipalities, locally and nationally, are issuing regulations or creatively solving shared problems. For an unprecedented crisis like COVID, when everyone is learning on the fly, the additional context will be especially helpful and informative.

Keep it brief. Residents don't want to read long, in-depth emails or texts. When sending out electronic communications, stay focused on high-level messages and need-to-know information only. Yes, you should anticipate potential follow-up questions and provide additional resources but don't write 1,000 words when 250 will do. You can always hyperlink to web pages with more specific information for a particular stakeholder group.

Provide advanced notice. We all need time to process information and adjust. For instance, families may need a backup plan for child/elderly care and those whose loved ones rely on home healthcare workers may need to come up with an alternative plan. Whenever possible, provide residents with ample notice of a new ordinance such as a curfew or stay-at-home order and continue to remind them as that change goes into effect. Also, be sure to communicate with partners such as the school district, first responders, and city/town departments prior to general announcements so they aren't caught flatfooted when they start getting questions about how they will be impacted. If the Superintendent of Schools or head of a major non-profit are receiving press calls

and saying they weren't consulted, it's not a good look for anyone and doesn't inspire confidence.

Don't allow a messaging vacuum. Be sure to give municipal leaders the information they need to speak confidently about the situation. While top city/town staff should be the first to communicate, appreciate that support staff can be effective ambassadors as well and don't let them be caught off-guard if they get a question from constituents about an issue. Make sure they receive the latest developments from the state as well as important details such as transportation schedules, school safety protocols and deadlines for residents and/or businesses to apply for financial assistance if available. Anyone who's authorized to share information or answer questions from the public must have the same messaging; no one should be using yesterday's messages when today's may be different.

Choose your channel. Understand how different constituents typically receive information. Are they most comfortable with email, a flyer, a phone call, a social media post or a text message? You should plan for a multi-channel strategy to meet residents where they are and to ensure no one is left in the dark. That means knowing how many languages are needed for translation services and doing your best to anticipate what resources will be needed for all major content. It helps having individuals who are native speakers review drafts early to ensure the correct messages are being conveyed.

Too much is rarely enough. Just as we found with many of our private-sector clients in early 2020, the steady stream of communications that might have proven a bit of an annoyance in normal times were warmly welcomed at the onset of COVID. Remember that, especially during uncertainty, people look to their leaders to guide them and to reassure them that everything will be okay. During a major crisis that impacts everyone, don't worry about sharing too often, as long as those communications are clear. In a crisis, it's a lack of communication that sows confusion.

T.J. Winick is a Senior Vice President at Solomon, McCown & Cence. ○



T.J. Winick

An aerial photograph showing a two-lane asphalt road that curves through a dense forest of evergreen trees. To the right of the road is a calm body of water, likely a lake or a wide river, with a rocky shoreline. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding greenery. The overall scene is serene and natural.

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Lessons learned: COVID and long-term care facilities

Perhaps no industry has borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic worse than the nation's long-term care facilities. And yet, in the months since, they've been able to pivot from the crisis and turn things around.

By Michelle Ubben

The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that spared no one, leaving hospitals scrambling to find PPE, respirators and adequate staff, schools pivoting to deliver quality education virtually and restaurants turning to delivery and pickup options when in-person dining was cut in half or shuttered altogether.

But no sector has borne the brunt of this crisis like the nursing home and long-term care profession.

From the very beginning, when the first U.S. outbreak was reported in a nursing home in Kirkland, Washington, the long-term care profession has been the fulcrum of this crisis. By May, 28,000 nursing home residents and staff had died of COVID nationwide, and to date nursing homes account for 35 percent of the nation's deaths.

The factors that made the long-term care profession especially vulnerable were largely beyond its control: Nursing homes, already working with their communities' most vulnerable, serve a population that proved to be uniquely susceptible to the virus. Although technically health care facilities, nursing homes lacked many of the specialized resources required to treat COVID patients, things like rooms with negative airflow, sufficient PPE and ventilators—and the staff trained in how to use them.

As a consequence, nursing homes with COVID outbreaks by and large had to transfer sick patients en masse to hospitals. This led to a perception by some that they were simply dumping their problem on an already burdened part of the healthcare system.

Faulty perceptions plagued the profession in other ways, too. Based on an October survey conducted in Florida, 2020's hyper-partisan political environment also colored how people viewed nursing homes' handling of the crisis, with Democrats delivering much lower grades.

Although determinations to lock down or reopen nursing homes were executive decisions imposed on facilities by the government, the nursing homes themselves bore the wrath of many family members and the public.

So, what are the crisis lessons to be gleaned from the decidedly unenviable position that nursing homes found themselves

in during the pandemic?

First and foremost, be nimble. This was—and remains—a public health crisis without a playbook. Knowledge of how the virus was transmitted, what would effectively stop the spread, how long it could live on surfaces, and other critical information was simply lacking in the early days of the crisis and evolved from day to day. Like other parts of the health care sector, the long-term care profession had to closely monitor guidance from public health officials for direction, and had to train and retrain staff to observe new and unfamiliar safety protocols. Not knowing how to beat back the virus on day one was excusable, but learning quickly and holding staff accountable for new, higher standards of hygiene was expected.

Second, be transparent. Duck and cover is a common response to crisis under the best of circumstances. When the consequences are being numbered in body bags and stored in refrigerated mortuary trucks, the instinct to circle the wagons can be profound. In this case, when some state authorities also were reluctant to release data that put states in a bad light, there was added incentive to go mum. But trust and credibility are byproducts of telling the truth and sharing information in a crisis, even when the numbers look bad. Nursing homes that kept family members and in some cases the media informed in real time were seen as reliable information sources. Although HIPAA regulations prevent naming individuals with COVID, sharing the numbers of residents and staff testing positive, hospitalizations, and, tragically, deaths is permissible and necessary to build trust.

Third, follow through. For family members with a loved one in a nursing home, COVID has produced almost unbearable anxiety and helplessness. They've had no choice but to rely on the nursing facility to take the right steps to keep their loved one safe. So promise-keeping becomes ultra-critical. A fundamental tactic of crisis management is to shift focus from the problem to the solution. In this case, when the announced solutions are routine staff testing, contact tracing, consistent mask wearing, frequent hand washing and other hygiene protocols, it's imperative that facil-

ity leaders follow through and make sure those procedures are followed.

Fourth, be human. In the past year, nursing homes have had to deal with some of the most unthinkably painful human experiences, including staff members holding up a phone so family members who weren't allowed to be in the room could say goodbye to dying parents. They have had to meet the needs of frail elders for love and social interaction, while also taking precautions to stop the spread of this disease. At the same time, many nursing home professionals also had to cope with the death of coworkers. Their outcomes haven't been perfect, but their efforts have been nothing short of heroic. COVID doesn't just present a threat to health but a challenge to the soul. Nursing home management that led with a human face rather than a corporate one got points for their humanity in the throes of this crisis.

Finally, tell your story. Although the last chapter has yet to be written, the long-term care profession already has a positive story to tell. Upwards of 93 percent of nursing homes have the ability to test their entire staff, and they've decreased the lag time in waiting for results from 3.8 days in August to 2.1 days in November. That aggressive testing is paying off, with a dramatic reduction in deaths from COVID in nursing homes as a percentage of COVID cases—down from 42.9 percent on May 24 to 25.7 percent on November 15.

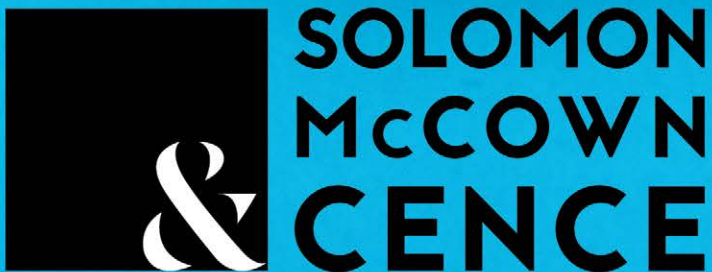
That doesn't mean it's all rosy for long-term care, nor should the profession pretend it is. The percentage of nursing homes reporting a shortage in any of their staff (nursing, clinical, aides or other) has risen from 20.4 percent in late May to 22.4 percent in mid-November. Nursing home populations were declining even before COVID, straining budgets—which were then raided further to pay for PPE, testing and unexpected staff needs.



Michelle Ubben

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This won't work in a crisis.



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Managing crisis around bankruptcy filings

A bankruptcy filing is a significant crisis event for any company, requiring a proactive, integrated communications program that speaks to all impacted stakeholders across every phase of the process.

By Phil Denning

Every bankruptcy is unique, with the specifics varying case-by-case. However, what's consistent across all situations is that a bankruptcy filing and the speculation surrounding it will cause a significant amount of disruption and potential confusion.

As with any crisis situation, stakeholders can forgive corporate mistakes or transgressions, provided the company responds appropriately, but they also possess long memories for botched or nonexistent responses. Decision-makers and executive teams facing a crisis must not only think and act quickly, but also think and act strategically.

The primary goals of crisis management are to limit the damage, allow all hands to return to focusing on the business, preserve your company's relationships and reputation and establish a foundation for recovery. These goals all apply to managing communications around a bankruptcy filing.

Companies in crisis are most effective at regaining the public's trust when they explicitly communicate the precise steps they're taking to address the issue and actively demonstrate that these steps will lead to resolution. Fortunately, an in-court bankruptcy process typically has a structured process with milestones that can be leveraged to communicate with key stakeholders.

The rumors start early

A publicly-traded, reporting company will likely see rumors speculating about a potential bankruptcy filing well before a filing is made. The speculation can be sparked by a filing including a "going concern" warning, the announcement of a process to review of strategic alternatives or even the disclosure of a potential bankruptcy among the options being considered.

The media frequently writes stories about companies hiring financial, legal or consulting advisors that may have bankruptcy experience. Unfortunately, these stories are typically very brief and do not provide a platform for providing context. These rumors or stories will trigger a series of questions from internal and external stakeholders, but the company may not be able to directly answer all the questions immediately. This may force difficult conversations earlier than planned, leaving the company

to address the rumors and speculation with anxious vendors, employees, shareholders and other stakeholders.

Recommended strategy: Once a filing or disclosure is made—or once a reporter calls—it's unlikely that you'll be able to stop a story from being written. It's also unlikely that there will be an opportunity to insert any balance nor the ability to provide context, so the communications strategy must focus on preparing for direct communications with the impacted stakeholders once the story runs or the disclosure is made, rather than simply trying to manage a story.

Targeted stakeholder communications

Preparing the communications around a bankruptcy requires developing a game plan for each stakeholder group: employees, customers, vendors, suppliers, landlords, creditors and shareholders, among others. Each company may have distinct stakeholder groups specific to their business, so it's important to take the time to map out the various groups, understand what their likely questions or concerns will be and align on what messaging will be delivered.

The messages should be consistent across all communications. However, the areas of focus or emphasis will vary by stakeholder group.

Recommended strategy: as you prepare for a potential bankruptcy filing, first create a stakeholder map that enumerates the various stakeholder groups, how they will be impacted, the role they will play in the process, any particular issues or challenges specific to that stakeholder that should be considered, the frequency of communication during the process, who will communicate with the stakeholder group and what the overall communications goal or objective is when engaging with that stakeholder group.

Messaging on filing day

While it's difficult to manage the potential rumors or speculation of a potential filing, a silver lining to those difficult days is that when you need to announce a filing, most stakeholders won't be surprised by the announcement.

The structure of the filing—a "prepackaged" or "pre-negotiated" reorganization plan, a 363 Sale with a Stalking Horse bidder—each have communications challenges and messages to focus on. Once the

filing is made, the company should focus each stakeholder group on how the process will benefit the company and the key stakeholders once complete.

Some stakeholders may presume that a bankruptcy filing means the company is going away, so the messaging on the filing day should clearly articulate how the business will operate going forward and how the restructuring will enable the company to continue to serve each stakeholder group.



Phil Denning

Recommended strategy: When you don't have all the answers people want, it's helpful to communicate the process you will undertake. Focusing the discussion on the process and key milestones will help to guide the communications. Preparing a detailed rollout plan with tailored communications materials that can be immediately cascaded throughout all communications, internal and external is key to managing announcement day. Having the materials prepared and shared with the appropriate members so that they can provide as much information and insight into the process as possible will provide comfort that the company is on the right path.

Leveraging milestones in the process

There will be certain court-driven milestones during the bankruptcy process that will provide the opportunity to proactively communicate with certain stakeholders. Whether it's the court approving First Day Motions, the approval of DIP financing, the requirement to issue notice to employees of potential job losses under the WARN Act, or sharing the timeline of a 363 Sale bid procedures are all opportunities to engage with your stakeholders, educate them on the process and reinforce the messaging on how this process will result in a company better positioned for the future.

Recommended strategy: The company, in collaboration with its legal and communications teams, should prepare a timeline of events that will unfold over the course of the bankruptcy process. The structure of

— Continued on next page

CRISIS AND BANKRUPTCY

— Continued from page 22

the filing will drive the types and timing of the events. The court's approval of the First Day Motions is the first opportunity to communicate some good news. The communications team should develop a plan to proactively communicate what these motions mean to the impacted stakeholders. Leveraging milestones in the process is a key first step in resetting the narrative.

Resetting the narrative

A bankruptcy filing is similar to other crisis situations in which the company will need to reset the narrative around itself following the event. While filing bankruptcy can be very painful and disruptive, it can allow a company to de-lever the balance sheet, find a new owner, close stores, renegotiate leases or obtain financing against assets that are difficult to finance outside of bankruptcy.

Properly positioning the go-forward, restructured business that will emerge from the bankruptcy filing is an important phase in resetting the perception of the business. Whatever path the company takes to emerge from bankruptcy, it should look for opportunities to communicate to the key stakeholders how the company will be stronger and better positioned for the fu-

ture after completing the process.

Recommended strategy: The reputational overhang from a bankruptcy may take time to fade, and rebuilding credibility and goodwill will not happen overnight. The resetting process will take time and will

require implementing a proactive communications program, showing progress over time.

Phil Denning is a Partner at ICR and head of the firm's special situations group, advising clients on a range of crisis issues. ○

COVID AND LONG-TERM CARE

— Continued from page 20

Nursing home funding from both Medicare and Medicaid have been declining, making it increasingly hard to maintain quality standards, even without the exponential added strain of a pandemic. Part of telling the profession's story must be sharing both how it rose to the occasion of COVID and what policy changes and investment are needed for the industry to

meet the needs of an aging America into the future.

Given the positive prospects for a vaccine, we'll likely move beyond the pandemic in 2021, but the lessons learned along the way, especially by those in the crosshairs of the crisis, like the long-term care profession, should be studied and embraced by all.

Michelle Ubben is Partner and President at Sachs Media. ○

THE POWER OF TRUST

— Continued from page 16

is going to think this leader doesn't care greatly for his people.

The glue that holds it together

So much goes into building trust: exuding credibility and consistency, being transparent and truthful, showing vulnerability and accountability, expressing empathy and compassion, and much more. But, as

the events of 2020 made clear, when trust breaks down in any one of these areas, connections fall apart. Never underestimate the power of trust—and how it can impact your brand if gained or lost, particularly in times of crisis.

Donovan Roche is Vice President of Havas Trust, the crisis communications practice of Havas Formula, named one of America's Top PR Agencies by Forbes in 2020. ○

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Predictions for PR agencies in 2021

Why 2021 is shaping up to be a banner year for the mergers and acquisitions landscape within the public relations world.

By Art Stevens and Rich Jachetti

There's no denying that COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. Our personal and professional lives are dramatically different now. The pandemic has forced companies in every industry to quickly pivot and reevaluate how they conduct business—and how they can carry on in a smarter, more efficient and resilient manner moving forward.

Global crisis or not, The Stevens Group predicts that 2021 will be a banner year for PR agencies, as well as for mergers and acquisitions.

Despite the devastation COVID-19 and current economic uncertainties have had on many organizations this year, more PR agencies than you may realize have actually had good to outstanding performances in 2020. In fact, several folks in the industry we've had conversations with recently say they see increasing opportunities for completing deals in 2021.

A recent SearchEngineLand article stated: "While 2021 still holds some economic uncertainty, digital marketing leaders indicate that their agencies have been remarkably resilient, according to a fall survey of 167 global marketing leaders who use its services. The findings show that most agencies will finish 2020 with higher annual revenues than in 2019."

Of course, while those PR agencies whose niches are restaurant and travel/tourism took pretty big hits—many of their clients either terminated their relationships, sliced their budgets or went on leave—many report that many of their budgets are returning, and they believe there's an end to the frustration is in sight.

The Stevens Groups predicts that airlines, cruise ships, tourist destinations, resorts and other categories are gearing up for a better 2021, particularly during the second half of the year.

So, yes, the pandemic will continue to influence the deal market over the next 12 months. The good news, however, is that we're observing a surprising level of optimism.

Emerging from the cocoon

In 2020, while there has been a lot of pent-up activity, we expect that many agency clients will begin to come out of their cocoons in 2021 and once again start spending on marketing, PR and brand-

ing. As a result, the money will flow as the economy begins to rebound, and agencies will experience a banner year. We believe it could even be much better than 2019 (right before the pandemic hit).

Here are some other trends we expect to see in 2021:

- More clients than ever will turn to PR agencies for the value they generate.
- There will be more acquisitions as PR agency owners start to see the value of becoming part of larger organizations that can help them grow faster than they ever would have on their own. They will also consider this step to help generate business and take administrative and back-office nuisances off their hands.
- Buyers will come from new ranks. For example, mid-size PR agencies that want to expand their bandwidth and services will acquire smaller firms, and the criteria will be to achieve greater critical mass; amass complementary services and niches; represent in markets they're presently not in; get new and valuable clients; and, recruit new management personnel that will redound to everyone's benefit.

• New categories of buyers will jump into the world of acquisitions: More and more private equity firms, family offices, consulting practices and ad agencies will be jumping into the world of PR agency acquisition.

• There will be more roll-ups. What does this mean? PR agencies will sell part of their equity to outside investors and, in return, receive the capital to acquire agencies and reach a specific size to have a liquidity event. We believe acquired agencies will also benefit from this "double-dipping." CEOs of mid-sized agencies will use this mindset to grow their businesses at a faster rate to become an overnight powerhouse.

• PR agency budgets will increase exponentially because of the pent-up inactivity for much of 2020.

• PR firms will continue to diversify to stay in the game. As we noted in a previous article, it's no longer fashionable to put all of your eggs in one niche. If you're in the travel space, consider exploring similar niches like consumer products. Those agencies that are more diversified and increase their bandwidth tend to weather a crisis better than niche firms.

• Firms will increase the pace at which they are diversifying their service offerings. For example, earned media will eventually take a back seat to more robust, quantifiable offerings such as paid, searched, owned and inbound, and of course, all things digital. These services will replace earned media as the cash cow that will drive PR agency growth in 2021 and beyond.

The bottom line

Agency leaders must continue their proactive, aggressive efforts in the form of 2021 strategy initiatives and plans—stabilizing and taking care of employees, connecting with clients and providing reassurance to keep vital services going, preserving as much of the current business as possible and observing the competition for opportunities to succeed throughout the pandemic recovery stages.

Ultimately, this approach will help boost their odds of maintaining a better balance and shaping their future as we begin to gradually come out on the other side.

The Stevens Group is deeply involved in helping to establish niche roll-ups and working with private equity firms to accomplish this goal. In fact, we believe we're taking the lead in bringing more private equity into the PR agency/marketing communications world and educating such firms on the benefits of investing in it. Within five years, you'll see further consolidation of PR agencies with new players. PR is now considered a growth industry by investors, and we predict that, in time, there will be a scarcity of qualified PR firms available for acquisition.

You heard it here first.

Art Stevens is Managing Partner of The Stevens Group and Rich Jachetti is Senior Partner at The Stevens Group, PR agency mergers and acquisitions consultants and facilitators. ●



Art Stevens



Rich Jachetti

That's why Stanton builds comprehensive communications strategies that ensure our clients are fully prepared before, during and after a crisis hits.

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2020: A year in crisis that could fool Nostradamus

The events of this year have proven that the expertise of crisis communications professionals will continue to be in high demand.

By Thomas Butler

A few weeks back, I got curious: What were the French mystic Michel de Nostradamus' predictions for 2020? Each year, there's generally a new documentary presenting his vague predictions 500 years ago of cataclysmic events that would unfold in our present day.

Given the sheer number and magnitude of 2020's global emergency events, pinpointing at least some of what the globe is presently dealing with should've been a no-brainer for someone with his visions. While interesting, the articles and videos I found were nothing more than so-called "news items" from unrecognized sources, mostly seeking to bend 500-year-old predictions to support an agenda or conspiracy theory they're peddling.

As the year concludes, it's human nature to wonder if he—or anyone else—did and could foresee what's going on. It's abundantly clear that America's people, government, businesses and non-profit organizations feel claustrophobic, trapped and victimized by the COVID-19 crisis and all it has wrought. It's a crisis bubble under which much of our society is trapped and against which many feel powerless, with many organizations and their leaders being pushed to the limit.

For my industry colleagues, specializing in crisis communications, we're all quite used to—and adept at—managing corporate reputations and the playbook of public actions to take, when serious trouble strikes.

For leaders of business or even government, periods of stress and trouble can be an opportune time to demonstrate true leadership qualities that will matter most and stand out when we eventually emerge from the health and economic crisis.

Steering through a crisis or two

Long ago, I believed I knew a fair amount about this. In the first dozen years of my PR career, I'd worked on crisis control and messaging matters pertaining to countless high-profile litigations, federal investigations, prosecutions, RICO cases, mergers and acquisitions, new product rollouts and even the painful events of the World Trade Center terrorist attack, as spokesperson for New York City's Firefighters union, as that department lost 343 brave souls on 9/11, while effectuating the largest civilian evacuation on U.S. soil.

While generally considered one event, the New York terror attacks were, in fact, two coordinated strikes, albeit at sites adjacent

to each other. As an organizational leader preparing your team to be game-ready, consider what that city's first responder manpower and preparedness capability might've been if two simultaneous terror attacks were not located together. Like a tsunami, it would've likely overwhelmed the resources at hand.

A long-time client, who led a \$13 billion pension fund but also had a para-military background, would always preach—to his team and in the bylined articles on which would collaborate—the need for organizations and their leaders to always be ready, prepared and capable to effectively manage the potential for two simultaneous crises. To him, this was a real scenario. 2020 is the proving ground.

The 16 years working regularly with this client, a highly adept field general, was perhaps much better guidance and game day preparedness for managing a 2020-styled crisis or even the most telling of Nostradamus' poetic quatrain predictions.

For our agency, which is used to guiding clients through major crisis situations and pivoting to a positive reemergence, I'd estimate we were tasked with no less than 15 dire business and reputational crisis situations over the pandemic period. We likely offered counsel to a dozen more.

Such a rising tide for emergency reputational and communications guidance illustrates the pressure cooker that business and organizational leaders were forced into this past year.

Last January, when life was simpler, a noted clinician came to us to address an attack by a newbie freelance journalist with an agenda. Our client, advised by prior counsel that he had nothing to lose by taking the interview, had by then recognized his reputation and business were at stake.

With our guidance, the half-baked story withered on the vine, allowing for a rapid pivot to proactively build the client's brand instead. Those were simpler times.

Before the ideoes of March

Right before Fauci became a single-name phenom, like Cher, Sting or Bono, the Butler team was immediately activated on the communication front lines, with two prominent medical first responder groups.

In early March, the FDNY Emergency Medical Service union, with the New York State Nurses Association, organized a major media briefing for the New York and

national press corps, to present concerns of insufficient staffing, preparation, safety precautions and personal protective equipment should the virus medical crisis truly take root. Their prophecies all came to pass.

Only days earlier, our firm had also been activated by a regional micro-brewery whose staff member was among the region's first positive cases, with their county health department's public disclosure only hours away and media conjecture at a frenzy.

As we researched, trained and prepared that client's public remarks, our agency was simultaneously tasked with announcing New York City's first medical first responder to become infected with the insidious virus. That client, the EMS, wanted to get the news out to communicate the dangerous nature of being front line workers, in a push for better resources to protect lives.

As news cycles boom and bust, the EMS announcement thankfully quenched much of media's appetite for the brewery virus story. That consumer brand's crisis, while still needing to be addressed, was relegated to second-tier news in a media market of over 15 million consumers. For competitive PR folks, and for both clients, this was the best positive outcome.

As the crisis field generals managing the message of two important news events, we passed the test, successfully effectuating simultaneous crisis situations, in one case elevating the news and the other deflating it, as the media's hunt for news of the growing contagion was taking over news cycles.

Who could have expected that we would now be in 2021 looking back in this manner?

In a major crisis, organizational leaders can certainly crack under intense stress and pressure, and yes, lose their capacity to effectively function and provide the vision expected of them under normal circumstances.

That is why the skill and capacity of the leaders of our industry, adept and trusted in crisis communications, will continue to be in demand. This industry's capability to demonstrate talent and courage under fire, in these uncertain times, will help write the history for how the story of 2020 will be recorded and recollected for centuries to come. Let's look ahead and look forward to a dynamic 2021.

Thomas P. Butler is President of Butler Associates Strategic Communications. ○



Thomas Butler

A woman's profile is shown in the lower-left corner, looking towards the right. Her head is filled with a complex arrangement of interlocking gears. The background is a solid blue color, overlaid with white, hand-drawn sketches of business concepts: a bar chart with an upward arrow, a line graph with an upward arrow, a lightbulb, several dollar signs, and various question marks and arrows.

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Ten reasons to get a PR agency valuation

There are a number of circumstances when it becomes beneficial for PR agency owners to have a valuation of their firms performed by a qualified outside advisory organization.

By Rick Gould

I was recently called by a prospective seller who asked for advice on the value of her firm. She was told by a competitor of my firm that she should simply double the annual fees, assuming her bottom line was at least 20 percent. What he didn't ask her were a series of questions needing answers and detail in order to fairly and accurately value her firm. There are at least ten different items needed to value a firm. He asked for none of these, and only shared his illusionary model for valuation.

Contrary to the belief of many prospective sellers, firms are not valued at a "multiple of net revenues."

I've been valuing PR firms for more than twenty-five years, initially as the CPA firm for many seller firms, and then since I started my own M&A advisory firm, Gould+Partners, in 2001. Valuing PR agencies is a complex process. It takes financial expertise, knowledge of the M&A marketplace and an understanding of how buyers create offers/term sheets.

There's no exact science in valuing a PR firm. Every valuation is different. PR is a business in which both actual financial performance, recast for many adjustments and several intangibles, will determine value. Items such as relationships with clients, depth of second tier of management, specialties and fee levels may also impact value.

There's generally an element of subjectivity in valuing a firm, but there certainly are objective rules and guidelines that a professional who values PR firms should use. In addition, there's extensive review work performed prior to doing the actual valuation report. Every PR firm has its unique components.

There's no cut-and-dried formula for valuing a firm.

Hiring a qualified outside organization to perform the valuation is well worth the investment required to complete them. While having a thorough understanding of your firm's value is a good idea, there are several specific circumstances when it's particularly beneficial to get an accurate PR firm valuation.

Establishing a baseline for a "build to sell" strategy. Today's valuation is your starting point.

Potential Sale. When contemplating putting your PR firm on the market, knowing how much your firm is worth can help you tremendously in understanding the offer

made by a buyer for your firm.

Partner buy-in. When adding new partners to the firm, knowing your company's worth is necessary in order to ensure that your partners have appropriate and fair fiduciary responsibility within the organization.

Partner buyout. In order to ensure a fair transaction takes place when a partner buyout takes place, knowing a firm's value is key, especially if the partner is retiring or moving on to her/his next chapter of their career.

Partner split-up. When firm partners split up and potentially divide firm assets, understanding the value of your firm is imperative, especially in a contentious split-up, which is often the case.

Potential merger of two or more firms. A firm valuation is a valuable resource to have on hand when considering the merger of multiple firms. Again, knowing the value of your firm will help to ensure that a fair and reasonable transaction takes place should the firm merge with another firm. It will save time and cost if the valuation is already in place.

Growth plan. Having a comprehensive firm valuation can greatly help making beneficial business decisions on a day-to-day basis. It can also provide valuable information and insight when large and small opportunities for growth come along.

Borrowing power. Any substantial loan request may require an independent valuation.

Estate planning. When organizing your estate and creating a succession plan for your business, it's important to have an accurate business valuation on hand. This will help you with tax planning and assist you in determining who should ultimately inherit your financial interest in the firm. Valuation for an estate plan is very different than valuation for a sale of the firm.

Divorce. Whether a divorce is amicable or not, knowing the worth of your organization is a safe bet when you go into negotiations. Understanding how much the business you worked hard to build is worth can help ensure that a fair divorce settlement is reached, especially if the two owners splitting up are married.

There's no "rule of thumb." Every valuation is different. There are many moving parts. There are items that may add or subtract from the calculated value. And there

are many intangibles that impact the ultimate valuation, for example, top- and bottom-line trends, sudden loss of major clients, death of an owner who's a rainmaker, a key VP leaving and taking a major client and so forth.

Here's what I recommend

- Connect with the person who may do the valuation.
- Ask for his or her education credentials, such as certification in valuations, teaching valuations at the graduate level etc.
- Ask for his or her cost range.
- Ask how long it takes to do the valuation report.
- Ask for his or her references.
- Call the references and ask the following: Was there value? Was it timely? Did they receive high-quality service? Was the cost in line with the quote?

If you have a need for a valuation, do your homework. Interview the firms that provide this service, specifically the person who will do the valuation. Determine which firm and individual will give you the highest quality of service and product for a fair price.

Rick Gould, CPA, M.S., J.D., is Managing Partner of Gould+Partners. His new book, "Exiting Your Business The Right Way," is available to PR firm owners at no cost. ○



Rick Gould

PR brief

Profile Advisors handles Whitebox's challenge to LG

Profile Advisors is handling Whitebox Advisors' effort to block LG Corp.'s plan to spin off some businesses into a new holding company.

The New York hedge fund claims the scheme fails to address LG's "most pressing issue, which is the unprecedented discount at which the company trades relative to its assets, and accordingly, inferior return to shareholders."

Whitebox in its Dec. 14 letter to LG's board, said the decision to proceed with the spin-off reflects poorly on LG's corporate governance. "Despite clearly favorable alternatives, the board has unanimously approved a plan that, in our view, sacrifices minority shareholder return in order to resolve a family succession issue."

Whitebox, which has \$5.5 billion in assets under management, is a long-term shareholder of Korea-based LG.

The hedge fund said it has repeatedly sought to engage LG's board and management team "in a constructive, private manner over the past two years" and is extremely disappointed that its feedback and viewpoints have been dismissed or ignored.

Profile Advisors' Greg Marose, Bela Kirpalani and Charlotte Kiaie represent Whitebox.

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Calibrating crisis responses in the disinformation age

The post-truth era has rewritten the crisis playbook, making it critical for leaders to have a scalable response plan handy when their brands or reputations are attacked.

By Matt Conroy

The incremental condensing of the news cycle that's taken place over the last 30 years has changed the way organizations think about crisis communications. Starting with the rise of 24-hour cable news in the 1990s, then spurred on by the rapid expansion of the Internet, the advent of electronic media platforms and finally the proliferation of social media, the "half-life" of a standard corporate crisis has progressively shrunk. Situations that once might have taken days—if not weeks—to build, simmer and boil over might now explode and quickly diminish in the space of several hours.

The Trump era might be thought of as the ultimate phase in this evolution. As the news media have scrambled to keep up with the Tweeter-in-Chief, financial, personal and political crises that might have doomed a more reticent president have fizzled out like wet firecrackers. This is due, in part, to the inability of the news media to focus on any one thing for too long, but Trump has understood like no politician before him that in the social media age "crisis fatigue" can set in, meaning that few scandals are long-lasting.

Managing crises in an age when print media was still king was often more of a marathon than a sprint. Investigative stories tended to evolve more slowly but could also last far longer, extending for days or weeks with intense focus from newsrooms. Accordingly, it was much harder to just turn the page. The default crisis communications strategy that grew out of the print era was to mobilize all available resources, apologize, quickly fire/discipline those responsible and tell everyone what you were going to do to ensure it would never happen again.

Today, much of this standard crisis playbook still holds true, especially for far-reaching reputational emergencies or cases of serious financial malfeasance. But with so many channels for disseminating information and such a limitless well of outrage on all sides of the ideological spectrum, what might once have passed without notice is today far likelier to balloon quickly on social platforms, migrate to second tier electronic outlets, and potentially make their way into mainstream regional or national media. On the other hand, the garden variety crisis may be prone to dying a quicker death as the crowd moves on to

the next trending topic.

The breathtaking speed at which a crisis can metastasize has resulted in a tendency for corporate communications departments to maintain a near permanent state of hyper-vigilance. Breaking news alerts, slick social monitoring tools, ready-made crisis protocols and easily adaptable standby statements are ubiquitous parts of today's crisis communications toolkit, enabling companies to leap into action quickly before things spiral and they appear unresponsive or uncaring.

But having the tools to respond quickly doesn't mean that a quick response—or even any response—is necessarily the best course of action in a crisis. Crisis situations come in all stripes, from an ill-advised tweet to an executive resignation to job cuts, and in the social media era they can disappear as quickly as they surface. So, what guidelines should leaders keep in mind when deciding when and how to respond?

Keep it in perspective

Investing in crisis response training and capabilities is wise but avoid overreacting. Not every situation requires a full-frontal response. There's a marked difference between a financial scandal that can send shares tumbling and a dissatisfied customer making your life difficult on Twitter. Sometimes responding to information only serves to amplify it, so calibrate your response and understand the potential business, employee and social impact before deciding to act.

Correct the record

False or misleading information from reputable media sources can spread quickly, resulting in a snowball effect that can damage your brand and reputation if left unaddressed. But there's a vast difference between a keyboard warrior with a small following stoking outrage on Twitter and an exposé by an investigative reporter at the *Wall Street Journal*. When needed, corrections should be negotiated on a one-to-one basis with reporters and editors, not hashed out in the open by executives on social platforms, which may only serve to burn bridges.

Maintain consistency

Gather the facts before responding. In a crisis, it is better to be right than to be fast, though speed and accuracy are both important. And when you do respond, make

sure your response is consistent across all of your platforms, including your corporate website and social channels, and that it's accurately reflected in any talking points your spokespeople may be using.

Perhaps we'll see less disinformation and a somewhat less frantic media environment in the post-Trump era, but it's hard to imagine the genie being put back in the bottle. The ever-shrinking news cycle can be a double-edged sword, with crises tending to cut quickly, but not always deeply. Having a scalable crisis plan handy and maintaining perspective are the keys to calibrating the right response.

Matt Conroy is Senior Vice President at Stanton PR and Marketing. 



Matt Conroy

PR brief

PR firms doing more with less

Not only do marketing professionals say they're doing more with less these days, they're also trying to do that on a playing field where the goalposts keep moving, according to a new survey released by technology and business research company The Analyst Syndicate and events company SINC.

Perhaps the biggest of the challenges that the 150 marketing pros surveyed face is the degree to which budgets overall are shrinking. On average, budgets were down by 42 percent for the second half of 2020. Only two respondents said that their marketing budgets had gone down by less than 20 percent, and 119 said that their budgets had shrunk by 40 percent or more.

The move from live events to virtual ones is affecting how marketers are willing to allocate the budgets that remain. Only 14 respondents said that tradeshow and conferences were a major focus in their budgets. On the other side, 29 say they are prioritizing such digital assets as white papers or research, and 57 named digital marketing as the primary way they're spending their marketing dollars.

While a third of those surveyed said they were working on new products and marketing segments, most added that they didn't have the go-to-market funding necessary to launch. Thirty-three percent of them said that they have less than half the budget that they feel is necessary to succeed.

In addition, a high level of uncertainty is making marketers' jobs even more difficult. Almost half (48 percent) said they were uncertain about the economy and the course of the pandemic, with 26 percent adding that another worry was how their competition may be responding to COVID.

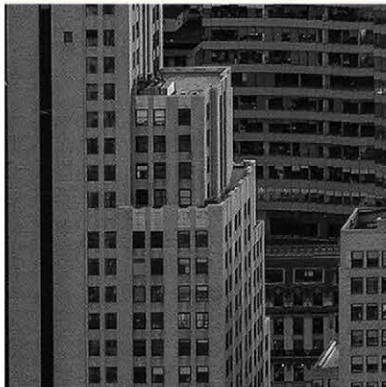
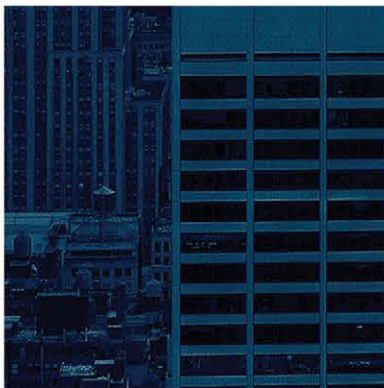
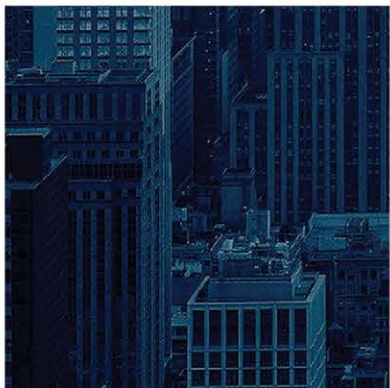
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Conservative media landscape enters 2021 divided

Trump supporters are ditching Fox News, creating an opportunity for once-obscure right-wing cable outlets to capitalize on a growing demand among viewers who seem to care less about being informed than having their fringe political views confirmed.

By Jon Gingerich

Fox News is facing an identity crisis. In what became one of the most unlikely developments in a year brimming with surprises, the most-watched prime-time cable network—long criticized for being a mouthpiece for the Republican party—is experiencing a falling out with pro-Trump audiences.

The trouble started on Election Night, when the network's decision desk projected before any other mainstream cable news outlet that former Vice President Joe Biden had beaten President Donald Trump in Arizona. In the following days, Fox joined the chorus of networks in reporting the electoral vote-based projection that Biden had won the 2020 presidential race.

These simple judgment calls infuriated Trump and elicited backlash from Fox's MAGA base. Yet the network continued to kneecap Trump's baseless claims that he'd won the election—"by a lot," in his words—when, a week later, Fox News host Neil

Cavuto cut off a live White House press conference after Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany made unfounded allegations that Trump's defeat was the result of widespread voter fraud. Two days after that, a clip of Fox News anchor Sandra Smith went viral after she was caught on a hot mic mocking a guest who'd expressed disbelief that Biden had clinched the election.



Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

Can't believe how badly @FoxNews is doing in the ratings. They played right into the hands of the Radical Left Democrats, & now are floating in limboland. Hiring fired @donnabrazile, and far worse, allowing endless negative and unedited commercials. @FoxNews is dead. Really Sad!

8:21 AM · Dec 16, 2020



In response, Trump turned to Twitter, where he wrote that Fox "forgot the Golden Goose" that made the network successful. Declarations of a Fox boycott ensued across social media among swaths of Trump supporters who said they'd follow the Presi-

dent's lead and migrate to channels with unabashedly pro-Trump views.

In some ways, it appears the political climate in post-election 2020 has cleaved the Republican party in half: in one camp are garden-variety conservatives who appear either happy to move on after Trump or otherwise see his defeat as a referendum on his policies; in the other camp are dyed-in-the-wool Trump loyalists who apparently refuse to accept that Trump lost.

In response, a few media outlets—namely, Newsmax and One America News Network—have positioned themselves as the alternative to Fox, and now see an opportunity to increase market share by essentially echoing far-right consumers' ignorance, including peddling outright conspiracy theories related to the 2020 race.

Newsmax nets new viewers

Perhaps no media outlet stands to capitalize on the vacuum left by Fox in the post-election media ecosystem than Newsmax. The Boca Raton-based network, which was described by journalism nonprofit Poynter Institute as "comfort food for staunch Trump supporters," currently appears on about 70 million cable boxes around the country and projects to add another 10 million by the end of 2021's first quarter.

The network's programming strategy, ostensibly, is to provide an alternative reality for MAGA supporters who believe Trump was the true winner of the election. As Newsmax host Greg Kelly said on the air shortly after the race: "President-elect Joe Biden? I don't think so. I just don't think so. It doesn't look right. It doesn't sound right. It doesn't feel right. And it's not right."

It appears to be working. According to media and marketing publication MediaPost, Newsmax's viewership skyrocketed in the weeks following the election, pulling in a Nielsen-measured 429,000 average prime-time viewers for the week ending November 23, more than 10 times its third-quarter average. The company reported in November that its news app saw three million downloads within the last month alone.

OANN: from obscure to obscurantists

One America News Network is another once-obscure network that appears poised to poach would-be Fox viewers through a

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CONSERVATIVE MEDIA LANDSCAPE

— Continued from page 22

seemingly endless stream of pro-Trump content as well as far-fetched conspiracy theories.

The San Diego-based broadcaster, which in May was described by *The Atlantic* as Trump's "favorite cable-news network," employs hosts who've reported on the Pizzagate hoax as well as conspiracy theories surrounding the murder of DNC staffer Seth Rich. The low-budget network, which doesn't subscribe to Nielsen's TV ratings but is available on DirecTV as well as via subscription on most streaming devices, has earned a "low" rating by media bias resource mediabiasfactcheck.com, based on "far-right bias, lack of sourcing, promotion of conspiracy theories, and propaganda as well as numerous failed fact checks."

OANN on Nov. 12 published a news segment titled "Dominion-izing the Vote," which interviewed a former admin. of QAnon-linked website 8kun—referred to in the segment as a "cyber analyst"—who baselessly claimed that voting machines made by electronic voting software company Dominion Voting Systems may have rigged the election, thereby "giving Biden a fraudulent win." That segment, shared via Twitter by Trump, has hit more than a million views on YouTube.

YouTube in November temporarily banned OANN for repeatedly violating its policies by posting misinformation regarding COVID-19.

The 2020 presidential election has proven to be a boon for media outlets specializing in misinformation. According to NewsGuard, which rates the reliability of news and information sites for brands, right-wing political blog The Gateway Pundit, one of the best-known political conspiracy sites, saw engagement spike by 81 percent in the weeks after the election.

Viewership at Fox News, meanwhile, has been in a rare tailspin since Election Day. Fox mainstay Tucker Carlson—who normally rules among prime-time cable offerings—fell behind CNN's Anderson Cooper the week after Election Day in the coveted 25–54 age demographic, and Fox's daytime viewership in the weeks following Election Day dropped 32 percent, according to Nielsen.

Given this sudden sea change, one might wonder what we can anticipate the multi-billion-dollar right-wing media landscape to look like in 2021, in a political environment where nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of conservatives now believe Trump was "cheated" out of the election,

according to a November CloudResearch.com poll.

Angelo Carusone, President of media watchdog Media Matters for America, told *O'Dwyer's* that Fox's business model is less threatened by any direct competition from Newsmax and OANN than those networks' potential ability to build their brands on small flare ups that could potentially chip away at Fox's audience—and roster of talent—over time.

According to Carusone, Fox's revenues don't come primarily from advertising but from the hefty carriage fees the network charges cable operators. Arguably, if Fox doesn't have an engaged audience it's hard to convince cable companies to pay those fees, but one of Fox's better-known secrets is the unusual inertia of its audience: people who watch Fox typically do so for hours on end, from daytime news coverage through the opinion shows at night (this is why hosts come and go with little change to the network's ratings).

Most likely, Carusone said the greatest long-term threat to Fox will be from a perspective of political relevancy. Newsmax is willing to put a lot of money on the table to widen its audience, and its ability to harness

reactionary voices that cater to far-right audiences may eventually spill over into a modest migration of talent that eventually dilutes Fox's political power.


"Fox has decided that it wants it both ways," Carusone said. "They want to attack Biden and do all the partisan stuff, but I also anticipate we're going to see a lot more fact-checking and corrections from their opinion people on things they would've let go in the past, not because they want some kind of balance but because a lot of it is straight revenge. It's personal. They've been attacked pretty relentlessly and they have nothing to lose, so I think you'll see a lot more of this sniping and flare ups between Newsmax and Fox. They're going to be a bit more antagonistic."

"These little fires we're seeing aren't going to let out, and they're almost certainly going to elicit backlash from far-right audiences," Carusone continued. "The news people at Fox will do these one-offs that will inflame the far-right, and of course, Newsmax will capitalize on every one of those moments. Anything they can do to inflame their audience and intensify their base will only make them demand more of the far-right stuff you can't get from Fox." ○

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Crisis management: The full swing

In order to be successful, companies must begin embracing the fact that crises are inevitable. Today, knowing how to properly manage these multi-part affairs from preparation to follow-through is a key to success.

By Emigdio Rojas

Let's assume, for a moment, that dealing with a crisis is like hitting a tennis ball. When it comes to your court, you strike it away, working to ensure it lands well on the other side. And when—not if—it comes back, you work to ensure you can do so again. Tennis balls are inherent to the game, just as crises are inherent to doing business.

But as any experienced tennis player knows, the game is about much more than each moment of contact with the ball.

In this sport, the concept of the “full swing” is commonplace. Aim, stance, grip, weight distribution and follow through are all critical components of ensuring not only that you hit, but that the ball goes to the spot you are aiming for—and that, once you have hit the ball, you're in a good position to hit it again, if need be.

Crisis are similar. When a company treats it as a single moment, it doesn't put thought and effort into the backswing or follow through, missing an opportunity to yield better results from their efforts, or possibly even circumvent a crisis before it begins.

What, then, is the anatomy of a full swing in crisis management?

Watch the ball: situational awareness

While not a part of the swing itself, “watching the ball” is crucial to ensuring you swing intelligently. It means being aware of the situation on the court so you can best predict your opponent's next action. This is exactly what all companies should be doing constantly, as it's much easier to hit a ball you see coming. Crises can—and in today's world, must—be anticipated.

In business, watching the ball means committing to issue mitigation rather than just managing crises as they appear. This means carrying out issue mappings, planning for likely scenarios and using predictive analytics to track the flow of relevant conversations. With today's technology, it's possible to determine the sociopolitical landscape in a market or region, allowing ample time to decide which activities to take and come to a consensus on how to handle current or future reputational issues.

Without this awareness, you're just hitting at balls blindly.

The backswing: leading up to a crisis

Here, the backswing refers to all the setup that goes into preparing a company and its executives to handle a crisis gracefully. For example, have your executives and per-

sonnel been trained in how to handle crisis situations? Is there a crisis manual in place? Do you regularly revisit your plans to ensure they're adapted to the current reality? If not, your backswing may need work.

This issue is compounded by the changing expectations society has of companies and leaders. Today's companies are vulnerable, as they're under constant citizen scrutiny. Furthermore, their CEOs are expected to do much more than lead a business; now, they're expected to be fully transparent, stand for a cause and genuinely work toward public good.

These new vulnerabilities and demands make careful communications even more important, as they require intelligent positioning and reputation management. However, these efforts also create a crucial reputational “shield”—or, to extend our metaphor, provide a very high-end racket—to use in the event of any crisis. In short, they allow the company to use its CEOs and its own reputation as an asset.

Even so, crisis management remains key. Even a top-of-the-line racket is not very helpful for stopping a ball if it's not swung well. We all must be ready to swing.

The forward swing: moment of impact

Once a crisis is identified, it's time to swiftly gather information and make quick decisions. Evaluate its potential impact and examine what it would take to resolve it now, before it grows. Also implement immediate Active Listening efforts to better track its evolution and the public's response to ensure you have all the information you need to hit the ball cleanly.

During this time, transparency, consistency and speed are essential. Society no longer tolerates any amount of ambiguity, and a single bad incident has the potential to turn into a global reputational crisis in a matter of hours. You must be ready to share a clear, honest message that serves to deescalate the situation as quickly as possible. Just consider what happened with United's Flight 3411 incident; if nothing else, it serves as a good example of what not to do in a crisis.

You should already have a basic action plan in place, courtesy of your crisis manual. It will provide the framework for your response, but it shouldn't stop you from deeply considering the specifics of each current crisis. A crisis manual provides valuable preparation and guidelines, but

careful thought is still a must in ensuring a good response.

The follow through: setting up for continued success

In tennis, a swing doesn't end upon contact with the ball—the follow through is every bit as important to ensuring it's a good hit, that the ball lands as expected and that the player is ready to hit again.

In the world of crisis

management, this includes elements such as post-mortem discussions on the crisis response, tracking best practices and identifying ways to improve for the future. What did the crisis teach you? What new processes or tools can you bring in? And how could you do it better in the future?

Then, share this information with the relevant actors in the company, whether through a reeducation program, an update to the crisis manual or a simple meeting to discuss these lessons with those who might have a different perspective.

This is a critical part of the crisis management process, as it's what allows for continued improvement. The crisis may be over, but the game continues. When the next ball comes your way, you want to be ready to send it flying.

Emigdio Rojas is Chief Executive Director in LLYC's Miami office. ○



Emigdio Rojas

PR brief

Report slams 'polluted PR'

ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, Dominion Energy, American Petroleum Institute, Exelon and other leading players in the fossil fuels business spend more than \$200 million annually in PR and corporate advertising to buff their image and spread misinformation about climate change, according to a report from the Clean Creatives activist group.

In its “Polluted PR: How Ad Agencies and PR Firms Secretly Block Climate Action,” released Dec. 18, Clean Creatives cites FleishmanHillard, Edelman, Weber Shandwick, Brunswick Group, Kivvit, BCW, Hill+Knowlton Strategies, Ketchum, FTI Consulting and Singer & Associates among firms having ties to the energy sector.

Duncan Meisel, Clean Creatives Campaign Director, said that when PR firms help the “fossil fuel industry pretend that it has ‘gone green’ or lobby against climate action, they're actively undermining our ability to confront the crisis.”



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Out of crisis comes opportunity

Communications lessons we can take away from one of the most historically challenging years on record.

By Whit Clay and Jill Zuckman

As we turn the page on 2020 and open a fresh chapter in 2021 with President-elect Biden, a new Administration and a new Congress, it's important that companies take a close look at what has worked—and not worked—when it comes to the crises and issues of the past year. And it's equally important that they prepare for the year ahead, which will bring new challenges—but also new opportunities—to engage in a much different political, social and regulatory climate.

When the Stagwell Group provided the capital for SKDK to acquire Sloane & Company in February 2020, the fundamental premise was that two strategic communications firms working together, one with expertise in public affairs and the other in financial communications, would offer compelling growth opportunities. It would enable clients to tap into experienced executives recognized for providing advice, counsel and execution to address some of the most complicated and compelling communications crises and opportunities, whether in public policy or the public markets.

Few of us could have imagined that just weeks after beginning to work together, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting economic challenges would prove that the premise for our combination was not just speculative but, in fact, very real. And, just as companies had begun to manage their communications around those issues, they faced a new and equally difficult challenge: the demand to address systemic racism, diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. This all occurred at a time of deep social unrest when our divided country was in the midst of a pivotal election.

While these macro issues captured much of the media's attention, there were many other day-to-day crises facing companies and organizations. If mismanaged, these events posed a significant threat to the reputations and valuations of businesses. They could undermine their executives and employees, as well as derail planned or potential strategic transactions.

What are the lessons we can derive from 2020?

There's both an expectation and insistence from employees, customers, partners and government officials that companies engage in a meaningful way on social issues such as race and economic fairness. A July 9, 2020 poll by Harris Insights and Analytics, one of our sister agencies in the Stagwell Group,

underscored this when it shared that Americans want to see companies commit to paying all employees a living wage (84 percent) and provide accessible grievance mechanisms for employees to report harassment or discrimination without fear of retaliation (83 percent). It's imperative companies dealing with these crises be able to provide action, not just words. And they need to have reservoirs of trust and goodwill from organizations that are built over time and not simply in times of crisis.

At no time was this more evident than in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and the many other Black lives that were taken and the national social unrest that followed. Many in corporate America saw the need to step up and speak out against years of systemic racism directed at their employees and customers. Diversity, equity and inclusion communications became more of a priority and we expect this to continue.

In the coming year, we can expect corporate social responsibility to meld with environmental, social and governance initiatives. We see an increasing focus on these issues among investors and expect the Biden Administration will use the bully pulpit and regulatory influence to insist that corporations act on climate, serve their employees and customers responsibly and work to improve their governance practices. Pressure will also come from investors, as demonstrated by recent shareholder pressure on ExxonMobil to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and increase investments in clean energy. Grappling with these issues is necessary—not just as protection during a crisis—but because it's the right thing to do and it can also provide a compelling opportunity to create value for stakeholders.

Misinformation that moves rapidly on social media—and is observed and reported by traditional media—is rapidly becoming the most pressing threat to a company, its leaders and employees. Society is increasingly vulnerable to inaccurate information and conspiracy theories that are not rooted in fact. We need not look any farther than the recent news around allergic reactions to the Covid vaccine to see evidence of the potential damage. When news leaked that individuals in England had gone into anaphylactic shock after receiving the vaccine, the market shuttered and pharmaceutical stocks dropped in early market trading. This required immediate action and response to clarify the facts, provide context

and reassure an already skeptical and concerned public.

We must prepare companies to deal with misinformation on social media and to rapidly respond with the right messaging. Given the growing power that social media companies hold in overseeing and regulating content on their platforms, it will be increasingly important that companies and organizations have the ability to connect with Facebook, Twitter, Google and others to address their concerns about content through the right leadership channels.

In the face of these issues and others, Sloane & Company and SKDK recommend that all companies and organizations reexamine their crisis communications plans to ensure that they have the following components: effective monitoring tools that are able to identify issues in traditional and social media that are potential risks; scenario updates with message development informed by research and testing; effective processes and protocols to enable quick action and escalation within an organization; communication across all key audiences—including investors; and, finally, the right team of external advisors—legal, financial, cybersecurity, governmental and communications experts who have experience, relationships and understanding to assist through a crisis or transformational event such as a merger.

We also recommend running tabletop crisis exercises to put the crisis communications plan and team to the test including the participation of external advisors so that the group is not working together for the first time amid a real, ongoing crisis. There's much to learn from these efforts and all too often companies and organizations are ill-prepared due to lack of practice.

In looking ahead to 2021, the words of Benjamin Franklin ring true when in 1736 he advised Philadelphians facing the threat of fires that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Strategic communications professionals should heed this advice and make sure they are ready for the year to come.

Whit Clay is co-CEO of Sloane & Company in New York and Jill Zuckman is a Partner at SKDK in Washington, D.C. ●



Whit Clay



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How DIY is changing the MarCom landscape forever

Your clients are always just a click away from dropping you.

By David Rothstein

We've always heard that change is good. But when it happens at break-neck speed exacerbated by a global pandemic, many of the challenges we face require us to be smarter, quicker and willing to do things differently.

The good news is that technology has come to the rescue in so many ways. New platforms allow companies to reach out to customers, vendors and beyond in an effort to carry on with business.

At the same time, these platforms and other technologies have brought increased global competition. Physical proximity no longer matters. The cost of providing services has also fallen—and in many cases, dramatically.

Think about what's going on in our world. Public relations agencies get dropped and replaced by an Upwork or Fiverr contractor with fresher ideas or adaptive skills. Clever clients realize they can learn how to run their own Google Ads and write their own press releases.

Whatever your situation, employer, or employee, it's time to rethink the landscape.

Your future now involves services such as Slack, Upwork, Zoom and any number of cloud-based communication and collaborative work platforms available today, and on the horizon, reshaping tomorrow.

Any one of your employees—or yourself—working from home, can network with copy editors, artists, voice talent, digital editors or upload press releases into distribution platforms or manage their business through Google Sheets, QuickBooks or pay bills through Venmo, TransferWise and PayPal. Renting an office? That's crazy talk. The gig economy is taking over.

Reasons to be optimistic about the future

For those in the MarCom space, there's more than ample opportunity to survive, grow, and even thrive.

Anecdotally, what I've seen from my perspective as CEO of EIN Presswire, is a flourishing world of start-ups growing faster than they ever imagined. I speak with many people who work at small-to-medium-sized companies and organizations forced into restructuring their MarCom, finding that they can manage more tasks in-house—and do them better. We work with emerging MarCom businesses expanding into new opportunities as traditional companies recalibrate their spending, processes

and procedures and adapt to a new landscape. When these companies can't do it all in-house or choose not to, they rely on outside expertise for help when needed.

What these growing new MarCom services have in common is that they're offering a pay-as-you-go structure. Not everyone needs a full-time app developer. They don't need a full-time person to do SEO or graphic design. They can assemble teams as required. They can create a solid collaborative group structure that feels like a team—a company.

One of the most important things we've seen is that many of the people we work with don't come from larger companies, where change is slow and getting things done is difficult. They're nimble, rising up with learned skills based on client demands. They tend to be more relevant to today's customer needs and market challenges—and aren't limited by industry group-think. Of course, they're using Slack, Upwork, and Google Meet, and all sorts of other cloud platforms that make collaboration work possible in today's distributed cloud-based world.

What these emerging collaborative workgroups offer are real efficiencies. They're faster to adapt to market challenges because their ears are closer to the earth. They have a headstart in using the new tools and have a cost structure less expensive than longer-established players.

Additionally, profound generational and workforce changes are at play reshaping the social contract between the employer and the employee. The relationships are collaborative between gig economy workgroups rather than the traditional employer-employee dynamic.

And finally, don't underestimate how much these knowledge workers enjoy the freedom of working from home. Home is wherever their computer is. Hawaii. Prague. Austin. Washington. A cabin in Vermont. Where would you rather work? How far do you want to commute? Clicking from Zoom meeting to Zoom meeting is, well, more efficient—and it's become a quality of life issue.

Being part of a virtual collaborative network empowers people to feel more like entrepreneurs than employees. Gone are the days when the company is king. Today, the boss is easily fired. Other exciting jobs one click away. This is the new normal.

MarCom is doing just fine

The breakneck speed of change has been great for my company, EIN Presswire. We've been leveraging a virtual workforce of gig economy talent with cloud services for quite some time. It's in our DNA. That, combined with radically low pricing and proprietary distribution, is disruptive to our competitors.

Sure, the MarCom industry is producing some winners and some losers. But money is just shifting around. Everyone still needs MarCom. It'll be interesting to see if these market forces will pull these newly established skills from these virtual collaborative networks back into the larger branded companies.

In the end, what this all means is that if you're not in tune with the present and the future, you and your company are a click away from losing your clients because they require a better, more efficient, less expensive way of doing business in order to stay competitive themselves. If you don't adapt, you'll lose your best employees and, who knows ... maybe to your competitors.

David Rothstein is Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of EIN Presswire, which has become the go-to service for professional communicators and organizations when they need to get their news in front of the media, stakeholders, and the public in a modern and affordable way. ○



David Rothstein

PR brief

Finsbury works Thoma Bravo's \$10B RealPage deal

Finsbury handles private equity firm Thoma Bravo's \$10.2 billion deal to acquire RealPage Inc. a real estate software/data analytics company, in one of the biggest leveraged buyouts of the year.

The private equity firm is offering \$88.75 for each of NASDAQ-listed RealPage shares, which is a 30.8 percent premium over its Dec. 18 closing stock price.

Orlando Bravo, founder/managing partner of Thoma Bravo, said RealPage's platform is critical to the real estate ecosystem. "Our firm has a track record of acquiring cutting edge software providers to specialized industries and driving their innovation and growth while remaining true to their core business and customers," he said in a statement.

RealPage CEO Steve Winn will continue to operate the company from its headquarters in Richardson, TX when the deal closes during the second quarter of 2021.

Finsbury's Andrew Johnson represents Thoma Bravo, which has offices in Chicago and San Francisco.

WPP owns Finsbury, which will merge with Glover Park Group and Hering Schuppener early next year.

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Containing crises in an era of stakeholder engagement

A company's ability to manage a crisis is made considerably more difficult in an environment where disinformation often travels faster than the truth.

By Hugh Burns and Paul Caminiti

No PR practitioner worth their salt would dispute we live in a new era of stakeholder engagement. A company's constituents—from employees to customers to shareholders—have a newfound voice and an ability to disseminate their sentiments on social media to impact perception about leadership, valuation and brand. Further, the challenge of managing a crisis is amplified in an environment where disinformation may travel many times faster than the truth, and is often magnified by a divisive political climate where culture and ideology now permeate corporate communications.

How does all this affect your ability to handle a crisis? The good news is that many of the traditional rules still apply.

PR brief

Disinformation may torpedo Biden agenda

Disinformation is an "ubiquitous and foundational impediment" to the incoming Biden/Harris administration's ability to deal with the deadly COVID-19 pandemic and reverse the decay of America's democratic institutions, according to a diverse coalition of nearly 50 organizations that signed a Dec. 21 open letter to Biden/Harris.

The coalition, which includes the Center for Media and Democracy, Common Cause, Center for American Progress, Greenpeace, Government Accountability Project, Public Citizen, Friends of the Earth, NARAL Pro-Choice America and MoveOn, maintains that disinformation stands as a barrier to progress on every issue they are devoted to advancing.

They blasted the "deluge of election lies" that sow chaos and division; racist and misogynist disinformation that incites domestic terrorism, threatens women, thwarts police reform and justifies cruel immigration policies; and blatant lies about abortion designed to roll back reproductive rights.

The groups say Team Biden will find it hard to pass its agenda when the American people "are not merely polarized, but living in disparate realities with warring sets of facts."

In their view, there needs to be a government-wide strategy to repair the broken information ecosystem.

The groups offer various proposals to Biden. They include 1) appointing a disinformation expert to the COVID-19 task force and empower the panel to brief the public and coordinate a whole-of-society response to the infodemic, 2) launching a website to serve as a hub for real-time debunking of viral disinformation, 3) directing the Dept. of Education to develop digital and media literacy programming, 4) advancing antitrust cases against the major platforms, 5) elevating the State Dept.'s Global Engagement Center to counter disinformation that threatens US democracy and that of our allies, and 6) launching a White House "Social Media for Social Good" effort to showcase innovative platform tools, algorithmic options, etc. to foster healthier public discourse.

Not every crisis is a rapid-fire immediate development. In fact most are a slow burn, where the company has learned of a problem or likely public attack in advance and has some time to prepare for disclosure. In many cases, the company still controls the timing and can use it to prepare. The bad news is you must prepare more rigorously than ever before.

Your message must resonate with all stakeholder groups. The days of segmenting your message for different stakeholders are essentially gone, as anything you say can be forwarded or tweeted about in an instant. Your response may be criticized by any group from any angle, so arriving at a thoughtful position and striking the right tone has never mattered more. Think like an investigative journalist or a fierce litigator as you game out the toughest questions the company could face from each stakeholder group. The communications must address the vast majority of the issues right away, without rambling or muddying the waters. You must also be prepared to confront questions about things you don't yet know, or haven't determined how the organization will ultimately address, in a way that preserves credibility and demonstrates that you are factoring in stakeholder concerns.

The rollout must be seamless. Opinions now can form and gain critical mass in an instant, so delivering the message in the right manner to each stakeholder group, and determining who will deliver the message and how, is critical. Preparing for a disclosure in an 8-K SEC filing or a press release is one step that clearly merits focus, but be sure to arm the media team with additional background points and the toughest Q&As. Employees need to be contacted directly by leadership, so consider whether a simple employee note will suffice. Perhaps more is needed, including scripts and rehearsals, for senior managers addressing the employees and sales teams who will be on the front lines with customers that may have been impacted. And always be mindful of the need to coordinate time zones. Just as importantly, establish a system to capture feedback in real time and adjust as necessary. Monitoring all stakeholder channels for feedback is also key to determining if more may need to be done.

Prepare for escalation (but not with an itchy trigger finger). Many adverse devel-

opments start with a disclosure and reach an inflection point where you must consider escalation. Key to this determination is reflecting honestly on the coverage and feedback you're receiving—and outside advisors who have seen scores of similar situations can provide a valuable and objective perspective. There will always be critics, and any negative news will result in some negative coverage. But if your messaging is resonating in general, you're on track. Just as importantly, if a situation isn't isolated to your company and impacting others in the space as well, don't step forward and own it more than you have to.

Monitor social media, but remember what it is you're monitoring. Social media can be a fascinating window into the reaction to your message, but don't confuse it with empirical data or direct feedback from important stakeholders. Watching both the quantitative data and qualitative tone on social media can be an extremely useful tool in deciding whether your message needs refinement or additional communication, but keeping it all in perspective is key. Often the best—and most difficult—decision is to do nothing, let things die down and let Twitter move on to other topics.

In the end, focusing on the perspectives of your various stakeholders—and the related impact on message, rollout and escalation plans for various scenarios—is key in any negative situation. If stakeholder views are rigorously assessed and incorporated as the plan takes shape, including necessary modifications as things go live, the client stands of strong chance of containing the crisis. And while it's not always readily apparent, some of the best crisis advisory work is done by exercising judgment weighing all the factors, including convincing clients when to stick with the plan and not take the bait.

Hugh Burns and Paul Caminiti are Founding Partners at ReeveMark. ○



Hugh Burns



Paul Caminiti

What the 2020 race means for your corporate reputation

How a shift in the national policy landscape might affect your brand's reputation.

By Carreen Winters

America has spoken, and we're going to see a change in the White House. And with it, we expect to see significant changes in priorities, policies and opinions on a wide range of topics. Undoubtedly, policy advisors at companies across industries and sectors have sprung into action identifying key policy issues that will impact your business and bottom line. But have you considered the implications of this election on your brand's reputation?

With a fundamental shift in priorities and issues comes an equivalent shift in the benchmarks of how we all judge companies: as employers, as investment opportunities and as community citizens. The pandemic has already brought the importance of companies as employers into sharp focus and fueled the emphasis on shared values between CorpSumers™ and brands. More than nine out of 10 Americans have said they're watching how your company handles the pandemic and will make their future purchases accordingly. Brands have become more than fashion statements; they're values statements.

As our policy landscape evolves, these changes will create both threats and opportunities. It's also clear that we remain polarized and divided, and the need to find enemies is likely to continue. There will be winners, and there will be losers. This is the time to take a fresh look at your communications programs to ensure that you are well-positioned for the "next normal."

Anti-big sentiment is growing. Big brands and big organizations are increasingly viewed with suspicion. Phrases like "anti-competitive" and "anti-trust" are being thrown around with increasing frequency and intensity. Yet it's our big industries and systems—the financial system, the health-care system and the food system—that have carried us through the pandemic. If you are a "big"—as a company or a sector—you will need to make the case that size and scale are beneficial, because policymakers, influencers and other stakeholders are presuming the opposite.

This election has been all about values, and making your values heard by voting. But we don't just vote on election day. Your stakeholders vote daily in every decision they make—where to work, where to invest and where to shop. The CorpSUMER movement—or "values-driven consumers"—has become the norm. But first and foremost, people trust people—not companies. Sev-

enty-five percent of CorpSumers highlight public opinion of company leadership as a factor in making purchasing decisions. Your organization's values and company leadership need to be front and center.

As climate change becomes part of our national narrative, there will be renewed expectations of industry. For those who've made 2020 or 2025 predictions, stakeholders will be checking in. Have you delivered on promises? What's your next commitment? If you aren't telling your sustainability story, you need to start.

Healthcare will also be front and center ... and that doesn't just impact companies in the healthcare sector. Make no mistake, this may not be an easy time to be a biotech, pharmaceutical company or an insurer or a provider system. But every employer has a stake in the continuing healthcare discussion, and your employer brand is a key driver of your reputation.

A more labor-friendly administration will likely increase organizing activity and embolden bargaining. Your company's policies and approaches to dealing with the pandemic will take on new meaning, and your biggest threat may be lack of knowledge and awareness. The efforts you are making now to engage, educate and support employees could have long-lasting implications.

Expect technology to be central to policy discussions, ranging from privacy and national security issues to how we can bridge our domestic digital divide. Is your compa-

ny deploying technology ethically? What are your responsibilities to protect privacy? How can your company use technology for good? This is not just for big tech companies—today, every company is a technology company.

Diversity, human rights and social justice will remain paramount, and stakeholder expectations of companies and brands have never been greater. People are watching what you do and what you don't. Some of the biggest voices and forces of positive change have come from businesses. Brands are increasingly required to take a stand on social issues ... because failing to do so is also viewed as taking a stand.



Carreen Winters

Washington D.C. is the epicenter of influence in America. And of course, the economy and employment will be key areas of focus for the new administration. As job creators, companies are uniquely positioned to use the "bully pulpit" of Washington to create and elevate their leadership and authority positions. Now is the time for companies to leverage the heightened focus on policy topics and use "government as a marketing tool" to build your company's reputation, connect with the right advocates and influencers and create thought leadership to build eminence of your executive team, both inside and outside the Beltway.

Carreen Winters is Chief Strategy Officer of MWWPR. ○

2020 worst year on record for ad spending

Media owners worldwide experienced "the worst year on record for traditional advertising media" in 2020, with the online ad market failing to chart growth for the first time since the Dotcom crash twenty years ago, according to a recent report released by marketing research firm WARC.

WARC's latest "Global Ad Trends" report, which focused on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the global ad market, found that media owners saw revenues in traditional advertising media—excluding political campaign spending—down by 11 percent worldwide in 2020, effectively slashing \$63 billion from the global advertising economy, which current stands at a combined total of about \$552 billion.

Social media and online video were

the only two advertising formats to chart growth in 2020, up 9.3 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively. The report anticipates both of those formats to continue to lead growth in 2021.

Among the advertising categories hardest hit hardest in 2020, the automotive industry fared worst, which accounted for 17.4 percent of all global ad losses. That sector saw ad spends plummet by 21 percent (or about \$11 billion) this year. The retail sector similarly lost \$10.5 billion in ad revenues in 2020, followed by the travel and tourism industry. Ad spending in the government and non-profit sectors remained unscathed.

According to the report, global ad spending is forecast to rise 6.7 percent next year, and this rebound is expected to recoup an estimated 59 percent of 2020's losses. ○

Communicating through an uncertain environment

Communications steps companies can take when facing a government investigation.

By Myron Marlin

A company embroiled in a government investigation faces many challenges. Like with most crises, a company may suffer reputational harm, customer backlash and a potential impact on its license to operate. But, when government or regulatory agencies conduct an investigation, corporate executives are often more restrained in what they can say. With many investigations, it's often the government that speaks first and speaks loudest.

However, this doesn't eliminate the need for a robust communications plan that can be activated at the appropriate time. At such moments, a company needs to be prepared to engage with its employees, customers, shareholders and vendors—at the least, to convey that it's taking the situation seriously and cooperating with the authorities.

In dealing with investigations, a company should be prepared to answer three main questions:

- What happened that led to the investigation?
- What did the company do to try to prevent the alleged wrongdoing?
- What's the company doing now to address the situation and ensure it doesn't happen again?

As with most crises, the answers to the first two questions are already set in stone when the communications team—and often the lawyers—are first brought in. It may take time to figure out what exactly happened or what compliance measures the company previously had in place, but the facts aren't going to change. Whatever happened, happened.

The only question where a company can still improve the answer is: "what now?" What's the company's leadership doing in response? With this question comes the opportunity for corporate executives to show that they are trying to correct the situation and demonstrate that their company is a responsible corporate citizen.

So, what can a company do? Often, it's the type of mitigating factors that a government investigator may very well consider when determining the size of a penalty. This includes such things as: Did the company launch its own independent investigation into the allegations to get to the bottom of the issue? Did it hire an outside firm to conduct the inquiry? Did it cooperate fully with government investigators? Did the company upgrade its compliance

programs or put in place new policies and procedures? Did the company remove the individuals who engaged in the alleged wrongdoing? Has the company enhanced its training programs for employees?

The underlying issue at the core of an investigation is going to dictate the best measures to undertake. But, steps like these go a long way, not only to potentially assuage a government prosecutor, but to rebuild the confidence of customers, investors and employees as the investigation unfolds. And, they create the basis for a meaningful communications strategy directed to those stakeholders.

After all, consider that employees will be concerned as to how the investigation may impact their own careers and will be watching how leadership responds. It will be important to keep staff engaged with their day-to-day responsibilities and focused on the company mission so that quality and productivity doesn't suffer.

In addition, a company will need internal communications to emphasize that management is addressing underlying issues. Similarly, if the company is public, investors and analysts will want to understand the scope of a potential settlement and other actions that may stem from the government's findings. In these cases, it may be wise for a company to conduct scenario planning to account for a variety of possible outcomes.

While a settlement may resolve the matter with the government—and therefore slowly draw the media attention to a close—management should recognize that the government may decide to generate much fanfare in connection with its announcement. And, the government's voice will be critical and more influential than anything the company says. Even if management wants to litigate its case in public, chances are that the settlement will not permit the company to dispute the facts—and it's unlikely that the media will give the company's arguments much weight.

Therefore, companies need to shape a concise message that places the alleged wrongdoing into context, highlights the finality that the settlement brings, and alludes to the positive steps the company has taken in response.

Government investigations are challenging moments to navigate for any company and it's natural for some in management

to want to wage a public fight against the government. But, unless the legal strategy involves litigating the matter in court, that approach will only serve to elevate the issue, draw more attention to underlying allegations and distract from any positive measures the company has undertaken.

In the end, with a clear communications plan and realistic, achievable goals, even the highest-profile investigations can be weathered, and companies can emerge even stronger. Seizing these moments to show leadership, rethink operations, and reinforce trust with key stakeholders is something worth doing, and with the right strategy, it can yield valuable results.

Myron Marlin is a former practicing attorney who served as Chief Spokesman and Director of Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Justice, as well as Communications Director at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. He currently serves as Senior Managing Director in FTI Consulting's Strategic Communications segment and as Americas Head of Crisis & Litigation. ○



Myron Marlin

PR brief

Stagwell, MDC shot for \$3B revenue mark

Stagwell Group and MDC Partners have ironed out a definitive merger agreement to form what CEO Mark Penn calls a \$2 billion "transformative" marketing services company with 8,600 employees in 23 countries.

The merger creates a roster of PR/PA firms that includes Finn Partners, KWT Global, Hunter, Allison + Partners, Sloane & Co and SKDKnickerbocker.

That group generates about 16 percent (\$320 million) in overall revenues.

Advertising (37 percent) is the largest component of the enlarged operation followed by digital services (32 percent), research (six percent), "other" (six percent) and media (four percent).

Penn, who currently helms both firms, is shooting for \$3 billion annual revenues by 2025.

That goal is based on achieving \$2.6 billion in revenues via five percent plus annual organic growth and a 10 to 15 percent boost in digital marketing business; \$325 million in revenues from M&A activities and the addition of \$75 million in "new digital revenues streams."

Stagwell and MDC, which announced a non-binding deal in October, expect the merger will be completed during the first half of 2021.

Howard Rubenstein dies at 88

Howard Rubenstein, who burnished the reputations of people ranging from Abe Beame to George Steinbrenner to Donald Trump, died on Dec. 29 at the age of 88.

The founding Chairman and President of Rubenstein Associates, Rubenstein was likely best known for his efforts to help those in the public eye negotiate scandals and crises.

Rubenstein started up his firm in 1954, after dropping out of Harvard Law School. He eventually earned his law degree from St. John's University in 1959, and took a six-month break from the PR industry to serve as assistant counsel to the House Judiciary Committee.

Rubenstein's political connections crossed party lines, including Rudolph Giuliani, Ed Koch and David Dinkins. That breadth of connections proved an invaluable tool as he solidified his place as a power broker on the New York scene. Rubenstein also worked with such media figures as Marv Alpert, whom he helped through a 1997 sex scandal, and talk-show host Kathy Lee Gifford, who faced criticism after her clothing line was charged with using child labor.

Throughout his career, Rubenstein insisted on the primary importance of ethics in public relations. "Any business that makes ethics a bedrock of its organization will create an image that lasts longer than a lifetime," he told *Leaders* magazine in 2016. ○



Howard Rubenstein

Pinnacle founder McCarthy dies at 84

Joseph M. McCarthy, founding Partner and Chairman of global PR network Pinnacle Worldwide, passed away on November 2. He was 84.

A former high school teacher, McCarthy held corporate communications positions at Mead Johnson, Eli Lilly and Pillsbury before joining department store chain Dayton Hudson (later Target Corporation), where he directed corporate communications.

In 1970, McCarthy



Joseph McCarthy

launched his own PR and public affairs firm, Northstar Counselors, which was headquartered in the Minneapolis suburb of Wayzata.

Four years later, he became one of the founding Partners of Pinnacle Worldwide, the first international organization of public relations and marketing communications firms, which allowed smaller, independent agencies the ability to compete in global markets with major agencies including those owned by advertising and PR conglomerates.

Once one of the largest global PR networks, Pinnacle at one time counted 72 member agencies across the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, South America and Asia-Pacific. The network suffered in the aftermath of the 2008 recession, however, losing more than a dozen member agencies between 2008 and 2009 alone. *O'Dwyer's* in late 2012 reported that Pinnacle had closed its doors.

McCarthy is survived by wife Lynn and their children and grandchildren. ○

Teneo co-founder Band quits

Doug Band, President and co-Founder of Teneo and ex-confidante to President Clinton, is stepping down to spend more time with his family and pursue other interests including teaching and investing, according to a statement from the high-stakes corporate communications firm.

After serving as a counselor to the President and creating the Clinton Global Initiative, 48-year-old Band established Teneo in 2011 with Declan Kelly and Paul Keary.

His departure from Teneo follows a devastating article in *Vanity Fair* called "Confessions of a Clintonworld Exile" that outlined Band's split with the former President and the Clinton family.

Teneo, which bills itself as a global CEO advisory, has 800-plus staffers in 20 offices. Private equity firm CVC Capital purchased a controlling stake in Teneo last year. ○



Doug Band

KWT Global names Zucker CEO

KWT Global has named agency President and co-Founder Gabrielle Zucker CEO. Current CEO and Co-Founder

Aaron Kwittken will transition to Chairman effective Jan. 1.

Prior to KWT Global, Zucker was VP of the corporate and financial practice at Havas PR (formerly Euro RSCG). As Chairman, Kwittken will continue to work with certain clients, host the Brand on Purpose podcast and participate in select business development and agency marketing initiatives. The rest of his time will be devoted towards scaling PProphet, the AI-driven software venture he launched with MDC Ventures. ○



Gabrielle Zucker

Richter takes top Ogilvy PR spot

Ogilvy has hired Julianna Richter, one-time Edelman U.S. COO and 17-year veteran of the No. 1 independent firm, for the Global CEO of PR and Influence position.

Richter will be responsible for media relations, brand publicity, C-suite and advocacy communications, reputation management and internal PR.

Upon exiting Edelman in 2018, Richter was in charge of U.S. practices, human resources, diversity and inclusion, marketing, innovation and learning and development.

Most recently, she was a Partner at Waypoint Partners, a global advisory and M&A firm, leading strategic engagements with digital media, creative and technology companies. ○



Julianna Richter

FanDuel hires Jones

FanDuel Group, online gaming company, has named Chris Jones VP-Corporate Communications. He will promote the New York-headquartered firm's retail brands within its Daily Fantasy Sports, Sportsbook and Casino business, expand brand/media partnerships and highlight the company's commitment to responsible gambling, diversity and social justice.

Most recently, Jones served as Chief Comms. Officer for IPG Mediabrands. ○



Chris Jones

O'Dwyer's guide to: CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

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Founded in 2003, 5W Public Relations is focused on bringing forward-thinking communications and lasting results to clients across B2C and B2B categories. Specializing in highly charged issues and crisis management for companies or individuals facing unanticipated difficulties in the marketplace—from rumors to recalls—5W is ready to respond within minutes.

With more than 20 years of experience creating powerful narratives, CEO Ronn Torossian is one of the country's foremost experts on crisis communications. Torossian has lectured on crisis PR at Harvard Business School, and was named a top Crisis Communications Professional by Business Insider in 2020.

From counseling blue chip companies, top business executives and entrepreneurs both in the United States and worldwide, 5W will immediately implement a real-time, round-the-clock communications strategy and a team to guide you through a crisis situation and help mitigate the issue(s) you face.

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Tom Johnson, CEO
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Abernathy MacGregor is a strategic communications firm specializing in advising CEOs, board directors and senior executives on effective stakeholder communications, engagement and advocacy initiatives in today's highly complex, dynamic and interconnected world. The firm has a proven 35-year history helping clients build and preserve value, seize opportu-

nities and solve problems.

We have advised on some of the largest highest-profile corporate crises spanning Board-led investigations, cybersecurity incidents, product recalls, labor issues, SEC matters, ethics violations and more. Our approach has helped our clients achieve superior outcomes by helping them successfully navigate a crisis and return to business as usual while mitigating potential damage and keeping their reputation intact.

Companies today face multifaceted and rapidly evolving challenges as business, political and social issues converge. Effective communications have never been more important to producing results. At Abernathy, we help corporate leaders bridge stakeholder concerns from Wall Street to Main Street to Washington and beyond. We believe highly customized and holistic communications strategies build and protect value, advance stakeholder relations and achieve real results.

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Janey Bishoff, CEO

Bishoff Communications LLC is a highly respected and recognized crisis resource with 30+ years of deep experience successfully managing dozens of crises and serious negative situations that threatened the organization's reputation, financial value, or existence.

These ranged from #MeToo to high profile accidents, crimes, and fatalities to food safety, product recalls, sexual harassment, leadership termination, sexual abuse, bankruptcies, lay-offs, data breaches, litigation, and dozens of other negative incidents and situations.

We help organizations prepare with comprehensive risk management planning including developing Crisis Management Playbooks and conducting Risk Management & Crisis Prevention Audits.

In crisis situations we move quickly to assist 24/7, providing strategic counsel and hands-on assistance to contain, mitigate, or ameliorate a negative situation and protect reputation.

We work in close collaboration with our clients and their professional advisors—including legal, financial, and others. Chosen by *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* readers in Best Crisis Management category (2018; 2019; 2020).

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Crisis Management: Preventing and Preparing for Potential Problems.

BoardroomPR is one of Florida's top PR agencies offering statewide coverage. The firm's experienced staff of public relations and crisis management professionals routinely handle high-profile crisis projects and public affairs campaigns each year. Examples include: investigations, hostile takeovers, litigation, product recalls, criminal charges, safety compliance issues, accidental deaths, project approvals, bid objections and legislative campaigns.

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

ment team can help guide you to a satisfactory resolution.

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2019 Winner of PRSA-New York's Best of the Best Award. Recent winner of other top PRSA-NY & Greater Connecticut Mercury Award accolades: 2020 & 2018 Best Legal Marketing Campaign & Best Business Communications Campaign & Best Public Affairs Campaign, plus Best PR & Political Messaging Campaign in U.S./Canada by the International Association of Fire Fighters. Butler is among New York's top agencies for its legal, business, financial, professional services, public affairs, environmental and crisis management practice results. Butler Associates is a team of exceptional communicators with a proven track record of consistent, creative, high-impact results.

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

Clients include: American Triple I Partners, Association of BellTel Retirees, Inc., Association of DuPont Retirees, Barasch McGarry P.C., Cognitive Assessment Group, Core Theatre Company, Davidoff Hatcher Citron LLP, De Caro & Kaplan LLP, Election Systems & Software, Fleet Financial, FDNY EMS Local 2507, Friars Club, Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association, Greenport Harbor Brewing Company, Home Health Care Workers of America, Home Health Care Employers



Butler Associates maintains offices in New York City and Stamford, CT.

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

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Consistently recognized as one of the nation's top public relations firms, Fineman PR, founded in 1988 and headquartered in San Francisco, specializes in crisis communications, brand messaging, community relations and digital and social media marketing.

This past November, Fineman PR was acquired by Phoenix-based, full-service marketing communications firm Off Madison Ave, one of the leading behavioral marketing and digital communications providers in the West. Off Madison Ave brings compelling solutions to influence how people interact and engage with brands. Founded in 1998 and with an office in Boulder, Colorado, Off Madison Ave offers integrated services across creative, paid media, public relations, social, interactive, application development and branding.

Fineman PR's high-profile crisis communications work is nationally recognized. In today's fast-paced culture of instant media exposure, online defamation and quick-draw lawsuits, the agency's battle-tested experience and strategic resourcefulness guide clients through rough waters. Agency President Michael Fineman is ranked among the nation's top crisis counselors. Fineman PR works extensively on reputation building, crisis preparedness, crisis communications and reputation recovery with a

wide range of organizations, from law firms, schools and government agencies to food companies, *Fortune* 500 corporations and startups.

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John Seigenthaler, Partner, Nashville, National Media
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Finn Partners has been ranked among the world's leading public relations agencies by *The Holmes Report* and *PRNews* has acknowledged FINN senior staff as "Crisis

Communicators of the Year." Our depth of knowledge within these industries offers clients access to the influencers, media and policy-makers that impact corporate reputation and economic sustainability.

From business transformation, cybersecurity, executive leadership transition, financial restatement, government investigation, product recall to shareholder relations, our experts in Consumer Products, Health, Economic Development, Education, Manufacturing, Public Affairs, Sustainability, Technology and Travel, blend crisis experience with sector expertise to help organizations weather the storm and emerge stronger. At a time of rapid public engagement and social media escalation, when issues rise to the level of business disruption, or threaten reputations, our team of skilled crisis experts helps clients navigate difficult situations, maintain the confidence of key stakeholders, and protect brands.



Jessica Berk Ross, Managing Partner, Public Affairs Global Practice Leader, FINN.

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Alexander Geiser, CEO

Finsbury Glover Hering is a leading global communications consultancy, supporting clients around the globe as they navigate increasingly complex business, policy, political and cultural environments.

We understand that the world is changing rapidly, with evolving

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FINSBURY GLOVER HERING

— Continued from page 45

ing societal expectations shaping business opportunities and redefining markets. Informed by data and executed with creativity, our campaigns draw from the disciplines of strategic communications, reputation management and advocacy.

Through our experience managing some of the toughest political and corporate engagements of the last 30 years, we know what it takes to win. We have built a global team of extraordinarily talented and dynamic thinkers, writers and influencers from diverse backgrounds, bound together by trust and a collaborative, client-centered culture.

When the stakes are highest, our clients trust that we can help them reach the audiences who matter most, own the conversation, and deliver results.

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Ken Fields, Americas Crisis Lead

FleishmanHillard maintains the world's largest and most geographically diverse crisis management practice. Crisis counselors guide clients through some of the biggest challenges organizations face including public health emergencies, cybersecurity incidents, litigation, executive changes, labor disputes, government investigations, product failures and recalls, natural disasters, workforce reductions and activism.

Crises provide the ultimate test of organizations and management teams, but FleishmanHillard's proprietary crisis management approach—the A.R.C.™ (Assess, Resolve, Control) methodology—guides clients through high-stakes situations. Through our industry-leading training program, developed with the input of crisis management veterans and educators, FleishmanHillard certifies each member of its global team of senior crisis counselors to use the A.R.C.™ methodology to manage the most challenging situations.

If you'd like to learn more, please contact Ken Fields, Americas Crisis Lead: ken.fields@fleishman.com.

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Mark McCall, Global Segment Leader

C-suites, boards of directors, and business leaders from around the world come to FTI Strategic Communications with their most complex, business-critical issues that require diverse skill sets and integrated disciplines. As part of a global business advisory firm, we help these organizations manage change, mitigate risk and enhance their market position by combining decades of deep subject matter expertise with functional and disciplinary experience.

Our financial communications professionals serve as trusted advisors to management teams on a range of capital markets events as well as other stakeholder issues throughout the corporate life-cycle. We help clients navigate their most pressing challenges and opportunities around M&A, IPOs, restructuring, capital raising, corporate governance, ESG strategy, proxy fights, and shareholder activism. Our integrated capabilities in financial communications, corporate reputation and public affairs help clients protect and drive business value.

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Christina Stenson, Partner

Gladstone Place Partners' diverse and experienced team is designed to meet the evolving strategic communications needs of leading companies' CEOs, boards of directors and heads of communications. Clients seek out Gladstone Place Partners for counsel on a range of matters, including mergers & acquisitions, crisis situations, corporate reputation and strategic positioning issues, IPOs & spinoffs, global trade and supply-chain matters, cybersecurity, shareholder activism and corporate governance communications.

Our boutique approach, with a focus on independent advice and confidentiality, enhances our ability to help our clients navigate layered and sensitive matters. We understand the complexity and super-charged nature of today's communications environment, which is why we have social and digital capabilities embedded in our DNA.

Gladstone Place strives to build long-term, trusted relationships by delivering the highest quality work product, paired with uncompromising ethics, integrity and judgment. Our work is underpinned by a culture of professional excellence, meritocracy and diversity.

Our Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Steve Lipin, has spent more than 30 years at the intersection of the corporate world, Wall Street and the media as a leading financial journalist and top communications strategist to C-suites, boards of directors and chief communications officers. We are an entrepreneurial firm with global capabilities and mindset, with headquarters in New York and an office in San Francisco.

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Havas Formula, recognized by *Forbes* in 2020 as one of America's Best PR Agencies, is a fully integrated strategic communications firm headquartered in New York City with offices across the country. The agency, a wholly owned subsidiary of Havas, adheres to "be brave" philosophy and aims to make a meaningful difference to the businesses, the brands and the lives of the people it works with. Led by PR veteran Donovan Roche, the firm's crisis practice, dubbed Havas Trust, supports clients in diverse industries, ranging from healthcare, technology and financial services to food/beverage, retail and building/real estate. The highly experienced team works with organizations to identify and anticipate potential issues or crises before they occur, and provides the guidance, tools and support to minimize them and thereby protect the brand's reputation when they do.

Its suite of services includes conducting vulnerability assessments, training brand-side crisis management teams, crafting issues and crisis management plans, providing ongoing crisis communications support and executing periodic team practice drills. In its nearly 30-year history, Havas Formula has steered clients through all types of crises, such as public health (including COVID-19), racism issues, employee and executive misconduct, class action lawsuits, sexual harassment cases, product safety/recalls, public protests, site closures and layoffs, injuries/fatalities, and much more.

ICR

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Thomas Ryan, CEO
Don Duffy, President

Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to develop and execute strategic communications programs and advisory services that achieve business goals, build credibility, and enhance the long-term value of the enterprise. The firm's highly differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to clients in more than 20 industries. Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent advisory firms in the world maintaining offices in Boston, Baltimore, Connecticut, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Hong Kong and Beijing.

Clients: Peloton, Zoom Technologies, Dave & Busters, Freshpet, Abbott Labs, FleetCor Technologies, Inc., Fossil, Inc., Genuine Parts Co., Gulf Oil, Gildan Activewear, Samsung/Harman, Herbalife Ltd., HubSpot, IAC, Jarden Corp., Lazard Freres & Co. LLC, Knopp Biosciences, Legg Mason & Co. LLC, lululemon athletica, Intel/Mobileye, Michaels Stores, Michael Kors, New Relic, Edeleman Financial Engines, Paramount Group Inc., Planet Fitness Inc., Shake Shack, Starwood Property Trust, VF Corp., X4 Pharmaceuticals, Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Workiva and Zoës Kitchen.

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

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

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

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

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

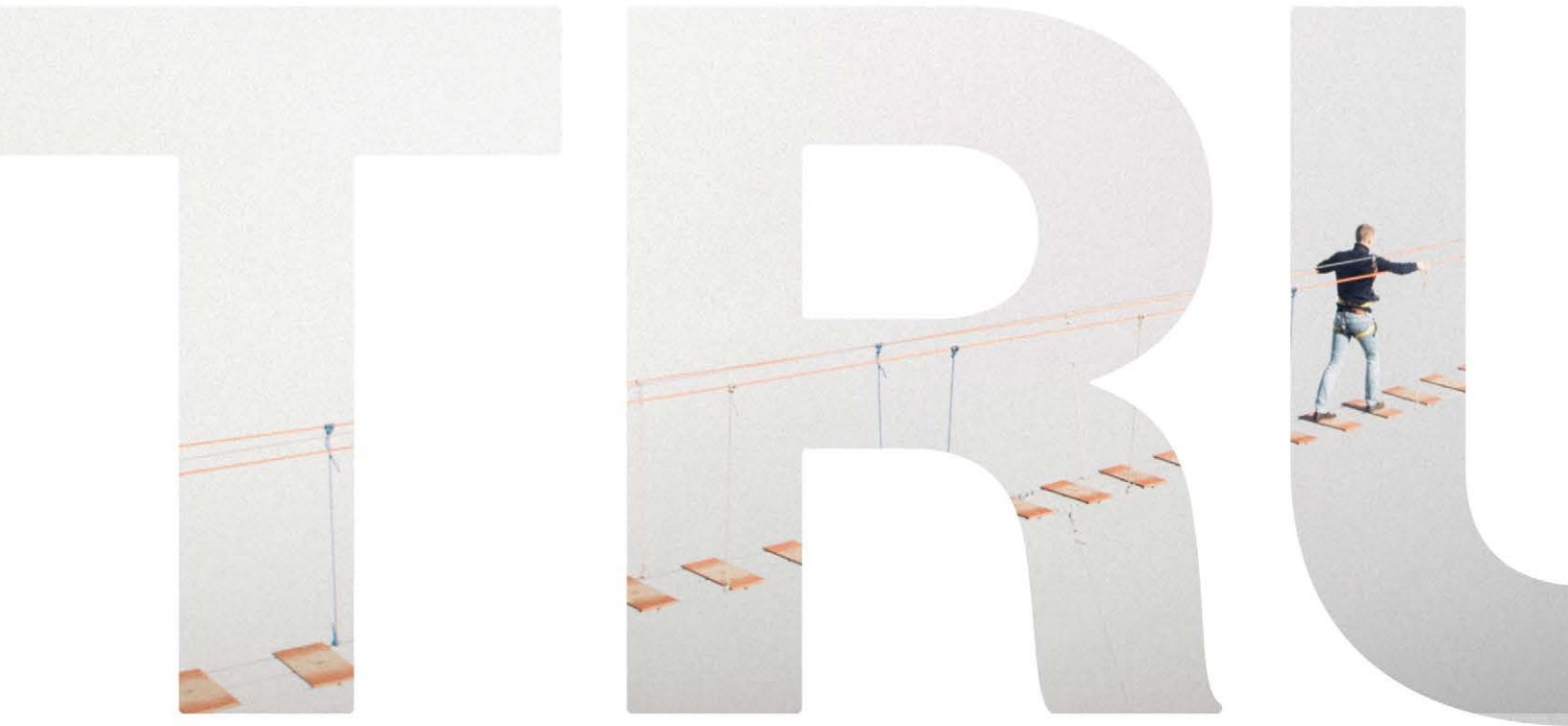
TechCrunch: “When it comes to handling crisis situations in particular, Sitrick is as well regarded as they come.” “We’ve been in a tricky position a number of times and the thinking (in Silicon Valley) has historically been to ignore reporters, says one Bay Area tech founder. “Sitrick takes the opposite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

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

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Chicago, Washington, DC and
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Jamie Diaferia, Founder & CEO
Zach Olsen, President

Infinite Global is an award-winning strategic communications agency advising a wide range of domestic and international clients facing difficult scenarios in which reputational, legal and commercial risk is high.

We advise organizations and individuals, providing counsel and tactical support to mitigate risk and protect reputations when it matters most. We have broad sector experience managing our clients' reputational risk, often involving active litigation, regulatory and political pressure, media attention and heightened public scrutiny. Infinite has an established data breach response practice that helps clients across a range of industries—including financial and legal services, education and healthcare—mitigate, prepare for and respond to the risks endemic to housing sensitive data.

Our work spans each phase of the crisis lifecycle: from pre-crisis preparation and planning, to rapid crisis response and post-crisis reputational repair.

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Joelle Frank, Managing Partner
Matthew Sherman, President

The events of 2020 underscore the importance of effective crisis communications across stakeholders. Communications to internal

and external audiences must instill confidence, articulate the issues and describe how challenges are being addressed.

Whatever the crisis, Joelle Frank supports our clients as they navigate new realities and unexpected circumstances. We help shape and implement effective communications strategies that are transparent and nimble enough to adapt to rapidly evolving situations. While unique situations often require unique solutions, our experience reinforces that there are best practices, and we work with our clients to draw from both the "unique" and the "best." Indeed, in a crisis, a company is judged not only on the crisis itself, but also how it prepared, managed and communicated through the event.

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

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

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

Kekst CNC is ideally equipped to help global business and institutional leaders address these challenges ... as well as their opportunities. For 50 years, our team of more than 250 experienced professionals, located in 13 offices around the world, has partnered with leading organizations of all sizes to: articulate new business strategies and a vision for success; explain an enterprise transforming event and its significance; help navigate complex business challenges or crises; build support among key stakeholders; and, work to strengthen and protect our clients' credibility, reputation, and brand.

As trusted advisors, Kekst CNC's professionals bring to client engagements high energy,

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

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Alejandro Romero, Partner &
CEO Americas

Global communications and public affairs consulting firm LLYC has an experienced team deeply familiar with U.S. Hispanic and Latino culture, and it is ready to help its clients connect with and manage crises involving these important audiences from its three offices in the United States (Miami, New York, and Washington D.C.) and 13 throughout Spain, Portugal, and Latin America. For its efforts, *PRWeek's* Global Agency Business Report 2020 and *PRovoke's* 2020 Global Ranking both name LLYC among the 50 most important communication companies in the world.

Always striving to improve the world, LLYC firmly believes honest, intelligent, innovative, and efficient communications foster confidence and understanding among people, companies, and institutions—in other words, the entities that form the foundations of economic and social progress. In this way, LLYC can contribute to solving many of the challenges of our times. It also collaborates with others to look at what will come next, as seen in projects like Future Leaders.

LLYC's 600+ professionals help its clients make strategic decisions proactively, creatively and based on the necessary experience, then implement those decisions while minimizing risks and harnessing opportunities, always considering their reputational impact. Within a disruptive and uncertain context, LLYC helps its clients to achieve their short-term business goals and define a roadmap with a long-term outlook in order to defend their so-

cial license to operate and increase their prestige.

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Jim Scott Polsinelli, Chief
Creative Officer

Crisis and issues management, strategic communications, public affairs, media relations, research and investigation, digital, creative and content, field services and stakeholder engagement.

Marathon Strategies is an independent PR firm that delivers intelligent communications and research solutions for the world's top corporations, brands, and associations. We specialize in crisis and issues management, reputation management, public affairs, communications, creative content, and digital strategy. Instead of solely relying on traditional or earned media, Marathon combines research, digital, and communications strategies to meet complex PR challenges with simple solutions.

No organization is immune from a negative news cycle, and we believe the best way to respond to a crisis is to anticipate and be prepared for it in the first place. From developing proactive media outreach strategies to mitigating crises and generating original content, Marathon helps our clients plan for and manage any reputational issue that may impact an organization.

Our crisis services include crisis and issues management programs, protocols, tools, and training aimed at minimizing the impact and shortening the lifespan of a negative news cycle. And all of our clients have real-time and around-the-clock access to client account leads and senior leadership who provide thoughtful communications counsel and strategy when and where you need it.

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The Montgomery Strategies Group is a full-service agency with broad expertise in crisis and litigation communications, reputation management, public affairs and regulatory advocacy, financial communications and transactions, as well as marketing and brand awareness.

We draw on decades of collective experience as trusted counselors and strategists to public and private company C-Suite executives, boards of directors, private equity investors, hedge fund managers, and trade association officials—with a team that includes former senior communications leaders from the SEC, The White House, Department of Justice, FINRA, NASDAQ, Capitol Hill, *The New York Times*, a host of *Fortune* 500 companies—T-Mobile, Lenovo, Honeywell, GE, Freddie Mac, and Exxon-Mobile among them—as well as a cross-section of global consultancies.

The breadth of our award-winning team includes expertise across all types of criminal and civil litigation, regulatory enforcement and policy actions, congressional and state AG investigations, and securing the legislative/regulatory approvals necessary to complete key corporate transactions. We provide proven depth in a number of industries and issues, with a particular focus on financial services, banking, and tax; healthcare and medical devices; consumer-facing industries and product recall; data privacy, cyber breach, and technology policy; global trade and supply chain; and corporate governance.

We have teams and partners in: New York, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Nashville and London.

MWWPR

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Michael Kempner, Founder & CEO

Bret Werner, President
Carreen Winters, Chief Strategy Officer

Crises happen. Today, organizations face an ever-increasing range of risks from product recalls, cyberattacks and executive mismanagement to labor disputes, regulatory violations, and harassment/discrimination allegations. It's no longer a matter of if a crisis will hit, but rather, when and how? In a 24/7, hyper-connected, hyper-competitive world, it critical to be prepared with the tools and resources to manage the situation quickly and effectively to limit potential damages to your brand and reputation.

MWWPR approaches crisis engagements with a foundation of reputation management best practices, and commitment of a senior team that is practiced, capable and understands impact to each of your audiences. The firm has expanded its offering of vulnerability assessments, crisis planning and table-top exercises to include a suite of innovative digital tools and services from predicative analytics, crisis planning and response effectiveness. This approach has:

- Helped leading global food companies respond to COVID-19, social justice issues, workplace violence, regulatory/legislative inquiries to attacks/campaigns by animal rights and environmental activists
- Created plans for clients in the airline, automotive, food, hospitality, nutritional, retail, technology and travel/tourism sectors
- Helped travel/tourism organizations across the US and abroad respond to natural disasters, terrorism incidents and criminal acts
- Provided labor relations/issues management communications programs for clients in the airline, automotive, gaming, healthcare, retail and transportation sectors
- Managed communications for a professional sports team dealing with sexual harassment/discrimination allegations and multi-faceted litigation
- Served on the crisis go-team for numerous national and international airlines and dealt with a wide range of aircraft, employee, customer and industry issues

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Tara Lilien, Partner & Chief Talent Officer
Maggie O'Neill, Senior Partner & Chief Client Officer

The seemingly never-ending crises of 2020 have sown chaos and confusion around the globe, and given rise to, and focus on, stakeholder capitalism. In such tumultuous times, brands have unsurprisingly found themselves confounded by what to say, when to say it, to whom and where, without adding to the anxiety or stirring up issues.

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in NYC with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm combines 26 award-winning years of expertise supporting blue chip and breakout clients through a wide variety of crises including consumer product recalls, social media gaffes and class action lawsuits. In each case, we helped these clients navigate through the uncertainty, manage their reputations, and survive intact.

Though many brands have access to extensive market research, it's usually delivered six months too late to provide insights into stakeholders needs. To help organizations navigate how to best communicate with stakeholder audiences, Peppercomm offers Mindset.AI which identifies impact, where they are engaging and what they are saying, and where they will be in the future.

Visit www.peppercomm.com or find us @Peppercomm.

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James F. Haggerty, President & CEO

PRCG | Haggerty LLC and its sports brand, PRCG | Sports, are internationally known for excellence in the management of complex crisis communications and litigation public relations matters. Repeatedly ranked as one of the top public relations firms in the United States

by the highly regarded international directory *Chambers & Partners*, the firm is headquartered in New York, with affiliations across the country and around the world—including through The Crisis Protection Network (crisis-protection.net).

PRCG | Haggerty and its consultants have worked with some of the leading individuals, corporations and nonprofit organizations in the nation on sensitive reputational issues, strategic positioning, crisis and litigation communications, and messaging. By properly framing issues and perceptions, PRCG works with clients to change conventional thinking and inoculate against negatives. The firm is particularly experienced in industries that include healthcare and pharmaceuticals, financial services, manufacturing, retailing, sports and legal services.

In the area of litigation public relations, PRCG | Haggerty is a pioneer with a 20-year track record in some of the largest cases of their kind in history. In both crisis and litigation communications, the firm emphasizes the importance of planning, training and coordination between legal, public relations and C-level executives, and is the creator of the award-winning CrisisResponsePro software, which provides resources and collaborative tools to streamline the speed and effectiveness of crisis communications response. The firm is also skilled in advanced social media and SEO strategies, as well as in the critical integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives into the crisis planning framework.

An acclaimed attorney and author, PRCG CEO James F. Haggerty has been called “a powerhouse” in the field who “operates at a different level” than most PR professionals. Haggerty has also been named one of “50 Game-Changers of PR” by *PR News* for his “pioneering” work in the field of litigation communications. Haggerty is the author of two of the leading books in the field of crisis and litigation communications: *In The Court Of Public Opinion: Winning Your Case With Public Relations*, which is now in its Third Edition and has been called “the perfect handbook for this age” by *Financial Times*; and *Chief Crisis Officer: Structure and Leadership for Effective Communications Response*, which was positively featured in *The Harvard*

— Continued on page 52

PRCG | HAGGERTY

— Continued from page 51

Business Review, *Fortune* and *Entrepreneur* magazines, among other media outlets.

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Rich Myers, Co-Founder and Managing Partner
Greg Marose, Co-Founder and Partner

Profile is a top corporate, financial and special situations communications consultancy that excels at content development, media management and investor and stakeholder engagement.

In contrast to a typical public relations firm, Profile has built a nationally-recognized Crisis & Special Situations practice by serving as a holistic strategic advisor to clients navigating activism campaigns and proxy contests, bankruptcies, legal and regulatory issues, and transactions. Over the past three years, Profile has represented clients involved in more than 60 activism situations, 30 bankruptcies and 30 litigation disputes.

Learn how Profile can help your firm navigate contested situations and transformation periods at www.profileadvisors.com.

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Bringing calm and strategy to clients in crisis, Public Communications Inc. works closely with our clients to prepare them to effectively handle situations that can threaten an organization's brand and erode consumer confidence. We partner with clients from prevention through the challenges of managing issues to then thriving in post-crisis recovery.

PCI's experienced counselors

consistently delivers award-winning campaigns for clients with reputation management and enhancement needs in all fields, including healthcare companies and associations; conservation, zoo and aquarium organizations; government agencies and nonprofits of all sizes. When an organization faces trouble, a thorough and strategic crisis communications plan is vital. We work with clients to identify, plan for, and mitigate crises that have the potential to negatively shape public opinion and disrupt business.

The PCI team has extensive experience helping clients manage their reputational risk through crisis communications planning and implementation. We also have specialists to provide spokesperson training and coaching on how to best articulate company values and messages that can restore the public faith and support.

PCI offers clients a specialized, post-crisis communication recovery model based on rapid response; ongoing and proactive communication; and inspired thought leadership that is critical to companies of all sizes. In recent years, PCI developed deep experience and skills in assisting clients to communicate effectively through natural and man-made disasters and through personnel and labor issues, including cases of #MeToo allegations and company culture change.

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Brandy Bergman, CEO and Founding Partner
Hugh Burns, Founding Partner
Paul Caminiti, Founding Partner
Delia Cannan, Founding Partner
Renée Soto, Founding Partner

Reevemark is a strategic communications firm founded by five experienced practitioners, four of whom are lawyers, to help clients address the most serious issues impacting their value or reputation. Reevemark focuses on what matters: providing candid, results-oriented communications counsel.

Our practice areas include crisis and reputation management, litigation communications, shareholder activism, transactions, restructurings, and corporate positioning programs. We have extensive experience guiding public and private companies, as well as high-profile individuals, through

complex matters. We provide crisis preparedness, response planning, and real-time support in the areas of litigation and regulatory matters, executive misconduct, #MeToo and other personnel issues, financial disclosure and operational issues, cyber incidents, data breaches and privacy matters and product and customer relations issues. We help companies effectively communicate their messages while managing legal and reputational risks.

We are tireless advocates on behalf of our clients with the media and other constituents. Every situation is different, and we pride ourselves on closely partnering with our clients and other advisors—either on the front lines or behind the scenes—to provide strategic counsel and to deliver the best results.

SACHS MEDIA

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For 25 years, Sachs Media has helped diverse sectors navigate the treacherous waters of high-profile crises with smart, strong, strategic support through its seasoned crisis management team. Sachs Media was named by *Forbes* a Top 200, five-star rated PR firm nationally for 2021. The key to weathering any crisis is preparation. That's where Sachs Media's trademarked Crisis Defense™ comes in—to actively help you prepare, train, develop and deploy an effective plan to help ready your organization in advance of a crisis and support you all through it.

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Paul Kranhold, Co-President
Bruce Haynes, Managing Director and Chairman of SVC Public Affairs

SVC provides candid, pragmatic counsel to boards, senior executives, and high-profile individuals

on a wide range of crises and special situations, from product recalls and industrial catastrophes, to sudden leadership changes and major regulatory events. We understand the critical importance of speed, combined with sophisticated strategic thinking and robust, agile execution. Our role includes strategy development and ongoing counsel, research and message testing, preparation of multi-audience communications, development and execution of social media and digital strategies, media relations, investor relations, on-site support, and post-event reputation tracking.

SVC is a recognized leader in strategic communications with over 25 years of experience supporting clients on long-term positioning and high-stakes situations. We are experienced in communicating with all key stakeholders, including journalists, investors, analysts, employees, lawmakers and regulators.

Office Locations: New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Houston, Hong Kong, Washington, D.C., Boston.

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Seven Letter, a full-service strategic communications firm with specialties in crisis communications, creative content development, brand and reputation management, public affairs, digital strategy and grassroots/grassroots mobilization, has grown in both scope and market share in recent years. The firm was founded as Blue Engine Message & Media in 2006. In 2018, it acquired JDA Frontline, a competing strategic communications firm, to cement its bipartisan credentials and rebranded the joint offering as Seven Letter. In 2019, Seven Letter launched Seven Letter Labs, expanding and enhancing its digital strategy services. The firm's 2020 merger with the communications practice of Boston-based O'Neill and Associates expanded the firm's geographic footprint, its team and reach.

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Michael S. Sitrick, Chairman and CEO

Less important than what you say about yourself is what others say about you.

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

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

• *BusinessWeek*: That’s unbelievable. This is the heavy artillery.” Quote is from the CEO of one of the largest PR firms in the world, after learning we were brought in on the other side of a contentious matter in which his firm was involved.

Since our firm’s founding 31 years ago, we have been consistently ranked among the top crisis and strategic communications firm in the nation.

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

Matters with which we have been involved include litigation support of all kinds; intellectual property matters, allegations of stock manipulation, wrongful termination, contract disputes, allegations of fraud and fraudulent inducement, wrongful death claims, allegations of illegal drug use, SEC matters, and a variety of other white-collar crimes. We have also handled criminal and civil cases against companies and their executives for such things as price fixing, insurance fraud, options backdating, antitrust violations, race and sex discrimination, sexual harassment, racism and #MeToo matters. We have a significant data breach, mergers and acquisitions and cor-

porate governance practice and have done extensive work combatting short sellers. Other issues include sensitive environmental matters, racketeering cases, family disputes, and high-profile divorces, reputation management and reputational positioning. We have also been involved in helping to launch such firms as Oaktree Capital.

Offices are in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Boston and Washington, D.C., though we have handled cases all over the world.

For additional information including clients for whom our work was public and additional media comments about our firm see: www.sitrick.com.

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Darren Brandt, Whit Clay, Co-CEOs

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

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

We have become a go-to firm when these crises and special situations occur by listening to our clients, understanding the situation, determining the risks to their business and delivering candid advice to management teams, boards, ex-

ecutives and organizations when they need it most. Clients have the benefit of working with senior executives with decades of experience who offer professional counsel in all phases of crisis planning and response, leading to immediate results.

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

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Solomon McCown & Cence (Boston & New York) supports clients that face complex, mission-critical issues at the intersection of public policy and business. The firm works within education, healthcare and real estate sectors, and with corporations and non-profit organizations to deliver integrated communications strategies that include: messaging, media relations & training, government relations, digital and social campaigns, and creative content.

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At last, the return of 'do nothing' government

By Fraser Seitel

A hundred years ago, when a friend of mine was public relations director of a big New York City bank, his superior officers used to pray for “divided government” in which neither Democrats nor Republicans controlled all levers of the federal bureaucracy.



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

The bankers believed that as long as Washington politicians focused on fighting each other, they couldn't do much to muck up the ability of people to make a living.

In other words, the governmental goal of bankers, business leaders and others concerned about the financial well-being of income earners far and wide, was then—and it is still today—“gridlock.”

And in early January, if the good citizens of Georgia see fit to elect at least one Republican to the Senate, gridlock will be back in Washington. And with it, a return to the days of “Do Nothing” government will be assured. Hallelujah!

The bet here is that President-elect Joe Biden, a nice man with plentiful experience, will direct an administration that, like its leader, will be weak, meek, long on inspiring rhetoric and short on meaningful action.

And a lackluster Biden government will mean good news to at least one group of workers in particular—besides the legion of out-of-work Democrat political retainers—public relations professionals. Under Biden, the traditional practice of PR will once again flourish, after being mortally threatened by dastardly Donald and his reckless rule-breaking reign.

From “doer” to “dozer”

Whether you despised or simply detested Donald Trump, you have to acknowledge that the soon-to-be erstwhile Commander-in-Chief got things done for ordinary people.

Among Trump's achievements:

- Resurrecting a listless economy.
- Supporting American business without

reservation.

- Delivering ultimatums that forced European nations to start paying their fair share for their own defense.
- Breaking the decades-old logjam on Middle East peace by circumventing obstructionist Palestinian leaders.
- Offing treacherous Iran's top general.
- Passing a long-promised prison reform bill.
- Presiding over the creation of three vaccines in less than a year to defeat a deadly virus.

Like it or not, President Trump, regardless of his personal odiousness, was a “doer,” the diametric opposite of the successor he appropriately dubbed “Sleepy Joe.”

Biden, unlike Trump, is a “legitimate” 78-year-old: slow-moving, slow-speaking, slow-acting. Like his mentor, Barack Obama, Biden promises to be excruciatingly “deliberative” in every decision he confronts, relying on scores of aides, experts and experienced sources of “Washington wisdom” before taking action.

On the one hand, we can be certain—thankfully!—that the days of disruptive, potentially-disastrous management by daily tweet are behind us. On the other, we can be equally certain, in light of the people that Biden has and will appoint to high office, that relatively little to help ordinary Americans will be accomplished by the new crowd in town.

Biden's roster of appointees—people like Anthony Blinken, Ron Klain, Jared Bernstein, et al.—are safe, competent, career politicians and Clinton/Obama leftovers, who will neither rock the boat nor get much done (Think John Kerry, for goddsakes!). Others in the wings, ready for their imminent Biden anointment—people like Corey Booker, Sally Yates and Susan Rice—have spent a lifetime as team players, moving up the ranks, speaking and writing heroically and accomplishing little. The Biden Administration will be marked by such mediocrities. (Maybe with the exception of the gifted Janet Yellen).

In terms of mediocrity, just consider the first journalists the President-elect sought out to preview his first 100 days. For broadcast, he chose CNN's lugubrious Jake Tapper, the perpetually-downcast Trump-hating anchor who doesn't even rank among his own network's top five broadcasters. For print, Biden chose columnist Tom Friedman, who, his *New York Times* always

reminds us, “won the Pulitzer Prize”—yes, 18 years ago!—and in the subsequent two decades has become whiny, bombastic and largely irrelevant.

Friedman's blockbuster, three-column Biden exclusive, for example, consisted mainly of the “revelations” that he'd try to lift Trump Iran sanctions and get back into the nuclear deal if possible and he'd work more with allies on China but wouldn't immediately drop the Trump China tariffs. Wow! Cue the Pulitzer committee!

The point is that it's likely the Biden Administration, like the Obama Administration, will be long on rhetoric and short on results. In eight years in office, Obama recorded one signature legislative triumph: healthcare. Biden, similarly, will probably chalk up infrastructure reform as his crowning victory. But not a whole lot more.

The winner: public relations

The prospect of the incoming administration turning out to be as somnambulant as its standard bearer does, however, bode well for one business: the practice of public relations.

For the great unwashed who consider the public relations business as little more than “style over substance,” the Biden Administration with its promised series of “firsts,” like the “single most diverse Cabinet ever,” will be historic.

For more sophisticated communications scholars, the new administration will adhere to a rigorous regimen of traditional public relations practice, where policies are weighed in terms of public appeal, “worst cases” considered and talking points and key messages vetted thoroughly before being drafted into cohesive arguments by communications professionals.

To ensure this process, Biden has appointed a capable communications team, led by the experienced Kate Bedingfield and Jen Psaki, to counsel him. Biden's upgrading of White House PR professionalism will be a major change from his predecessor's predilection for communications threat, bluster and prevarication (i.e. lying).

And the return to a more “normal” PR also underscores that from a character or role-model standpoint, Joe Biden, like Obama, will clearly be a quantum improvement over Trump.

Indeed, there's little question that we can all be proud of President-to-be.

Just don't expect him to accomplish much. ○

Podcasting in 2021

By Jane Genova

In April 2020, Apple Podcasts announced a milestone: Its catalogue featured one million podcasts. That might have reflected the COVID-triggered surge in podcasting last spring. With so many locked down at home, launching a podcast seemed like a good idea.



Jane Genova is a ghostwriter, marcom expert and career coach with special expertise on future trends (janegenova374@gmail.com).

The other major presence in the podcast category, Spotify, went on an acquisition spree. That included the Joe Rogan podcast, with its 190 million downloads monthly. *Forbes* documents that the Rogan show made \$30 million in 2019.

According to Podcast Insights, 155 million house-

holds in America have listened to podcasts. 45 percent of them have income over \$75,000. The medium is mobile and smartphones drive usage.

The prototype of what we know as podcasting today has existed since the 1980s. Around 2004, it began to catch on. Apple coined the term in 2005. But it took about 15 years for it to catch fire. Along with that explosive growth have come massive shifts in the category.

It might be said that the medium has bifurcated into BigPodcast and The Rest. The mission of this article is to guide public relations agencies and marketing firms and their clients on how to navigate this rapidly changing medium.

Those in BigPodcast include both the significant revenue producers and the influencers. The podcasts with influence range from former first lady Michelle Obama's Higher Ground to former prosecutor Preet Bharara's Words Matter. They could evolve into top revenue producers. In fact, the latter is being sued because the producers allege they haven't received their cut, as agreed, of the \$1.75 million in past and future advertising revenue.

In addition to advertising, revenue currently primarily comes from subscriptions and sponsored content. That could expand, notes Pacific Content, to membership groups, various forms of online education, newsletters, merchandise and premium content.

Pacific Content also foresees the medium

going through consolidation, fresh content approaches, tech developments in everything from advertising to distribution and diversity. Experimentation is already underway. For instance, in the spirit of TikTok short form, there are microcasts, broadcasted throughout the day. Those would be ideal for clients' branding and cause-related messaging.

In a relatively short period of time, podcasting has become serious business. Essentially, it mutated from a fun sandbox amateurs could play in a professional game. As a result, the bar is now high for production standards, hosting, scripting, guest selection and overall performance. Part of that, of course, is also because of the glut of digital content in all mediums, not just audio. Way back in 2016, there was already noise about Peak Content, be it text, video, audio, or a combination of all three.

Experts such as Swisher and Galloway anticipate that in 2021 businesses like Apple and the Spotify will only contract with commercial-quality podcasts by personalities or those with large followings. Scale has become more important because of how competitive advertising has become.

Given what's now demanded, it's no surprise that almost half of podcasts fail. There's even a term for it: "podfade." However, podcasting per se remains an open medium. Public relations agencies and marketing firms can still use this tool for themselves and for their clients. The objectives include persuasion, influence, branding, selling, fundraising and profit. Some of those podcasts might be "sleepers" which catapult into the big time. Others could be the analogues of "indie" film-makers who took on the traditional Hollywood studios. All have a shot at achieving the needed results if aligned with what are best practices, at the time.

Right now, among the proven-out rules of the road to increase the probability for success are these eight:

Preparation is necessary, both for reconfiguring existing podcasts and launching new ones. The amateur phase is over. One focus must be recording space. Some podcasters have had a room in their homes brought up to studio standards. A second option is renting time in a recording studio. Another aspect of the planning is the willingness to invest—time, energy, creativity and funding. The "show" requires the same attention to macro and micro elements as radio programming. What will be the topic for the episode? What tone will the scripting or talking points have? Who will be invited as guests? How to brief guests without

constricting their input?

Test test test before first going live or when doing course correction. Conduct informal focus groups for feedback.

As in blogging, **concentrate on a niche**. Within niches there's wiggle room. However, if the content bleeds beyond those boundaries, start another podcast for other kinds of subject matter.

Be original. The killer of podcasts, just as happens in blogging, is the assumption that it's necessary to fit in with the herd. The result is what might be called The Giant Platitude. Both blogging and podcasting are personal mediums. The persona as well as the content has to be one-of-a-kind.

Research who the target audiences are or could be. As in all communications, it's all about the audience. If the audience changes, so might the tone and content of the podcast. Yes, follow the audience.

Have no expectations. Especially not of stardom. There's the old adage that expectations are platforms for resentments. That kind of negative mindset sets in play downward trajectories. Both launching and operating a podcast are experiments. There's no predicting what can happen. In addition, developing a show takes time.

Assess quantitatively and intuitively how it's going. Leap in immediately and often with course corrections. Small changes can have big impacts.

Promotion is everything. No longer is there a notion of over-doing that. Exploit both digital social networks and traditional word of mouth. For the latter, ask family, friends, neighbors and clients to tune in. Yes, be imaginative and in-the-now with how you keep putting the podcast out there. For example, if an episode goes controversial, share that story afterward in all your usual promotional spots. Each episode could provide a story to tell.

Of course, there's an elephant in the room about podcasting. That's the question: Has a podcast become a must-do in 2021? That same old question also had arisen and continues to emerge with establishing a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, blogging, e-books and even print publishing.

There's no absolute answer. The common-sense one is this: Usually an organization or an individual excels in a few of those but not all. When to add another medium and perhaps cut back involvement in others tends to be fairly obvious. Given the content glut, public relations agencies and marketers have to go with their own and their clients' strengths. At least those at the time. Over time, they could change. ○

Congress calls for U.S. push vs 'fake news'

Reacting to rising online extremism triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the elections, a group of House Democrats want President Biden to launch a multiagency digital democracy task force to develop a federal strategy to increase resilience to online threats and create stronger protection for the democratic process.

In a Dec. 10 letter to Biden, members of the Congressional Task Force on Digital Citizenship asked him to adopt a “whole of government system to build citizen resilience to disinformation and misinformation.”

They see the need for “media literacy programs with commitments to truth-seeking” to counter social media platforms that traffic in “false, misleading or emotionally manipulative” content to boost engagement and corporate profits.

The U.S. needs to partner with allies to help set global mechanisms on platform transparency, share information on the evolving digital ecosystems and develop protocols for citizen resilience to online information, according to the letter.

The Congressmen warn that the COVID-19 vaccine will not cure the online infodemic and conspiracy will continue to be exploited.

“We encourage you to work with researchers, scholars and civil society to understand the impact of disinformation and misinformation on American society and we stand ready to assist you in putting forward these new initiatives,” said Jennifer Wexton (VA), David Cicilline (RI), Donald Beyer (VA), Zoe Lofgren (CA), Bill Foster (IL), Bill Keating (MA) Yvette Clark (NY), Jamie Raskin (MD), Elissa Slotkin (MI). ○

Glover Park gobbles up Grubhub

Glover Park Group has picked up Grubhub for D.C. representation of labor and issues related to delivery network companies.

The food delivery service this month guaranteed minimum earnings and enhanced benefits for its California drivers following approval of the state’s Protect App-Based Drivers and Services Act.

Grubhub, which is in the process of being acquired by Netherlands-based Just Eat Takeaway in a \$7 billion deal, posted a 53 percent surge in second-quarter earnings to \$494 million sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. It lost \$9.2 million compared to a \$1 million year-ago profit.

Managing directors Susan Brophy, Paul Poteet, and Gregg Rothschild, along with Senior VP Megan Moore handle Grubhub.

Glover Park Group will merge with Finsbury and Hering Schupener to form Finsbury Glover Hering in early 2021. ○

PhRMA recruits MGM’s DeShong for top PA job

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America has hired Debra DeShong, who has strong ties to the Democratic party, as Executive VP of Public Affairs.

She will join PhRMA in mid-December from MGM Resorts International, where she is senior VP-Global Communications and industry affairs.

DeShong was Chief of Staff to former U.S.



Debra DeShong



Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy, Director of Communications at the Democratic National Committee, Director of Communications for ex-Jersey Senator Bob Torricelli and Press Secretary to Maryland Congressman Steny Hoyer.

She also was Executive VP/Managing Director of PA at Subject Matter and co-founded Point Black Public Affairs.

Stephen Ubi, PhRMA President/CEO, said DeShong has led PA campaigns that “punctured the din and advanced policy priorities.” ○

Brooks-LaSure speaks for Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Allyn Brooks-LaSure has joined the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as VP of Communications.

Brooks-LaSure comes to RWJF from the Leadership Council on Civil and Human Rights, where he served as Executive Vice President for Communications. He was previously a State Department Foreign Service Officer, and was on the communications staff of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Before that, Brooks-LaSure was Washington Press Secretary for Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and served as Deputy Press Secretary for New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine.

In his new position, he leads the RWJF’s communications department and is responsible for implementing strategy to support initiatives that address health equity and the social determinants of health. ○



Allyn Brooks-LaSure

LLYC hires Marquez to direct D.C. office

LLYC has hired Francisco Marquez as Office Director in its new Washington D.C. location. Marquez has served as counselor to the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington D.C., Chief of Staff of the Mayor of El Hatillo (Caracas, Venezuela), and Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships at UFacilitate.

In his new post, he’ll work closely with the global partnership of Finsbury, Hering Schupener and Glover Park Group, which LLYC joined in 2019. ○



Francisco Marquez

Haiti hires Latin America Advisory Group

Haiti has hired the Latin America Advisory Group to provide PR, Congressional outreach and international media relations services.

The Miami-based shop will prepare talking points for Haitian officials and identify “champions” in Congress to promote various humanitarian/economic assistance programs.

The one-year contract calls for LAAG to develop a messaging strategy, provide background and sometimes “off the record” information to journalists and draft/place OpEd pieces in “reputable” news outlets.

The firm also will create a “revolving” door of events and meetings with think tanks to influence opinion makers.

LAAG partner Damian Merlo, who was special assistant to Haiti’s former President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe, oversees the \$96,000 account.

He reports to Haiti’s Ambassador to the U.S., Bocchit Edmond. ○

Mercury lands China’s JinkoSolar

Mercury Public Affairs is negotiating a contract to provide PR services and media outreach for the US arm of China’s JinkoSolar Holding.

JinkoSolar Holding announced the immediate resignations of top management including CEO Kangping Chen, COO Jiun-Hua Allen Guo, who took the post Nov. 25, Chief Marketing Officer Gener Miao, Chief Technology Officer Hao Jin, and human resources director Shaoguo Ji.

They will assume respective responsibilities at the company’s principal subsidiary, Jinko Solar Co. Ltd, which is being listed on

the Shanghai Stock Exchange’s STAR Market, according to the company’s statement.

JinkoSolar Holding, which is listed on the New York Stock Exchange, chalked up \$3.7 billion in revenues for the first nine months of 2020 and earned \$102 million. The company says solar power is entering a “golden era,” spurred partly by the election of Joe Biden as U.S. President. U.S. demand is expected to double under the Biden administration, according to Jinko.

Mercury got the assignment from Jinko after the company received a phone call from a reporter from the *New York Times* asking about its business practices. The Omnicom unit expects to have a written agreement that covers PR related to its business operations and economic interests. ○

Armenia calls Cooper Strategies for media work

The Embassy of Armenia retained Cooper Strategies through March to handle press outreach, social media and communications related to the conflict in the disputed Nagorno Karabakh region.

Azerbaijan, supported by Israeli and Turkish-made drones, launched an invasion of NK on Sept. 27 and retook the bulk of the territory. Russia President Vladimir Putin brokered a peace treaty this month and dispatched 2,000 troops to monitor the region.

Armenia hired Cooper to monitor western coverage of the conflict and to “advance the American understanding of the conflict and support its peaceful resolution.”

Cooper receives \$6,000 a month for the push. The pact is a four-month extension of the original one-month \$20,000 agreement that expired November 30. ○

FARA News



NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT FILINGS

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

Myriad Int’l Marketing, LLC, Los Angeles, CA, **registered Dec. 14, 2020 for Embassy of the Republic of Rwanda**, Washington, D.C., regarding efforts to reach consumers, travel trade and the media by positioning Rwanda as an attractive and sustainable “must-see” destination.

BGR Government Affairs, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Dec. 16, 2020 for Aviora Consult EAD (on behalf of Delyan Peevski)**, Sofia, Bulgaria, regarding accusations that Peevski, a businessman and member of the Bulgarian Parliament, is contributing to corruption in his country.

Karv Communications Inc., New York, NY, **registered Dec. 6, 2020 for Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz (through Wiggan and Dana LLP)** Berlin, Germany, regarding litigation involving SPK, a Smithsonian-like consortium of museums in Berlin, which is at the center of a claim from heirs of Jewish art dealers that the sale of medieval art to Germany in the 1930s was invalid.

Lobbying News



NEW LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT FILINGS

Below is a list of select companies that have registered with the Secretary of the Senate, Office of Public Records, and the Clerk of the House of Representatives, Legislative Resource Center, Washington, D.C., in order to comply with the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995. For a complete list of filings, visit www.senate.gov.

Squire Patton Boggs, Washington, D.C., **registered Dec. 23, 2020 for United States Council for International Business**, New York, NY, regarding customs law for imports made with forced, indentured or prison labor.

George J. Hochbrueckner & Associates, Inc., New York, NY, **registered Dec. 23, 2020 for Squirrel Compliancy Solutions, Inc.**, Raleigh, NC, regarding issues related to promotion of cyber security technology to protect computer networks from hackers.

Hannegan Landau Poersch & Rosenbaum Advocacy, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Dec. 22, 2020 for UnitedHealth Group, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues related to coronavirus as well as Medicare and Medicaid.

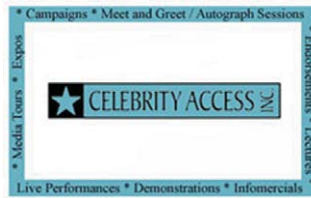
Franklin Square Group, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Dec. 21, 2020 for Internet Works**, Washington, D.C., regarding content moderation of the Internet.

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- 60 - Annual Reports/Design/Branding
- 60 - Associations
- 62 - Awards
- 64 - Broadcast Monitoring Services
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- 64 - Clipping Services
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- 65 - Conventions/Conference Planners
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- 65 - Crisis Management
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Craig Bernhardt, Creative Dir., Prin.

Broadridge, 5 Dakota Dr., #300, Lake Success, NY, 11042. 800/353-0103. www.broadridge.com.

Eisenberg & Associates, 1722 Routh St., #900, Dallas, TX, 75201. 214/528-5990. www.eisenberginc.com.
Arthur Eisenberg, Founder.

Galperin Design Inc., 2280 Frederick Douglass Blvd., #9D, New York, NY, 10027. 212/873-1121. www.galperindesign.com.
Peter Galperin, Pres.

Johnson Strategic Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 72227, Overland Park, KS, 66225-7227. 913/649-8885. www.johnsonstrategic.com.
Richard Johnson, Pres.

Lippincott, 499 Park Ave., New York, NY, 10022. 212/521-0000. www.lippincott.com.
Richard Wilke, Sr. Partner.

Point Five Design, 118 E. 25th St., 10th flr., New York, NY, 10010. 212/414-4309. www.point5.com.
Alissa Levin, Founder.

Associations

Advertising Club of New York, 989 Ave. of the Americas, 7th flr., New York, NY, 10018. 212/533-8080. www.theadvertisingclub.org.
Gina Grillo, Pres. & CEO.

Advertising Specialty Institute, 4800 Street Rd., Trevoise, PA, 19053. 800/546-1350. www.asicentral.com.
Timothy M. Andrews, Pres. & CEO.

Alliance for Women in Media, 2365 Harrodsburg Rd., #A325, Lexington, KY, 40504. 202/750-3664. www.allwomeninmedia.org.
Becky Brooks, Exec. Director.

American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As), 1065 Ave. of the Americas, 16th flr., New York, NY, 10018. 212/682-2500. www.aaaa.org.
Marla Kaplowitz, Pres. & CEO.

American Association of Political Consultants, 1775 Tysons Blvd., 5th flr., McLean, VA, 22102. 703/245-8020. www.theaapc.org.
Alana Joyce, Exec. Dir.

American Marketing Association, The, 130 E. Randolph St., 22nd flr., Chicago, IL, 60601. 312/542-9000. www.ama.org.
Russ Klein, CEO.

Arthur W. Page Society, 230 Park Ave., #455, New York, NY, 10169. 212/400-7959. www.awpagesociety.com.
Roger Bolton, Pres.

ASAE: The Center For Assn. Leadership, 1575 I St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20005. 202/371-0940. www.asaecenter.org.
Chris Vest, VP, Corp. Comms & PR.

Association for Conflict Resolution, P.O. Box 5, Eagle, NE, 68347. 202/780-5999. www.acrnet.org. Kelly Riley, Pres.

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 234 Outlet Pointe Blvd., Ste. A, Columbia, SC, 29210. 803/798-0271; fax: 803/772-3509. www.aejmc.org.
Jennifer McGill, Exec. Dir.

Association for Women in Communications, The, 1717 E. Republic Rd., Ste. A, Springfield, MO, 65804. 417/886-8606. www.womcom.org.
Kandice Mollitiam, Membership.

Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75027. 214/377-3524. www.amcpros.com.

Association of National Advertisers (ANA), 155 E. 44th St., New York, NY, 10017. 212/697-5950. www.ana.net.
John Wolfe, Dir., PR.

Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals, 129A Morgan Drive, Norwood, MA, 02062. 781/562-1630. info@strategic-alliances.org; www.strategic-alliances.org.
Mike Leonetti, Pres. & CEO.

Automotive PR Council, Original Equipment Suppliers Assn., 25925 Telegraph Rd., #350, Southfield, MI, 48033. 248/952-6401. info@oesa.org; www.oesa.org.
Jeff Laskowski, Sr. Mgr., Comms.

British American Business Inc., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., 20th flr., New York, NY, 10017. 212/661-4060; fax: 212/661-4074. www.babinc.org.
Duncan Edwards, CEO.

Chief Marketing Officer Council, 1494 Hamilton Ave., San Jose, CA, 95125. 408/677-5333. www.cmocouncil.org.
Donovan Neale-May, Exec. Dir.

CPR, The International Institute For Conflict Prevention and Resolution, 30 East 33rd St., 6th flr., New York, NY, 10016. 212/949-6490. www.cpradr.org.
Alan Waxman, Pres. & CEO.

Florida PR Association, 40 Sarasota Ctr. Blvd., #107, Sarasota, FL, 34240. 941/365-2135. www.fpra.org. Cheray Keyes-Shima, Exec. Dir.

Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Mgmt., Via Ruggi, 3-6963, Lugano-Pregassona, Switzerland. 212/949-6490. www.globalalliancepr.org.

Healthcare Businesswomen's Association, 373 Route 46 West, Bldg. E, #215, Fairfield, NJ, 07004. 973/575-0606. www.hbanet.org.
Laurie Cooke, Pres. & CEO.

Hispanic Public Relations Association, P.O. Box 86760, Los Angeles, CA, 90086. info@hpra-usa.org; www.hpra-usa.org.
Stephen Chavez, Pres., LA Chapter.

Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association Int'l., 7918 Jones Branch Dr., #300, McLean, VA, 22102. 703/506-3280. global.hsmai.org.
Robert A. Gilbert, Pres. & CEO.

Idealliance, 1800 Diagonal Rd., #320, Alexandria, VA, 22314. 703/837-1070. www.idealliance.org. Evelyn Helminen, Dir., Media, Mktg. & Comms.

Institute for PR, University of Florida, P.O. Box 118400, Weimer Hall, Gainesville, FL, 32611-8400. 352/392-0280. www.instituteforpr.org.
Tina McCorkindale, Pres. & CEO.

Interactive Advertising Bureau, 116 East 27th St., 6th Flr., New York, NY, 10016. 212/380-4700. www.iab.com.

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Managed by SmithBucklin, 330 N. Wabash Ave., #2000, Chicago, IL, 60611. 312/321-6868. www.iabc.com.

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Wash., D.C. Chapter www.iabdcmetro.org.

International Association of Speakers Bureaus, 1922 E. Fairmont Dr., Tempe, AZ, 85282. 480/839-1423. www.iasbweb.org.
Marie Fredette, Exec. VP.

International Communication Association, 1500 21st St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20036. 202/955-1444. www.icahdq.org. Laura Sawyer, Exec. Dir.

International PR Assn. (IPRA), Suite 5879, P.O. Box 6945, London, W1A 6US, U.K. 44 1634 818308. www.ipra.org. Philippe Borremans, IPRA Pres.

International Women's Media Foundation, 1625 K St., N.W., #1275, Washington, DC, 20006. 202/496-1992. www.iwmf.org. Elisa Lees Munoz, Exec. Dir.

Internet Association, Washington, DC. 202/869-8680. info@internetassociation.org; internetassociation.org.

Issue Management Council, 207 Loudoun St. S.E., Leesburg, VA, 20175. 703/777-8450. www.issuemanagement.org. Teresa Yancey Crane, Pres.

Museum of Public Relations, The, 85 Broad St., 27th fl., New York, NY, 10004. 212/943-9439. info@prmuseum.org; www.prmuseum.org. Shelley Spector, Barry Spector, Co-Founders.

National Association of Broadcasters, 1 M St., S.E., Washington, DC, 20003. 202/429-5300. www.nab.org. Ann Marie Cumming, Sr. VP, Comms.

National Association of Business Political Action Committees, 700 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E., Washington, DC, 20003. 202/236-0191. www.nabpac.org. Micaela Isler, Exec. Dir.

National Association of Government Communicators, 400 S. 4th St., #754E, Minneapolis, MN, 55415. 888/285-8556. nagc.com. Isaiah Allen, Exec. Dir.

National Association of Personnel Services, 800 Dailans Way, Uniontown, PA, 15401. 844/NAPS-360. www.naps360.org. Trinette R. Cunningham, Pres.

National Black Public Relations Society, 14636 Runnymede St., Van Nuys, CA, 91405. www.nbprs.org.

National Foundation for Women Legislators, 1727 King St., #300, Alexandria, VA, 22314. 703/518-7931. www.womenlegislators.org. Jody Thomas, Exec. Dir.

National Hispanic Media Coalition, 150 South Arroyo Parkway, #101, Pasadena, CA, 91105. 626/792-6462. communications@nhmc.org; www.nhmc.org. Brenda Victoria Castillo, Pres. & CEO.

National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics, The, 10340 Democracy Lane, #204, Fairfax, VA, 22030. 703/383-1330. www.lobbyinginstitute.com. Paul A. Miller, Pres.

National Investor Relations Institute, 225 Reinekers Lane, #560, Alexandria, VA, 22314. 703/562-7700; fax: 703/562-7701. www.niri.org. Ted Allen, VP, Comms. and Member Engagement.

National School PR Association, 15948 Derwood Rd., Rockville, MD, 20855. 301/519-0496; fax: 301/519-0494. www.nspr.org. Rich Bagin, Exec. Dir.

National Writers Association, 10940 S. Parker Rd., #508, Parker, CO, 80134. www.nationalwriters.com.

New York Financial Writers' Association, P.O. Box 338, Ridgewood, NJ, 07451. 646/470-7433. contact@nyfwa.org; www.nyfwa.org.

New York Women in Communications (NYWICI), 355 Lexington Ave., 15th fl., New York, NY, 10017-6603. 212/297-2133. info@nywici.org; www.nywici.org. Alexandra Owens, Exec. Dir.

Novitas Communications, 1732 Wazee St., #201, Denver, CO, 80202. 720/379-5740. mblyng@novitascommunications.com; novitascommunications.com. Michelle Lyng.

Online News Association, c/o NPR, 1111 N. Capitol St., N.E., 2nd fl., Washington, DC, 20002. www.journalists.org. Irving Washington, Exec. Dir./CEO.

Organization of American Women in Public Relations www.womeninpr.com.

Pennsylvania Association for Government Relations, P.O. Box 116, Harrisburg, PA, 17108. 717/939-1900; fax: 717/939-7900. info@pagr.org; www.pagr.org. Christine Corrigan, Exec. Dir.

Philadelphia PR Association, 7300 City Ave., #360, Philadelphia, PA, 19151. 215/557-9865. www.ppra.net. Deirdre Hopkins, Pres.

PR Club, (Formerly Publicity Club of New England), c/o March Comms., 560 Harrison Ave., #408, Boston, MA, 02118. www.prclub.org.



PR Council, 135 W. 41st St., 5th Floor, New York, NY, 10036. 917/439-9201. Kim Sample, President.

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Professional Marketing Forum, The Yard House, Breach Lane, Little Berkhamsted, North Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire, SG13 8LS, U.K. 020 7786 9786. www.pmfum.co.uk. Richard Chaplin, Founder & Chief Exec.

Promotional Products Association Int'l., 3125 Skyway Circle North, Irving, TX, 75038-3526. 888/426-7724. www.ppai.org. Paul Bellantone, Pres. & CEO.

PRSA/Georgia, 4971 Staverly Lane, Norcross, GA, 30092. 770/449-6369. www.prsageorgia.org. Denise Grant, COO.

PRSA/Los Angeles Chapter, 2700 E. Foothill Blvd., #209, Pasadena, CA, 91107. 626/313-4343. www.prsala.org.

PRSA/National Capital Chapter, 200 Little Falls St., #205, Falls Church, VA, 22046. 703/691-9212. www.prsa-ncc.org.

PRSA/New York Chapter, 19 Mantua Road, Mount Royal, NJ, 08061. 212/228-7228. www.prsany.org. Andrew Graham, Pres.

Public Affairs Council, 2121 K St., N.W., #900, Washington, DC, 20037. 202/787-5950. www.pac.org. Douglas Pinkham, Pres.

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), 120 Wall St., 21st flr., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1474. prssa.org.
Jeneen Garcia, Exec. Dir.

Publicity Club of Chicago, P.O. Box 101236, Chicago, IL, 60610. 773/463-5560. www.publicity.org.

Publicity Club of New York, 8554 260th St, Floral Park, NY, 11001. info@publicityclub.nyc;
www.publicityclub.org. Peter Himler, Pres.

Radio Television Digital News Association, 529 14th St., N.W., #1240, Washington, DC, 20045. 202/221-4282. www.rtdna.org.
Dan Shelley, Exec. Dir.

She Runs It (Formerly Advertising Women of NY), 1460 Broadway, New York, NY, 10036. 212/221-7969.
www.sherunsit.org.
Lynn Branigan, Pres. & CEO.

SIIA, Software & Information Industry Assn., 1090 Vermont Ave., N.W., 6th flr., Washington, DC, 20005. 202/289-7442. www.siia.net.
Jennifer Baranowski, Awards Dir.

Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing (SABEW), Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Arizona State Univ., 555 N. Central Ave., #406E, Phoenix, AZ, 85004. 602/496-7862. www.sabew.org.
Kathleen Graham, Exec. Dir.

Society for Health Care Strategy & Market Development, 155 N. Wacker Dr., Chicago, IL, 60606. 312/422-3888. www.shsmd.org. Diane Weber, Exec. Dir.

Society for Technical Communication, 3251 Old Lee Highway, #406, Fairfax, VA, 22030. 571/366-1914. www.stc.org. Liz Pohland, CEO.

Society of American Travel Writers (SATW), 17W110 22nd St., One Parkview Plaza, #800, Oakbrook Terrace, IL, 60181. 877/480-4585. www.satw.org.
Marla Schrager, Exec. Dir.

Society of Professional Journalists, Eugene S. Pulliam National Journalism Center, 3909 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46208-4045. 317/927-8000. www.spj.org.
John Shertzer, Exec. Dir.

U.S. Travel Association, 1100 New York Ave., N.W., #450, Washington, DC, 20005. 202/408-8422. www.ustravel.org.
Cathy Reynolds, Mgr., Media Relations.

Washington Women in PR, P.O. Box 65297, Washington, DC, 20035. www.wopr.org.

Women in Government Relations, 908 King St., #320, Alexandria, VA, 22314. 202/868-6797. www.wgr.org.
Emily Bardach, Exec. Dir.

Awards

Adrian Awards, Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association Int'l., 7918 Jones Branch Drive, #300, McLean, VA, 22102. 703/506-3280. global.hsmi.org. Robert A. Gilbert, Pres. & CEO.

Alexander Hamilton Medal, Institute for PR, University of Florida, P.O. Box 118400, Weimer Hall, Gainesville, Florida, 32611-8400. 352/392-0280. www.instituteforpr.org.
Tina McCorkindale, Pres. & CEO.

AME - Advertising & Marketing Effectiveness Awards, New York Festivals, 260 West 39th St., 3rd flr., New York, NY, 10018. 212/643-4800. www.AMEawards.com.
Gayle Mandel, Exec. Dir.

American Hotel & Lodging Association's Stars of the Industry Awards, 1250 I St., N.W., #1100, Washington, DC, 20005. 202/289-3100; fax: 202/289-3199. www.ahla.com. Rosanna Maietta, Exec. VP, Comms. & PR.

APEX Awards, Communications Concepts, Inc., 5810 Kingstowne Center Dr., #120-804, Alexandria, VA, 22315. 703/643-2200. info@ApexAwards.com; www.ApexAwards.com.
Ken Turtoro, Exec. Editor.

ARC Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com.
Reni L. Witt, Pres.

Association TRENDS Annual Trendy Awards, Columbia Books & Information Services, 1560 Wilson Blvd., #825, Arlington, VA, 22209. 888/265-0600. www.associationtrends.com. Rebecca Mann.

Association TRENDS Association Executive of the Year Award, Columbia Books & Information Services, 1560 Wilson Blvd., #825, Arlington, VA, 22209. 888/265-0600. www.associationtrends.com.
Rebecca Mann.

Astrid Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com.
Reni L. Witt, Pres.

AVA Digital Awards, Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75207. 214/730-0533. www.avaawards.com.

Bell Ringer Awards, PR Club, (Formerly Publicity Club of New England), c/o March Comms., 226 Causeway St., 4th flr., Boston, MA, 02118. www.prclub.org.

Big Apple Awards, PRSA/New York Chapter, 19 Mantua Road, Mount Royal, NJ, 08061. 212/228-7228. www.prsany.org.
Andrew Graham, Pres.

Bronze Anvil Awards of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st flr., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org.
Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Bulldog Awards, PR Awards, Stars of PR Awards. www.bulldogawards.com.

Cannes Lions Awards, Festival of Creativity. +44 (0) 20 3033 4000. www.canneslions.com.

Clarion Awards, Association for Women in Communications, 1717 E. Republic Rd., Ste. A, Springfield, MO, 65804. 417/886-8606. www.womcom.org. Kandice Mollitiam, Membership.

CLIO Awards, 104 W. 27th St., 10th flr., New York, NY, 10001. 212/683-4300. www.clioawards.com.
Nicole Purcell, Pres.

CODiE Awards, Software & Information Industry Association, 1090 Vermont Ave., N.W., 6th flr., Washington, DC, 20005. 202/289-7442; 949/448-0545. www.siia.net/codies.
Jennifer Baranowski, Awards Dir.

Communicator Awards, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts, 22 West 21st St., 7th flr., New York, NY, 10010. 212/675-3555. www.communicatorawards.com.

Communitas Awards, Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75207. 214/377-3526. info@communitasawards.com; www.communitasawards.com.

dotCOMM Awards, Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75207. 214/377-3526. www.dotcommawards.com.

Galaxy Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com. Reni L. Witt, Pres.

Gold Anvil Award of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Gold Circle Awards, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership, 1575 I St., N.W., Washington, DC, 20005. 202/371-0940. www.asaecenter.org. Chris Vest, VP, Corp. Comms. & PR.

Gold Ink Awards, Printing Impressions, NAPCO Media, 1500 Spring Garden St., 12th fl., Philadelphia, PA, 19130. 215/238-5300. www.goldink.com.

Gold Quill Awards, Int'l. Association of Business Communicators (IABC), Managed by SmithBucklin, 330 N. Wabash Ave., #2000, Chicago, IL, 60611. 312/321-6868. www.iabc.com.

Golden Trumpet Awards, Publicity Club of Chicago, P.O. Box 101236, Chicago, IL, 60610. 773/463-5560. www.publicity.org.

Golden World Awards, Intl. PR Assn., IPRA, Suite 5879, P.O. Box 6945, London, W1A 6US, U.K. 44 1634 818308. www.ipra.org.

Hermes Creative Awards, Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75207. 214/377-3525. www.hermesawards.com.

iBravo! Awards, Hispanic Public Relations Association, P.O. Box 86760, Los Angeles, CA, 90086. info@hpra-usa.org; www.hpra-usa.org. Stephen Chavez, Pres., LA Chapter.

iNova Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com. Reni L. Witt, Pres.

Internet Advertising Competition (IAC) Awards, Web Marketing Association, P.O. Box 475, South Wellfleet, MA, 02663. www.iacaward.org. William Rice, Pres.

Jack Felton Medal for Lifetime Achievement, Institute for PR, University of Florida, P.O. Box 118400, Weimer Hall, Gainesville, FL, 32611-8400. 352/392-0280. www.instituteforpr.org. Tina McCorkindale, Pres. & CEO.

Jersey Awards, New Jersey Advertising Club, 199 Prospect Ave., #7250, North Arlington, NJ, 07031. 201/998-5133. www.njadclub.org. Chris Vaglio, Exec. VP.

MarCom Awards, Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas, TX, 75207. 214/377-3524. www.marcomawards.com.

Matrix Awards, NY WICI, 355 Lexington Ave., 15th fl., New York, NY, 10017. 212/297-2133. www.nywici.org. Alexandra Owens, Exec. Dir.

Mercury Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com. Reni L. Witt, Pres.

NAGC Communicator of the Year Award, National Association of Government Communicators, 400 South 4th St., #754e, Minneapolis, MN, 55415. 888/285-8556. nagc.com. Isaiah Allen, Exec. Dir.

New York Festivals, TV & Film Awards, 260 West 39th St., 10th fl., New York, NY, 10018. 212/643-4800. www.newyorkfestivals.com. Gayle Mandel, Exec. Dir.

Online Journalism Awards, Online News Association, c/o NPR, 1111 N. Capitol St., N.E., 2nd fl., Washington, DC, 20002. 202/503-9222. www.journalists.org. Irving Washington, Exec. Dir./CEO.

Outstanding Educator Award of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Paragon Awards, Plus Additional Awards, National Council for Marketing & Public Relations (NCMPR), 5901 Wyoming Blvd., N.E., J-254, Albuquerque, NM, 87109. 505/349-0500. www.ncmpr.org.

Paul M. Lund Public Service Award of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Power of A Awards, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership, 1575 I St., N.W.,

Washington, DC, 20005. 202/371-0940; fax: 202/371-8315. www.asaecenter.org. Chris Vest, VP, Corp. Comms. & PR.

PR News Awards, Access Intelligence, LLC. www.prnewsonline.com/pr-news-awards.

PR Professional of the Year Award of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/643-4800. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

PRSA/National Capital Excellence in Comms. Awards, Formerly Thoth Awards, 200 Little Falls St., #205, Falls Church, VA, 22046. 703/691-9212. www.prsance.org.

Public Relations and Marketing Excellence Awards, Business Intelligence Group. 909/529-1163. www.bintelligence.com.

Questar Awards, Sponsored by MerComm, Inc., 500 Executive Blvd., Ossining-on-Hudson, NY, 10562. 914/923-9400. www.mercommawards.com. Reni L. Witt, Pres.

Ragan's PR Daily Awards, 10 S. LaSalle St., Chicago, IL, 60603. 312/960-4100. www.prdaily.com. Brendan Gannon, Awards Program Mgr.

REBRAND 100 Global Awards, 24 Corliss St., #6791, Providence, RI, 02940. 401/785-1412. www.rebrand.com. Anaenzi Modu, Founder & CEO.

SABRE Awards, PRovoke Media, 271 West 47th St., New York, NY, 10036. 212/333-2300. www.provokemedia.com.

Sigma Delta Chi Awards, c/o Society of Professional Journalists, Eugene S. Pulliam Nat'l Journalism Center, 3909 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN, 46208-4045. 317/927-8000. www.spj.org. John Shertzer, Exec. Dir.

Silver Anvil Awards of PR Society of America, 120 Wall St., 21st fl., New York, NY, 10005. 212/460-1400. www.prsa.org. Karen Mateo, Chief Comms. Officer.

Silver Apple Awards, Direct Marketing Club of New York, 288 Park Ave. South, #88658, New York, NY, 10003. 646/741-4771. www.dmcny.org.

Society for Technical Communication, STC Awards, 3251 Old Lee Highway, #406, Fairfax, VA, 22030. 571/366-1914. www.stc.org. Liz Pohland, CEO.

Society of American Travel Writers,
SATW Foundation Lowell Thomas Travel
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www.satw.org.
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Viddy Awards, 127 Pittsburg St., Dallas,
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videoawards.com; www.videoawards.com.

W. Howard Chase Award, Issue
Management Council, 207 Loudoun St. S.E.,
Leesburg, VA, 20175. 703/777-8450.
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www.NewsExposure.com.

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Universal Information Services, 1700 Farnam St., Suite 1260, Omaha, NE, 68102. 800/408-3178. news@universal-info.com; www.universal-info.com.

Content Marketing

Associated Press, The, 200 Liberty St., New York, NY, 10281. 212/621-1500. www.ap.org/content-services.

Concepts, Inc., 4800 Hampden Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD, 20814. 240/482-3709. info@conceptscmm.com; www.conceptscmm.com. Karen Herson, Pres.

Content Marketing Institute
contentmarketinginstitute.com.

Conventions/ Conference Planners

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Meeting Professionals International (MPI), 2711 Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway, #600, Dallas, TX, 75234. 866/318-2743. www.mpi.org.

Copywriters

ContentWriters.com, 148 Mercer St., 2nd flr., New York, NY, 10012. 800/891-0553. contentwriters.com.

Edgewise, 5419 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA, 90027. 323/469-3397. info@edgecommunicationsinc.com; www.edgecommunicationsinc.com. Ken Greenberg.

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Crisis Management

5W Public Relations, 299 Park Ave., 10th flr., New York, NY, 10171. 212/999-5585. www.5wpr.com. Ronn Torossian, President & CEO.

See listing in Crisis Communications profile section, p. 44.

Blaine Group, Inc., The, 8665 Wilshire Blvd., #301, Beverly Hills, CA, 90211. 310/360-1499. www.blainegroupinc.com. Devon Blaine, Pres./CEO.

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Boardroom Communications Inc., 1776 N. Pine Island Rd., #320, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 33322. 954/370-8999. www.boardroompr.com. Don Silver, COO, Todd Templin, Exec. VP.

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Montgomery Strategies Group, The, 2445 M Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC, 20037. 202/255-0737. mrobinson@tmsgr.com; www.tmsgr.com. Michael W. Robinson, Chairman & CEO.

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Complete Broadcasting Industry Guide, The: Television, Radio, Cable & Streaming, Grey House Publishing, 4919 Route 22, P.O. Box 56, Amenia, NY, 12501. 800/562-2139; 518/789-8700. www.greyhouse.com. Leslie Mackenzie, Publisher.

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MediaFinder Online Database, Oxbridge Communications, 388 2nd Ave., #503, New York, NY, 10010. 212/741-0231. www.mediafinder.com. Trish Hagood, Pres.

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Website Development



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

At Point provides website development and maintenance services, and can manage your project from end to end. Clients receive personalized and high-quality customer service, solutions that fit their budgets, and the assurance of At Point's reliability.

Novitas Communications, 1732 Wazee St., #201, Denver, CO, 80202. 720/379-5740. mblyng@novitascommunications.com; novitascommunications.com. Michelle Lyng.

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Categories _____

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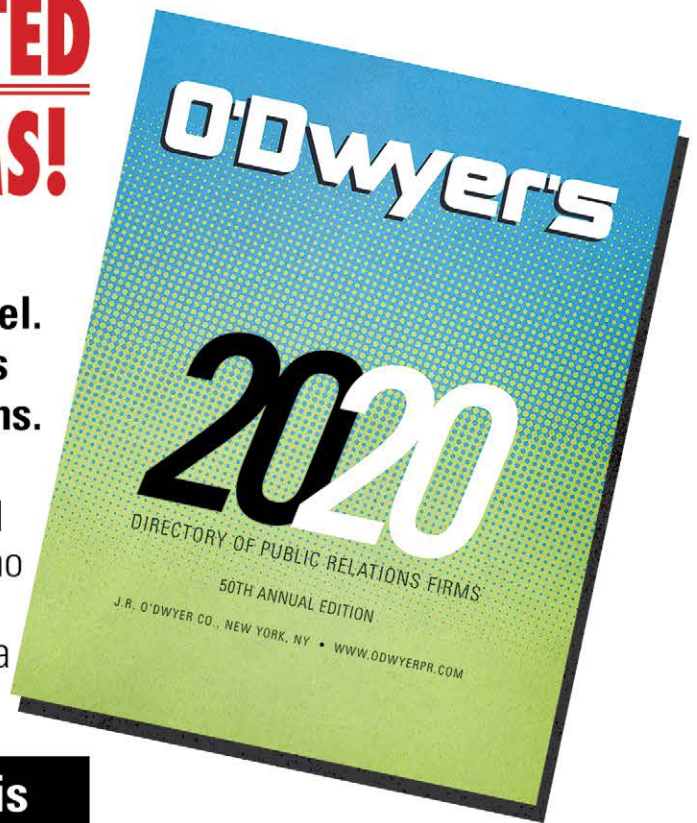
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Form may be faxed to 212/683-2750

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

1-9

24-7 Press Release Newswire: Press Release Distribution
4media Group: Public Service Announcements, Radio, Satellite Media Tours
5K Productions: Television (TV) Production
5W Public Relations: Crisis Management

A

A-1 Broadcast: Satellite Media Tours
ABGPrint: Printing
Addison Design Company: Graphic Services
Adrian Awards: Awards
Advertising Club of New York: Associations
Advertising Specialty Institute: Associations
Agility PR Solutions: Measurement & Evaluation, Media Monitoring, Social Media
Alan Morgan Group: Search Engine Optimization
Alexander Hamilton Medal: Awards
All-In-One Media Directory: Directories
Alliance for Women in Media: Associations
AME - Advertising & Marketing Effectiveness Awards, New York Festivals: Awards
American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As): Associations
American Association of Political Consultants: Associations
American Hotel & Lodging Association's Stars of the Industry Awards: Awards
American Marketing Association, The: Associations
American Program Bureau, Inc.: Speakers Service (Talent)
American University, School of Communication: Education
APEX Awards: Awards
ARC Awards: Awards
Arthur W. Page Society: Associations
Artisan Production House: Satellite Media Tours, Video
ASAE: The Center For Assn. Leadership: Associations, Education
Associated Press, The: Content Marketing, Newswires/Press Services, Photo Distribution, Photographers/Stock Photo, Press Release Distribution, Television (TV) Production, Video
Association for Conflict Resolution: Associations
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication: Associations

Association for Women in Communications, The: Associations
Association of Directory Publishers: Directory Publishers
Association of Marketing and Communications Professionals: Associations
Association of National Advertisers (ANA): Associations
Association of Strategic Alliance Professionals: Associations
Association TRENDS Annual Trendy Awards: Awards
Association TRENDS Association Executive of the Year Award: Awards
Astrid Awards: Awards
At Point Inc.: Website Development
Atomik Research, a part of 4media group: Research
Audio Productions Inc.: Video
August Jackson: Special Events
Automotive PR Council, Original Equipment Suppliers Assn.: Associations
AVA Digital Awards: Awards

B

Bader Media Group: Video
Baruch College (CUNY), M.A. in Corporate Communication: Education
Belfort Group: Integrated Marketing & PR
Bell Ringer Awards: Awards
Bernhardt Fudyma Design Group: Annual Reports/Design/Branding
Big Apple Awards: Awards
Black PR Wire Inc.: Newswires/Press Services
Blaine Group, Inc., The: Crisis Management, Integrated Marketing & PR, Media Training
Bliss Integrated Communication: Crisis Management
Boardroom Communications Inc.: Crisis Management
Boom Broadcast & Media Relations: Video
Booz Allen Hamilton: Management Consultants
Bowling Green State University, School of Media and Communication: Education
Brian Simon Associates: Executive Search
British American Business Inc.: Associations
Broad Street Productions: Video
Broadridge: Annual Reports/Design/Branding
Bronze Anvil Awards of PR Society of America: Awards
Bruce Wodder Photography: Photographers/Stock Photo
Buchbinder Tunick & Company LLP:

CPA/Consulting Services
Bulldog Awards: Awards
Bulldog Reporter: Newsletters
Burke, Inc.: Research

C

C&J Mediaworks: Media Tours/Roadshows, Radio
Camera One: Photographers/Stock Photo
Cameron Communications Inc.: Media Training
Can Stock Photo: Photographers/Stock Photo
Cannes Lions Awards: Awards
Capitol City Speakers Bureau: Speakers Service (Talent)
Caplan Communications LLC: Radio
CareerBuilder: Employment Services
Cavanaugh & Associates Inc.: Celebrities
CCI - Corporate Communication Int'l at Baruch College/CUNY: Education
Celebrities, Plus Inc.: Media Tours/Roadshows
Celebrity Access, Inc.: Celebrities
Celebrity Source, The: Celebrities
Center City Film & Video: Video
Chief Marketing Officer Council: Associations
Chraft PR: Social Media
CIMSearch: Executive Search
Cision: Directories, Measurement & Evaluation, Media Lists, Media Monitoring, Newswires/Press Services
Clarion Awards: Awards
ClickTime: Software
CLIO Awards: Awards
CMG Productions: Media Training
CODIE Awards: Awards
Columbia Books & Information Services: Directory Publishers
Columbia University, M.S., Strategic Communication: Education
CommCore, Inc.: Crisis Management, Media Training
Communicator Awards: Awards
Communitas Awards: Awards
Complete Broadcasting Industry Guide, The: Television, Radio, Cable & Streaming: Directories
Concepts, Inc.: Content Marketing
Conference Board, The: Conventions/Conference Planners, Special Events
Connex International Inc.: Webcasting
Consultants and Consulting Organizations Directory: Directories
Content Marketing Institute: Content Marketing
ContentWriters.com: Copywriters
Conus Archive, The: Video
Corporate Events: Special Events

Corporate Public Issues: Newsletters
 Cover Edge Television News Service:
 Television (TV) Production
 CPR, The International Institute For Con-
 flict Prevention and Resolution: Asso-
 ciations
 Creative Civilization: Research
 Creative Media Design: Interactive/Mul-
 timedia Services, Media Tours/Road-
 shows
 Creators News Service/Creators Syndi-
 cate: Newswires/Press Services
 Cresta Creative: Video
 Crews Control: Video

D

D S Simon Media: Satellite Media Tours
 DEFINITION 6: Research
 Deltek: Software
 DHR Int'l.: Executive Search
 DigiClips, Inc.: Broadcast Monitoring Ser-
 vices
 Directory of Business Information
 Resources: Directories
 dotCOMM Awards: Awards
 Double R Productions: Video
 Drexel University Online, M.S in Commu-
 nication: Education
 DRG (Talent Advisory Group): Executive
 Search

E

Eagles Talent Connection: Speakers Ser-
 vice (Talent)
 Edgewise: Copywriters
 Editor & Publisher News Media Data-
 Book and Online Newspaper Data-
 base: Directories
 Effective Promos: Promotions
 EIN Presswire: Press Release Distribu-
 tion
 Eisenberg & Associates: Annual Reports/
 Design/Branding
 Encyclopedia of Associations: National
 Organizations of the U.S.: Directories
 Engine: Research
 Escalent: Research
 EurekaAlert!: Press Release Distribution
 Event Planners Plus!: Special Events
 Eventage: Special Events

F

Facebook: Social Media
 Fast Forward Events: Special Events
 Feature Photo Service Inc.: Photogra-
 phers/Stock Photo

Feintuch Communications: Crisis Man-
 agement, Media Training, Social Media
 Florida PR Association: Associations
 Forum Group, The: Executive Search
 Fry Group, The: Executive Search

G

Galaxy Awards: Awards
 Gale, A Cengage Company: Directory
 Publishers
 Gallup Inc.: Research
 Galperin Design Inc.: Annual Reports/
 Design/Branding
 George Washington University, Online
 Master's in Strategic Public Relations:
 Education
 Georgetown University, School of Con-
 tinuing Studies, Master's in Public
 Relations & Corporate Comms.: Edu-
 cation
 Getty Images: Photo Distribution
 Gilbert Tweed International: Executive
 Search
 Glassdoor: Employment Services
 Glean.info: Media Monitoring
 Global Alliance for Public Relations and
 Communication Mgmt.: Associations
 GoGraph: Photographers/Stock Photo
 Gold Anvil Award of PR Society of Amer-
 ica: Awards
 Gold Circle Awards: Awards
 Gold Ink Awards: Awards
 Gold Quill Awards: Awards
 Golden Trumpet Awards: Awards
 Golden World Awards: Awards
 Gonzaga University, M.A., Communica-
 tion and Leadership Studies: Education
 Google: Research, Social Media
 Gould+Partners LLC: CPA/Consulting
 Services, Management Consultants,
 Mergers & Acquisitions
 Greater Talent Network: Celebrities,
 Speakers Service (Talent)
 GreenBook Directory for Marketing
 Research Companies: Directories
 Greenleaf Book Group: Editorial Distribu-
 tion & Services
 Grey House Publishing: Directory Pub-
 lishers
 GRS Systems Inc.: Video

H

Harry Walker Agency: Speakers Service
 (Talent)
 Havas Formula: Crisis Management
 Headquarters USA Directory: Directories
 Healthcare Businesswomen's Associa-
 tion: Associations
 Hechkooff Executive Search Inc.: Execu-
 tive Search
 Hedquist Productions: Radio
 Henninger Media Services: Video
 Herbert Mines Associates: Executive
 Search
 Hermes Creative Awards: Awards
 Heyman Associates Inc.: Executive
 Search
 Hispanic Public Relations Association:
 Associations
 History Associates: Research
 Hospitality Sales & Marketing Associa-
 tion Int'l.: Associations
 Hudson's Washington News Media Con-
 tacts Directory: Directories
 Hunter Public Relations: Social Media
 Hypefactors: Measurement & Evaluation,
 Media Monitoring, Software

I

iBravo! Awards: Awards
 ICR: Crisis Management
 Idealliance: Associations
 IEG LLC: Special Events
 Incricia: Integrated Marketing & PR
 Indeed: Employment Services
 Infobase: Directory Publishers
 InMoment: Research
 iNova Awards: Awards
 Instagram: Social Media
 Institute for PR: Associations
 Interactive Advertising Bureau: Associa-
 tions
 Interface Media Group: Video
 International Association of Business
 Communicators (IABC): Associations
 International Association of Business
 Communicators (IABC), Wash., D.C.
 Chapter: Associations
 International Association of Speakers
 Bureaus: Associations
 International Communication Associa-
 tion: Associations
 International PR Assn. (IPRA): Associa-
 tions, Public Relations Networks
 International Public Relations Network:
 Public Relations Networks
 International Women's Media Founda-
 tion: Associations
 Internet Advertising Competition (IAC)
 Awards: Awards
 Internet Association: Associations
 Intrado (Formerly West): Press Release

Distribution
IPREX: Public Relations Networks
Issue Management Council: Associations
Ivanhoe Broadcast News Inc.: Video

J

Jack Felton Medal for Lifetime Achievement: Awards
Jenkins Group: Editorial Distribution & Services
Jersey Awards: Awards
JL Insight Communications: Media Training
Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher: Crisis Management
John Knepler Design: Graphic Services
John O'Boyle Photography LLC: Photographers/Stock Photo
Johnson Strategic Communications, Inc.: Annual Reports/Design/Branding
Judith Cushman & Associates, Consulting and Retained Search: Executive Search

K

Karen Friedman Enterprises Inc.: Media Training
Keep in Touch: Broadcast Monitoring Services
Kekst CNC: Crisis Management
Keppler Speakers: Speakers Service (Talent)
Kettle Media Concepts, Inc.: Video

L

L.C. Williams & Associates: Crisis Management
Language Bank: Translation Services
Leader Motiv: Media Training
Leadership Connect: Directories
Leadership Connect (Formerly Leadership Directories): Directory Publishers
Leading Authorities Inc.: Speakers Service (Talent)
LexisNexis: Media Monitoring
Licensing Sourcebook Online: Directories
LinkedIn: Employment Services, Social Media
Linsey Careers: Executive Search
Lippe Taylor: Social Media
Lippincott: Annual Reports/Design/Branding
Live Star Entertainment: Satellite Media Tours
Lloyd Staffing: Executive Search
LoginRadius: Software

Lovett Stories + Strategies: Video
Lynn Hazan & Associates, Inc.: Executive Search
Lyons PR: Satellite Media Tours

M

Magnify Digital: Social Media
Management Recruiters Int'l of Boston: Executive Search
MarCom Awards: Awards
Marketing Maven: Integrated Marketing & PR, Social Media
Marketing Services Search Database: Directories
Marketing Werks - Mobile & Event Marketing: Promotions
Maryanne Russell Photography Inc.: Photographers/Stock Photo
Matrix Awards: Awards
MediaEngagement LLC: Electronic Newsfeeds/Satellite Services, Media Tours/Roadshows, Public Service Announcements, Radio, Satellite Media Tours, Social Media, Video
MediaFinder Online Database: Directories
MediaMax Online: Broadcast Monitoring Services, Clipping Services, Media Monitoring
MediaNet: Media Training
MediaTracks Communications, Inc.: Radio
Meeting Professionals International (MPI): Conventions/Conference Planners
Megaphone Media: Media Tours/Roadshows, Public Service Announcements, Radio, Satellite Media Tours, Television (TV) Production, Video
Mercury Awards: Awards
Metro Creative Graphics, Inc.: Editorial Distribution & Services
Metro Monitor, Inc.: Media Monitoring
Moldow Communications LLC: Satellite Media Tours
Monday Talent: Executive Search
Monster: Employment Services
Montgomery Strategies Group, The: Crisis Management, Media Training
Murray Hill Studios: Satellite Media Tours, Television (TV) Production, Video, Webcasting
Museum of Public Relations, The: Associations
MVP Collaborative: Special Events
M|A|R|C Research: Research

N

NAGC Communicator of the Year Award: Awards
National Association of Broadcasters: Associations
National Association of Business Political Action Committees: Associations
National Association of Government Communicators: Associations
National Association of Personnel Services: Associations
National Black Public Relations Society: Associations
National Foundation for Women Legislators: Associations
National Hispanic Media Coalition: Associations
National Institute for Lobbying & Ethics, The: Associations
National Investor Relations Institute: Associations
National Press Club: Interactive/Multimedia Services, Special Events, Video, Webcasting
National School PR Association: Associations
National Writers Association: Associations
Neil Frank & Co.: Executive Search
New York Festivals, TV & Film Awards: Awards
New York Financial Writers' Association: Associations
New York Women in Communications (NYWICI): Associations
Newman Group Inc., The: Media Training
News & Experts: Radio
News Exposure: Broadcast Monitoring Services, Clipping Services, Media Monitoring, Radio, Research
NewsWatch: Video
Newz Group: Clipping Services
Next Millennium Productions: Satellite Media Tours, Television (TV) Production, Video, Webcasting
Nielsen: Research
North American Network: Public Service Announcements, Radio
North American Precis Syndicate: Press Release Distribution
Northeastern University College of Professional Studies, M.S., Corporate and Organizational Communication: Education
Novitas Communications: Associations, Crisis Management, Editorial Distribution & Services, Measurement & Evaluation, Media Lists, Media Monitoring, Media Tours/Roadshows, Media Training, Search Engine Optimization, Social Media, Website Development
nVision: Special Events

NYU School of Professional Studies,
M.S. in Public Relations and Corporate
Communication: Education

O

O'Dwyer's: Directory Publishers
O'Dwyer's Directory of Public Relations
Firms: Directories
O'Dwyer's Newsletter: Newsletters
O'Dwyer's PR Jobs Site: Employment
Services
O'Sullivan Comms.: Translation Services
Omnigraphics: Directory Publishers
Onclusive: Measurement & Evaluation,
Media Monitoring, Social Media
OneConnective: Executive Search
OnePitch: Software
Online Journalism Awards: Awards
Online News Association, c/o NPR: Asso-
ciations
Organization of American Women in
Public Relations: Associations
Original U.S. Congress Handbook, The:
Directories
Outstanding Educator Award of PR Soci-
ety of America: Awards

P

Padilla: Crisis Management
Paladin Staffing Services: Employment
Services
Paragon Awards: Awards
Parallax Productions Inc.: Video
Paul M. Lund Public Service Award of PR
Society of America: Awards
Paulette Wolf Events & Entertainment:
Special Events
Pennsylvania Association for Govern-
ment Relations: Associations
Peppercomm, Inc.: Crisis Management
Phifer & Company, LLC: Executive
Search
Philadelphia PR Association: Associa-
tions
Pinterest: Social Media
PitchBox Media: Media Lists
Pitching Monkeys Media: Media Tours/
Roadshows, Radio, Satellite Media
Tours
PMI (Production Masters, Inc.): Video
Point Five Design: Annual Reports/
Design/Branding
Power of A Awards: Awards
PR Club: Associations
PR Council: Associations
PR News: Newsletters
PR News Awards: Awards
PR Professional of the Year Award of PR
Society of America: Awards

PR World Alliance: Public Relations Net-
works
PREMIERETV: Electronic Newsfeeds/
Satellite Services, Radio, Satellite
Media Tours, Television (TV) Produc-
tion, Video
Press Record Communications: Media
Tours/Roadshows, Media Training,
Radio, Satellite Media Tours
Prime Time Media: Digital Media Tours,
Electronic Newsfeeds/Satellite Ser-
vices, Radio, Satellite Media Tours
Professional Marketing Forum: Associa-
tions
PROI Worldwide: Public Relations Net-
works
Promotional Products Association Int'l.:
Associations
Proof Advertising: Research
PRSA/Georgia: Associations
PRSA/Los Angeles Chapter: Associa-
tions
PRSA/National Capital Chapter: Associa-
tions
PRSA/National Capital Excellence in
Comms. Awards: Awards
PRSA/New York Chapter: Associations
Public Affairs Council: Associations
Public Communications Inc.: Crisis Man-
agement
Public Relations and Marketing Excel-
lence Awards: Awards
Public Relations Boutiques Int'l: Public
Relations Networks
Public Relations Global Network (PRGN):
Public Relations Networks
Public Relations Society of America
(PRSA): Associations
Public Relations Student Society of
America (PRSSA): Associations
Publicity Club of Chicago: Associations
Publicity Club of New York: Associations
Purdue University, Online M.S. in Com-
munication: Education

Q

Queens University of Charlotte, Online
M.A. in Communication: Education
Questar Awards: Awards
Queue Associates: Software
Quinn & Co. Public Relations: Social
Media
Quinnipiac University, M.S. in Public
Relations: Education

R

Radio Television Digital News Associa-
tion: Associations
Ragan's PR Daily: Newsletters
Ragan's PR Daily Awards: Awards
REBRAND 100 Global Awards: Awards
Red Fan Communications: Crisis Man-
agement, Editorial Distribution &
Services, Management Consultants,
Mergers & Acquisitions, Public Rela-
tions Networks
Regatta Inc.: Special Events
Relentless Awareness LLC: Press
Release Distribution
REQ: Interactive/Multimedia Services
Research America Inc: Measurement &
Evaluation
Research America Inc.: Research
Researchscape International: Research
ReviveHealth: Crisis Management, Inte-
grated Marketing & PR
RFP Associates, Agency Search Consul-
tants: Management Consultants
Rich Green Photography: Photogra-
phers/Stock Photo
Robert Half International, Inc.: Employ-
ment Services
Rogers & Cowan PMK: Celebrities
Russell Reynolds Associates: Executive
Search
Rutgers School of Communication and
Information, Master of Communication
and Media Program: Education

S

SABRE Awards: Awards
Sachs Media Group: Crisis Management
Sadler Productions, Inc.: Video
Sard Verbinen & Co.: Crisis Manage-
ment
Scudder Training & Consulting, Ken:
Media Training
Select Resources Int'l: Management
Consultants
Send2Press® Newswire, a service of
Neotrope®: Press Release Distribution
Seton Hall University, M.A., Communica-
tion, M.A., Public Relations: Education
She Runs It (Formerly Advertising
Women of NY): Associations
Shining Starlet Entertainment, LLC: Video
SHOOT Publicity Wire: Newswires/Press
Services
Sigma Delta Chi Awards: Awards
SIIA, Software & Information Industry
Assn.: Associations
Silver Anvil Awards of PR Society of
America: Awards
Silver Apple Awards: Awards
Simmons College, B.A., Communica-
tions: Education

Sitrick And Company: Crisis Management
 Sloane & Company: Crisis Management
 SMM Advertising: Graphic Services
 Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing (SABEW): Associations
 Society for Health Care Strategy & Market Development: Associations
 Society for Technical Communication: Associations
 Society for Technical Communication, STC Awards: Awards
 Society of American Travel Writers: Awards
 Society of American Travel Writers (SATW): Associations
 Society of Professional Journalists: Associations
 Solomon McCown & Cence: Crisis Management
 Speakers On Healthcare: Celebrities, Speakers Service (Talent)
 Spencer Stuart & Associates: Executive Search
 Spring Associates: PR Salary/Compensation Analysis
 SSRS: Research
 Standard & Poor's Global Ratings: Research
 Stevens Group, The: Mergers & Acquisitions
 Stevie Awards: Awards
 Straight North: Search Engine Optimization
 Strategic Objectives: Crisis Management, Media Tours/Roadshows, Media Training, Social Media, Special Events
 Strauss Media Strategies, Inc.: Electronic Newsfeeds/Satellite Services, Media Tours/Roadshows, Public Service Announcements, Radio, Satellite Media Tours, Television (TV) Production
 Studio 120: Video
 Syntaxis Inc.: Education
 Syracuse University, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications: Education

T

T. J. Sacks & Associates: Copywriters, Integrated Marketing & PR, Newsletters
 Take One Productions: Video
 TEKGROUP Int'l Inc.: Software
 Tellem Grody PR: Crisis Management
 Telly Awards, The: Awards
 The Analyst Agency: Measurement & Evaluation
 The Brand Advocates: Crisis Management, Graphic Services, Interactive/

Multimedia Services
 The Good Search, LLC: Executive Search
 Thomson Reuters: Newswires/Press Services
 THUNK! MEDIA, Inc.: Electronic Newsfeeds/Satellite Services, Media Tours/Roadshows, Satellite Media Tours, Television (TV) Production, Video
 TJM Communications, Inc.: Crisis Management
 Tobin Communications Inc.: Radio
 Translations.com: Translation Services
 Tufts University, Gerald J. & Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Food Nutrition Policy and Programs: Education
 TV Access: Public Service Announcements
 TVEyes: Media Monitoring
 TVG: Crisis Management
 Twitter: Social Media

U

U.S. Travel Association: Associations
 Universal Information Services: Broadcast Monitoring Services, Clipping Services, Measurement & Evaluation, Media Monitoring
 University of Denver, University College, M.A., Communication Mgmt. Program: Education
 University of Florida, College of Journalism & Communications: Education
 University of Maryland, College Park, The Dept. of Communication: Education
 University of Memphis, The, College of Communication and Fine Arts, Dept. of Journalism and Strategic Media: Education
 USAJobs: Employment Services
 USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, M.A., Public Relations and Advertising: Education

V

Ventana Productions: Video
 Very Special Events: Special Events
 Viddy Awards: Awards
 VideoLink Inc.: Satellite Media Tours, Video
 VISTA Worldlink: Electronic Newsfeeds/Satellite Services, Special Events
 VNR1 Communications, Inc.: Video

W

W. Howard Chase Award: Awards

Ward Group, The: Executive Search
 Washington Independent Productions: Video
 Washington Speakers Bureau: Speakers Service (Talent)
 Washington Women in PR: Associations
 Washington Women in Public Relations (WWPR) Woman of the Year Award: Awards
 WebAward Competition for Website Development, Web Marketing Assn.: Awards
 Weber Shandwick: Crisis Management
 West Virginia University, Online M.S., Integrated Marketing Communications: Education
 What's Hot London: Press Release Distribution
 Wieck Media: Interactive/Multimedia Services
 Woman of the Year Award: Awards
 Women in Government Relations: Associations
 World Class Speakers & Entertainers: Speakers Service (Talent)
 World Radio TV Handbook: Directories
 Worldcom Public Relations Group: Public Relations Networks

X, Y, Z

Yearbook of Experts: Directories
 Zing How Design: Fulfillment, Graphic Services, Printing, Promotions
 ZipRecruiter: Employment Services

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