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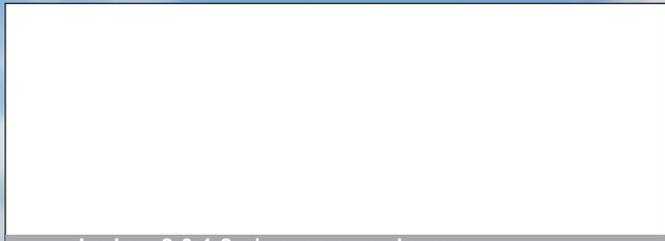
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## “Monkey wrench” politics will haunt Republicans

In June, House Republicans held Attorney General Eric Holder in contempt of Congress for allegedly failing to turn over documents relating to the ATF’s “Fast and Furious” operation. Simultaneously, they threw a collective tantrum over the Supreme Court’s 5-4 decision to uphold the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act’s power to tax U.S. citizens. The takeaway from these behaviors? Republicans are growing desperate.

We have less than five months to go until the 2012 Presidential election and, big surprise, our economy still stinks. The difference now is Americans are beginning to point the blame in the right place.

Partisan railroading has always been an integral part of U.S. politics, but Congressional Republicans have managed to take the concept to brave new frontiers. Several years ago, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell famously said “the single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president.” You have to hand it to him: he’s been true to his word.

By their own admissions, Republicans have sabotaged the Presidential administration during the worst recession in modern American history. They’ve deliberately engaged in a coordinated, collusive effort to undermine any progress made by the current administration, bulldozing over bi-partisan policy that would add jobs for a chance to turn a political screw against the man in the White House. It’s a plan that’s practically criminal in its contempt, one that goes far beyond the pale of partisan politics. Today’s Congressional Republicans are an economic goon squad, busting the wheels of the carriage and then blaming the driver for not going fast enough. They don’t want more jobs for Americans. At least not until after November (*The Guardian* writer Michael Cohen analyzed this very issue particularly well, in a June editorial titled “Did Republicans Deliberately Crash the U.S. Economy?”).

In the course of doing so, Congressional Republicans have revealed astounding hypocrisy. They derided the effectiveness of the recent stimulus, while they proposed their own stimulus a decade ago. They voted down every piece of job-creating legislation that’s come their way — even quintessentially conservative legislation like payroll tax cuts for the middle class. They derailed the “Buffett Rule” that would force the nation’s biggest earners to pay 30% of their income in taxes. They blocked a bill that would prevent interest rates on subsidized federal college loans from effectively doubling, from their current 3.4% interest rate to a whopping 6.8%. They stalled a bill to increase Federal transportation funding, which would have given thousands of Americans high-paying construction jobs. They shot down bi-partisan legislation that would have given states much-needed tax relief, resulting instead with hundreds of thousands of teachers, firefighters, librarians and police officers being laid off. Now they’re crying foul over the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act — a bill that was engineered after the current Republican nominee’s health-care re-haul in Massachusetts.

Any victories under this rubric will be Pyrrhic. It’s akin to burning down your house because you don’t like the property taxes. They might not realize it now, but Republicans’ monkey wrenching will come back to haunt them. The fact is, the American people are becoming painfully aware of all this. A June Public Policy poll asked Americans if they thought Republicans were intentionally stalling the economy. About half — 49% — said yes. Among moderates and independents the numbers were much higher — at 61%. A similar November poll in Florida by Suffolk University found that even 34% of conservatives now believe Republicans are intentionally stalling efforts to revive the economy. A June Daily Kos/SEIU poll found 55% of those polled now view the Republican Party negatively. Amazingly, Republicans have managed to amass an even worse reputation for themselves in 2012 than they had at the end of 2008.

These behaviors have sent a clear message to the American public: Republicans want what’s best for Republicans, not what’s best for Americans. Besides the fact that holding our economy hostage is an insidious idea, the very notion that there are politicians who believe the “broken window fallacy” that the best way to improve our country is by destroying it will not be a concept forgotten in November. ●

— Jon Gingerich

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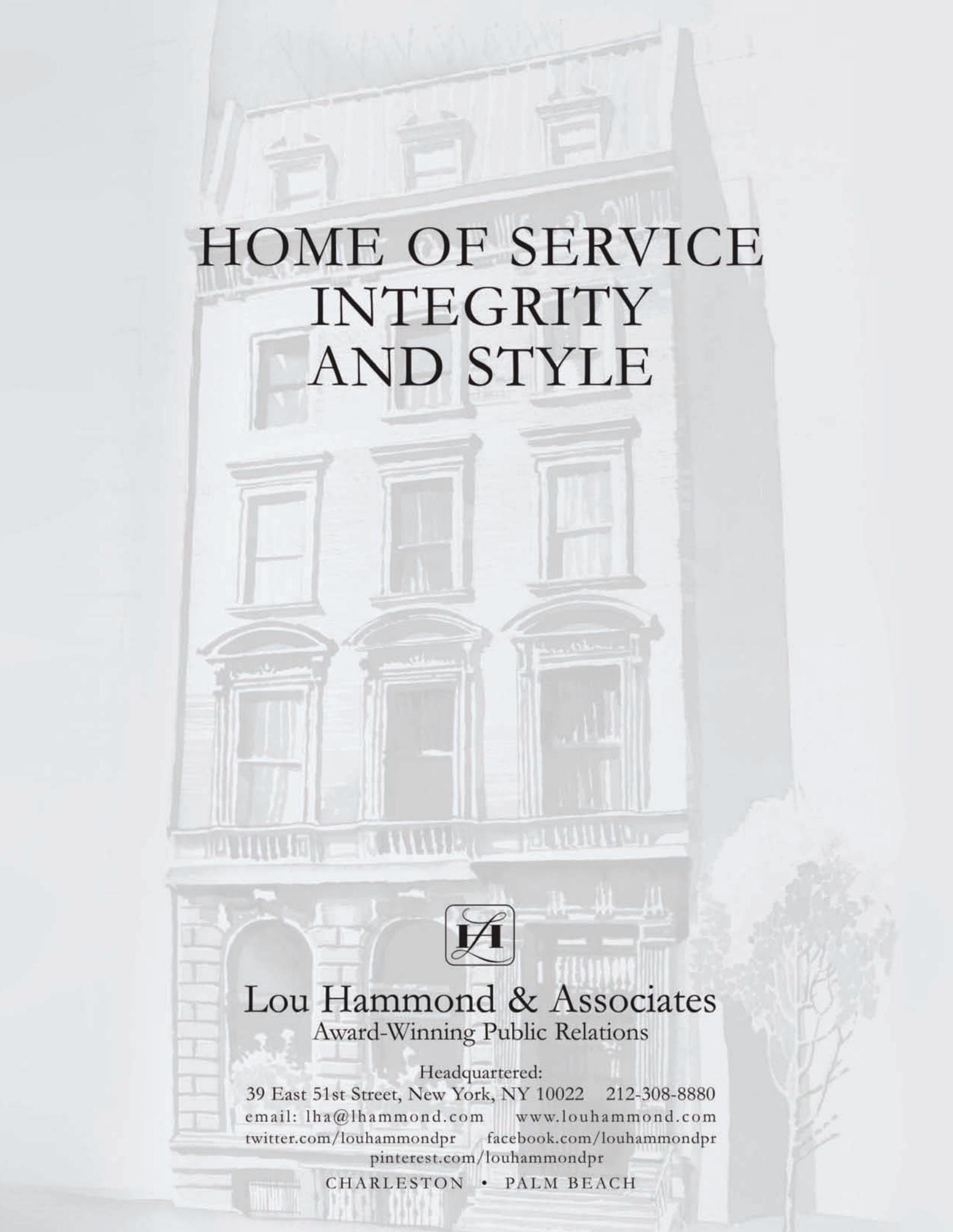
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# PR groups: pros shouldn't edit Wikipedia pages

**PR professionals shouldn't directly edit Wikipedia pages relating to their organization or clients, according to a set of guidelines released by four international PR groups in June.**

By Greg Hazley

Led by the U.K.'s Chartered Institute of PR, the group set out to provide "clear and detailed advice" for PR pros seeking to engage the Wikipedia community. They recommend PR pros should suggest amendments to Wikipedia content to so-called Wikipedians, the "editors" who participate in the online information collective.

"The main theme of the guidance is quite simple — where there is a clear conflict of interest created by the relationship between the public relations professional and the subject of the Wikipedia entry, such as a client or employer, they should not directly edit it," said CIPR CEO Jane Wilson, noting Wikipedia is "one of the most visited sources of information on the Internet."

The Canadian PR Society, PR Consultants Association, and PR Institute

of Australia collaborated with Wikipedians on the project, which produced a crowd-sourced, 19-page guidebook for PR pros using Wikipedia.

Where a Wikipedia article on a client is perceived to be unfair or erroneous, PR pros are urged to engage with regular contributors on the article's "talk page." If a request levied there is ignored, the guidelines suggest moving to the author's talk page and to continue through a series of quality controls designed by Wikipedians. Legal threats are discouraged. "'See you in court' will not help you or a client. It can get you banned from editing while the issue is referred to lawyers," reads the guidelines.

A study funded by the Arthur W. Page Center at Penn State University in April



found that 60% of Wikipedia articles about companies contain factual errors.

Wilson acknowledged the Facebook group, Corporate Representatives for Ethical Wikipedia Engagement, or CREWE — led by Edelman's Phil Gomes and lobbying Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales to streamline onerous rules for correcting or changing information on the site — but said such policy changes will not be made quickly and urged PR pros to respect the "community workings" as they stand now.

The guidelines say PR pros are free to contribute Wikipedia articles unrelated to their jobs and urged them to do so to learn how the site works.

The project also backed the following definition of PR: "Public relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behavior. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics." ●

# Pentagon bans co-owner of PR contractor

**The Department of Defense has banned the co-owner of a PR services firm from handling military contracts after he confessed to a "misinformation campaign" targeting two reporters.**

By Greg Hazley

Camille Chidiac, who co-founded and controls a 49% stake in Leonie Industries, was added to the Excluded Parties List of individuals and companies barred from working federal contracts, effective May 30.

Leonie handles information and PR operations for the military in Afghanistan and has worked with the U.S. government since 2004.

"Mr. Chidiac's placement on the EPL relates to him as an individual," Leonie, which has worked with Patton Boggs amid the crisis, said in a statement June 20. "Leonie has not been placed on the EPL, and the government has not indicated that Leonie has done anything that would warrant placement on the list."

Two *USA Today* reporters, Tom Vanden Brook and Ray Locker, reported in

February that the company's work on a \$145 million, three-year pact was ineffective, questioned its limited military experience, and that it owed at least \$4 million in federal taxes, which has since been paid. *USA Today* also reported that its writers were targeted with an online smear campaign after reporting on the company.

Members of Congress expressed concern and threatened to withhold Pentagon PR funds in the wake of the allegations, sparking a Pentagon investigation.

Chidiac, who works with Phalanx PR, confessed on May 24 to involvement in an online "misinformation" campaign, following an internal probe.

"Some of the positive and negative comments made about these two journalists' articles were written on blogs that I had registered under my name," said Chidiac. "I take full responsibility for hav-

ing some of the discussion forums opened and reproducing their previously published *USA Today* articles on them."

Chidiac denied his work was a smear campaign, noting the blogs registered under his name were all clearly marked "unofficial fan site", were not "fake websites" and were not intended to "smear, mislead or misinform anyone."

"Following *USA Today's* release of a new article falsely claiming a 'smear campaign' had been instituted against its journalists, I had the blogs audited and then removed so that there would be no consequences to Leonie for something I did personally," he said.

The company stressed he resigned as an employee in 2008 and acted on his own, though he still holds a 49% stake.

Leonie, which said it has earned high marks by the government for its previous work and has been audited on several occasions, said Chidiac is "being removed as an owner of the company," although as of June 20 that process is not yet completed. ●

# Press: Obama admin. is tightest ever on information

**New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson, addressing the Investigative Reporters & Editors conference in Boston June 16, said D.C. reporters have told her the Obama administration is the worst ever in terms of withholding information and blocking investigations.**

By Jack O'Dwyer



**New York Times Executive Editor Jill Abramson speaks at the June 16 Investigative Reporters & Editors conference.**

“Several reporters who have covered national security in Washington for decades have told me that the environment has never been tougher nor information harder to dislodge,” she said, adding that an NYT reporter “told me the environment in Washington has never been more hostile to reporters.”

As an indication of the administration’s tough approach, Abramson noted it has six prosecutions underway involving leaks as barred by the 1917 Espionage Act, which she said is double such actions in all other previous administrations.

People “fear legal retribution for even talking to reporters” and “reporters fear being hit with subpoenas or even prosecuted themselves,” she said.

Abramson cited the prosecution of Thomas Drake as an example of the type of legal attack that has a “chilling effect” on news sources.

Drake, an Air Force veteran charged with illegally keeping classified documents, lying and obstructing justice, faced 35 years in prison. He and others had criticized the “Trailblazer” National Security Agency project that was to have analyzed worldwide data. The critics thought a much cheaper program was better.

Drake pleaded guilty to one charge of unauthorized use of a government computer in June 2011.

Abramson described NYT’s battles to obtain information and said reports published in the paper had never endangered national security.

Self-censorship by the paper of what it knew about the 1961 planned “Bay of Pigs” invasion of Cuba was harmful to the U.S., she noted. President Kennedy later told NYT columnist “Scotty” Reston that he would have called off the invasion if the paper had printed what it knew, she said.

Abramson, describing numerous NYT investigative stories, said “all desks” at the paper are charged with doing investigations — from sports to science. She

described “serious investigative reporting” as the defining attribute of good reporting and said it has never been more important.

## **Lawyers: sources can’t be protected**

Adding to reporters’ fears of legal attacks were statements by two lawyers at an IRE legal panel to the effect that courts will not support claims of “confidentiality” for news sources. Attendance at the conference was more than 1,000.

Andy Siegel, VP and Assistant General Counsel at CBS, said, “Think twice about promising absolute confidentiality. You can silhouette someone or mask their face, which helps. However, if it gets into court and you protect the source, the court can rule you don’t have a source. The best bet is to get two sources.”

Steve Chung, lawyer for NBCUniversal, said, “There is really no way to protect sources. Reporters should state right up front what they are willing to do for a source.”

## **Ross tells of lawyers in newsroom**

Brian Ross, Chief Investigative Reporter for ABC News and a 40-year news veteran, described the growing power of lawyers in the newsroom at the panel called “Sue me: dealing with the threat of legal action.”

Ross noted he has won 13 Emmys for outstanding work but also has had “13 lawsuits against me.” He added that when he started out as a reporter “lawyers weren’t even allowed in the newsroom but that has changed.”

One of the suits he was no doubt referring was the action against ABC News in the 1990s when two ABC reporters posed as Food Lion reporters and videotaped alleged unsanitary practices with cameras hidden in wigs.

Food Lion was awarded \$5.5 million by a jury in 1997 but this was later reduced to \$316,000. The verdict was then overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals which said ABC was wrong but Food Lion had been unable to show it had been directly injured by the ABC reports.

Ross’s combative style was in evidence last year when he got roughed up by aides

to Republican candidate Michelle Bachmann. He pursued her into a parking lot repeatedly asking whether she had missed a House vote due to a migraine headache.

*Time*’s Swampland blog said that two men “pounced on him, grabbing and pushing him multiple times.” Ross broke away and repeated his question to Bachmann but was again ignored. Ross, asked if had ever been treated so roughly, told *Time*, “A few times, mostly by Mafia people.”

Confronted with legal threats, smaller publishers and individual reporters often have no recourse but to cave. The freefall of ad and subscription revenues have cost tens of thousands of reporters their jobs. The New York Financial Writers Assn. currently lists 97 members as “freelancers,” a category that did not exist a few years ago. They don’t have corporate sugar daddies to fight their legal battles.

What does a small publisher do when confronted with legal threats is a question that was not addressed based on reports we have received thus far on the panel. Smaller publishers may find the cost of dealing with a lawsuit prohibitive.

Tight-lipped federal government PA officers were criticized this year by John Ensslin, President of the Society of Professional Journalists, who said a survey of 146 D.C. reporters found that seven of ten were dissatisfied with government disclosure practices.

Abramson spent most of a 16-minute talk extolling NYT coverage and saying all departments were now in an investigative mode. Although NYT reporters pepper sources with questions, Abramson took none herself. The conference was hosted by the *Boston Globe*, a subsidiary of NYT. ●

# Travel communications seeks to reinvent America

Americans are still in love with the heartland, a fact that reveals ongoing opportunities for the domestic travel and tourism industry. However, PR pros working with themes of Americana are presented with a new challenge: of reinventing the “familiar” destination.

By Lou Rena Hammond

With more than 50% of Americans seeking to travel domestically this year, the time is right to re-introduce the country to its 313+ million residents.

But what are their interests? Can these travelers get beyond the big cities and discover the real gems of America?

Statistics illustrate that a leader in this tourism sector is cultural heritage. A recent American Express report finds 42% of travelers claim they’re seeking cultural experiences. More than 20% desire to learn while on vacations, mainly through museums and historical sites. These cultural heritage tourists also travel more frequently than others, taking five trips per year versus three for other types of travelers. Additionally, they spend 25% more on vacation than their counterparts.

A large number of these cultural heritage tourists are baby boomers seeking experiential travel opportunities. According to AARP, the 45-plus population represents a significant market opportunity for the travel industry. More and more boomers are retiring each year and they have a strong desire to use their newfound freedom by traveling and exploring, especially domestically. Baby boomers are willing to spend more money on authentic and memorable travel experiences.

## Showcase authentic experiences

The American Queen steamboat was originally built in 1995. It was pulled from service three years ago when its owner went bankrupt. However, in 2011 a group of cruise executives came together to bring the 418-foot vessel back to life.

At the moment, the American Queen is the only authentic paddlewheel steamboat offering overnight voyages. Public relations efforts needed to focus on the nostalgia and tradition of steamboating itself and inspire the media to take a fresh look at the United States and what it has to offer to today’s traveler — from its “amber waves of grain” and “purple mountain majesties” to the history, heritage and culture found when cruising the Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee Rivers.

Story ideas presented to the media needed to highlight authentic experiences that travelers could have on the American Queen. In addition to strolling through

charming towns and vibrant river cities and exploring historic ports of call like New Orleans, Natchez, Mark Twain’s Hannibal, Louisville and Chattanooga, they also had the opportunity to interact with local residents, many of whose families have been living in the area for generations.

For example, Rose Temple of the Pilgrimage Garden Club in Natchez, Mississippi, captivates guests during excursions of her hometown, sharing stories of antebellum homes, including Longwood and Stanton Hall. Another Natchez native, Chef Regina Charboneau, was appointed as American Queen’s culinary directory. Her dishes are reflective of the bountiful regions the vessel explored, from an abundance of sustainable fish, seafood and artisan cheeses.

## Build buzz through beat writers

Once the stories had been uncovered, it was time to present them to the press. While clients often have visions of big beautiful features stories in the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and appearances on CNN during the pre-launch phase of a campaign, it is the loyal travel trade writers and beat reporters who build the initial buzz. These loyalists received the first interviews with the American Queen’s executives and were the first to tour the vessel during its refurbishment.

They also had the chance to tour American Queen ports of call. This gave them the rare opportunity to interact with local residents operating the town’s antique shops and restaurants and experience historical sites first hand.

According to a top national newspaper journalist, “the American Queen story was on our cruise beat writer’s radar and he convinced the editor it was a story we had to cover as a large feature down the road.”

## Produce a cultural road show

Just as a start-up company hits the road to visit banks and drum up support before an initial public offering (IPO), a travel company can employ the road show strategy as well. In the cruise business, the travel agent is responsible for generating



The American Queen’s return to the waterways had the press designating 2012 as the “Year of the River.”

90% of bookings. The American Queen visited 11 markets in cities that included New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco to introduce the product to 1,800 qualified agents. They enjoyed luncheons inspired by American Queen’s culinary offerings while being immersed in the vessel’s overall experience, entertainment and itineraries.

The road show also served as a way to engage regional media in the American Queen experience. In fact, 51 members of the press attended the road shows. As a result of one event, the *San Francisco Chronicle* travel editor was inspired to declare 2012 to be the “Year of the River,” in a story titled “Cruising Industry Rides New Wave as Demand Grows.” This article was syndicated across the country and made the phones ring in the company’s reservation department.

## Measuring success

In the first 120 days of business (prior to the launch), the American Queen booked \$20 million in business, equating to 40% of total capacity for the entire year. In eight months of public relations efforts, coverage — including feature stories in *The New York Times* and *USA Today* — exceeds a reach of 332 million with an advertising rate value of more than \$13.5 million. This does not take into account the value-added premium of third-party endorsement. To date, the American Queen has produced more than \$30 million in sales — and the phones have not stopped ringing.

Lou Rena Hammond is Chairman and Founder of Lou Hammond & Associates. ●

# CRC collects \$200,000-plus to fight “Obamacare”

**A D.C.-based PR firm with a roster of Republican clients has received more than \$200,000 to promote the National Federation of Independent Business’ lawsuit against President Obama’s 2010 healthcare reform legislation, which was recently upheld by the Supreme Court.**

By Kevin McCauley

Formerly known as Creative Response Concepts, PR firm CRC received \$203,701 in 2011 from the National Federation of Independent Business, which sued the federal government to repeal “Obamacare,” according to a June 21 letter from Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz.) to Douglas Shulman, Internal Revenue Service Commissioner.

The NFIB is bankrolled by Karl Rove’s Crossroads GPS political advocacy group, which gave the group a \$3.7 million donation. Crossroads was No. 1 contributor, but NFIB received nine other six-figure contributions from unknown sources.

The Congressman wrote in his letter: “While the sources of these grants are

reported to the IRS, they are not required to be made public. As a consequence, no one outside the IRS — including the Supreme Court — knows where this money comes from.”

He wants the IRS to change the disclosure rules to require tax-exempt groups to publicize contributions and expenditures of more than \$25,000.

Grijalva, Co-Chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, believes NFIB is “acting on behalf of the wealthy interests that do not speak for the small business community.”

NFIB communications director Jean Card told the *Daily Caller* that her group is “not sure why the Progressive Caucus thinks that they can compel us to disclose things that we are not legal-

ly required to disclose.”

NFIB’s legal center received a \$2 million contribution in 2011 and shelled out \$1.2 million to Jones Day for legal expenses, \$401,756 to attorney Randy Barnett and \$203,701 to CRC for PR duties.

“These combined expenses of more than \$1.8 million for legal and PR work represent a major expansion of the Center’s mission and were funded by a few high-dollar donations, not by a spontaneous outpouring of member-driven contributions,” according to Grijalva’s letter.

Headquartered in Alexandria, VA, other CRC clients have included Parents Television Council, EverBank, AgustaWestland, AT&T, Simon & Schuster, Universal Studios, Viacom and the Walt Disney Company.

CRC is remembered for past work on behalf of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which trashed Massachusetts Senator John Kerry’s Vietnam service; Regnery Publishing’s “The Case Against Barack Obama,” and Discovery Institute’s promotion of “intelligent design” as an option to evolution. ●



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# When crisis threatens a travel campaign

**Evaluating crisis communications within the travel, tourism and hospitality industries takes PR professionals through a maze of difficult situations that must be properly — and quickly — resolved. It only takes an instant for a crisis to occur, derailing marketing campaigns and destroying plans for those immediately affected. While the public begins looking for answers, a crisis communications team must face the situation and resolve the immediate effects while preparing for its aftermath.**

By D.M. Banks

In times of crisis, it's up to the PR professional to convince the public that things are never as horrific as other media outlets may lead them to believe. Both natural and manmade disasters can destroy a destination: earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, bomb attacks and outbreaks are all among the list of problems that can overturn the industry within minutes. These leave vacationers and locals alike scrambling to evacuate, causing major problems for airlines, hotels, rental car companies and entire transportation systems. As a PR professional assigned to oversee crisis communications efforts, you become the direct contact to the media, your client and many others — and are expected to be versed in both the problem and the best solution. It's no easy task. In some cases, it's next to impossible.

While natural disasters certainly can't be avoided, the way in which the circumstances are handled can greatly benefit brands. We see this on a yearly basis with destinations affected by hurricanes and tornadoes; and more recent catastrophes such as the oil spill in the Gulf and the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. These are monumental tragedies that can take years before the industry begins to see improvements. In the case of the Gulf, many of the destinations that were not directly affected quickly uploaded videos and photos to their website and social media accounts to convince tourists that they were sincerely open for business. Big budget commercials, amateur photos and videos have all been utilized to offset the negative media in an effort to convince tourists to return to these destinations.

There will never be anything that can turn around tourism for a war-torn region or make travelers want to visit a region in the middle of political turmoil. Even a beautiful destination such as Fiji, complete with luxury resorts and activities, is still trying to overcome a history filled with governmental problems. Even with the last major action being resolved over

a decade ago, continuing to overcome this history is a major focus of their tourism efforts. In these cases, being able to “celebrate” new hotels, resorts and attractions, as well as additional flight services and ports of call for cruise lines is the best way to help build strong tourism for a region or city.

The definition of crisis continues to grow with today's technology, and brands must collaborate with their public relations representatives to have both a team and plan in place before the crisis actually occurs. Of course, this includes the tasks of choosing the spokesperson who will become the “voice” representing the client, determining the target audience and electing when to begin the plan of action. In addition to overseeing external communications, it's vital to also properly approach the internal communications sector to keep all parties updated and connected at all times.

Crisis will always include situations such as political unrest and natural disasters, but now also involve the negative effects that have been introduced with today's technology: bad reviews, negative comments and smear campaigns top the list. Conveniences like the Internet and social media have been priceless for the travel and tourism industries in helping to grow brand awareness across borders with ease. The flip side has been the short and long term effects of negative comments made through social networks, and more detrimental, cyber attacks.

Ongoing discussion continues to be the best option when it comes to approaching negative comments made online regarding hotels, airlines, tour operators and restaurants. Almost unanimously, it's best to simply “not act” when it comes to the average negative comments and reviews. Social media has been a great way to connect with clients, and when properly utilized, can help offset this negativity, while also enhancing the brand.

The wider presence and larger following you create through social media outlets, the more connected you become with clients while keeping them updated

on all specials, contests, announcements and crisis situations. Real-time social media is becoming a very powerful tool for brands; allowing for instant notifications and solutions. Brands such as hotels and airlines are big fans of this direct connection with the public to provide the day-to-day associations and assistance, while also being available during any crisis situation where they must quickly distribute information and updates.

So, how can you best approach the aftereffects of a crisis? Begin with the standard protocol of having your dedicated spokesperson become the “voice” of your client by providing the media with the up-to-date details, while working with the internal team to follow through with the crisis management plan to stay unified and regain control. Next, look for additional ways to reach your audience and make personal connections. I know it's been said a million times, but “visuals are worth a thousand words” — the power of video and photos are absolutely priceless when marketing a product, service or destination. It's always helpful to include a “newsfeed” on the website's homepage to provide updated information, as well as reaching out to clients/guests and media via the social media outlets. Having the spokesperson and testimonial videos highlight the positive points while including videos and photos to validate these claims will go a very long way in winning back your audience. Making this direct connection with the public while being honest and forthcoming typically results in immediate and long-term loyalty.

Crisis communications and management is certainly not a glamorous part of the public relations industry, but incredibly vital to the success of any brand. Like every public relations and marketing endeavor, taking the time to formulate and execute a well-laid plan of attack will result in the best possible outcome for you and your client.

*D.M. Banks is a freelance travel writer and Director at DMB Public Relations. ●*

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# Travel conference focuses on blogger influence

The 2012 Travel Blog Exchange conference (TBEX), held June 15-17, brought more than 700 travel industry experts, PR pros and members of the travel blogging community to the Rocky Mountain resort town of Keystone, CO. For three days of workshops, seminars, speakers and parties, professionals celebrated social media's growing influence on the travel industry.

By Carla Marie Rupp & Larry Eugene Rupp

Presented by BlogWorld, with sponsorships from Vail Resorts, the Visit Denver Convention & Visitors Bureau, the 4th annual TBEX conference was the largest yet. Held at the Keystone Resort & Convention Center, the industry travel event yielded considerable evidence that blogging's influence on the travel world is at an all-time high.

"It's a serious voice and a growing influence," said Gayle Conran, President of New York-based Conran PR, which represents travel clients. Conran came to Colorado specifically to promote client Lake Geneva Region, in Switzerland. "The energy at this conference reinforces that influence. Travel blogging has been taken into the mainstream. It's a landmark moment, it's been taken to a new level."

The internationally attended conference drew not only public relations pros from across the United States, but from countries as far away as Italy, the Dominican Republic, Canada, Switzerland, Jordan and Croatia. Tables were filled with PR pros eager to meet with travel bloggers and tell them their stories.

Liane Carrascoso and Janine Jervis of the Jordan Tourism Board, North America, found plenty of adventurous travel bloggers excited about the prospect of visiting Jordan. "I enjoy talking with the bloggers," said Carrascoso. "It was the first experience we've had and we had a very positive experience. We are definitely coming back to TBEX."

Visit Denver executives, as well as travel PR pros from around the state, went all out in providing hospitality and plenty of local story ideas. Visit Denver arranged for bloggers to get acquainted with the city and each other in interesting group docent tours of three downtown Denver museums: the History Center of Colorado, the fairly new Clyfford Still (a legendary painter) Museum, and a fashion-filled exhibit of the work of Ives Saint Laurent at the

Denver Art Museum.

Bloggers who toured museums were joined by many more bloggers and publicists at the Wyncoop Brewery in LoDo (Lower Denver's popular old warehouse district made into trendy bars, clubs, cafes and shops), the setting for beer tasting from numerous micro-breweries of Colorado and food, all arranged by Visit Denver.

## "Speed dating" a hit

Travel PR staffers scrambled for the chance to network with writers and vie for their attention. A "speed-dating" media marketplace event was included in the activities, where PR pros and journalists could meet for eight-minute intervals and exchange business cards and story ideas.

"This is my third TBEX, and the conference continues to grow and impress me with the caliber of bloggers and brands present. It's valuable to our clients and our agency to be here," said Jessica Parker, Account Supervisor at Weber Shandwick's Travel and Lifestyle division, and one of the many hands on deck at the "speed dating" table.

Not every blogger signed up for "speed-dating." Some simply chatted with any of the PR communicators they could find.

## Expedia entertains, bring charity

Travel site giant Expedia held a massive presence at the TBEX conference, and offered a popular social event. Billed as Summer Shindig, it was complete with line dancers, a country western band, ribs, chicken and brisket, bucking bull rides, horseshoe and golf driving. Colorado wineries and the state's array of microbreweries provided refreshments at the complete "cowboy" event on the night before the last day of speakers and educational seminars.



A view of the Rockies from the deck of the Keystone Lodge in Keystone Colorado, which hosted the 2012 TBEX conference.

Photo by Jenny McIver of [www.RTWIn30days.com](http://www.RTWIn30days.com)

Expedia Vice President and General Manager Joe Megibow spoke about various humanitarian campaigns and charitable projects the company is currently involved in, including a new project at Water.org that brings wells to rural Haiti. Expedia has now set up a program where PR pros can work with bloggers together on these projects. Sponsors through these projects have also been instrumental in raising money for a school in Cambodia, a village in India and libraries in Zambia.

"What it's all about is making a difference," said Beth Whitman, Founder of WanderTours. A video presentation showed children and teachers happy about a new library in Zambia funded through the work of Expedia, bloggers and their readers and publicists. Expedia sent some bloggers to Zambia to participate in the ribbon cutting at the new library, and bloggers told of their indescribable joy in being involved.

Founders of Passports With Purpose include Debbie Dubrow, Whitman, Michelle Duffy and Pam Mandel. Mandel loves cupcakes, so bloggers could eat all the cupcakes they wanted on the last day's conference in the large

Continued on next page

networking room to thank them for supporting the charity. The delicious, colorful cupcakes (many eaten during speed-dating sessions to meet publicists, along with coffee), were made courtesy of Keystone Resorts and Chef Ned.

#### **"Instant PR" on Road Rally**

After a fun, fact-filled and interactive pre-conference, a "Road Rally" was held on June 15, where PR professionals rode in vans with travel bloggers as they visited scenic locations in the area, in an attempt to acquaint bloggers with local Colorado hotspots and promote Denver-area attractions.

Stops included the Denver Zoo, with its new Toyota Elephant Passage exhibit, the historic and spectacular outdoor Red Rocks Amphitheatre; the Coors Brewery, in Golden, with its free tour; the Phoenix Mine; 800 Trail Creek Road, a working underground mine where real miners still push tons of gold and silver ore in small rails cars just as they did 100 years ago, and the TommyKnocker Brewery, in Idaho Springs.

"I'm thrilled the travel bloggers joined us here in the Denver Zoo. It's going to help them understand what we do and how they can help their readers understand about animals and preserving wildlife. We appreciate everything they can write about us," said Denver Zoo Communications Director Tiffany Barnhart, who led the groups of writers on a tour of the zoo.

Travel bloggers also tried local beers made at TommyKnocker's, as well as appetizers from its cafe. Before reaching Keystone, a high point was the scenic Continental Divide stop, where bloggers drank "shots" of Colorado microbrewery beer.

Other PR-guided vans of bloggers also went to such places as Elitch Gardens Theme Park, in Denver, an historic amusement park, even riding a memorable high Ferris wheel, and to a zip lining activity along the mountain portion of the Interstate 70 outside of Idaho Springs.

Many giveaways and prizes were handed out to the travel bloggers to encourage social networking activity and to promote products and destinations. Along with press kits on flash drives, Road Rally sponsors Visit Denver gave out free iPads to bloggers and members of the press.

#### **Relationships formed, maintained**

One blogging couple, Stephanie Yoder, and her husband, Michael Tieso of New York City, joke about being "a

nomadic couple." They met at TBEX two years ago, kept in touch, traveled together at times, and got married this year, just in time for TBEX '12.

According to Yoder: "TBEX is great for picking up 'dudes,' well seriously, we love the conferences for meeting our friends, making new contacts and planning our trips and each of our story ideas for our blogs!"

Tieso said that when they met at the TBEX a few years ago, he was on his way to teach in China and she was going to go backpacking alone and write about her travels. Yoder went to go visit him in China, and they went on a travel-writing trip together to South America.

Tim Leffel, who was one of the speakers this year, said blogging has changed everything about the world of travel.

"When I first started backpacking, no one had WiFi, you just worried about



**Travel writer and author Christopher Baker speaks at the closing keynote speech at the 2012 TBEX conference.**

Photo by Jenny McIver of [www.RTWIn30days.com](http://www.RTWIn30days.com)

you had a hook to put your clothes on! It's amazing what little things like that you care about. Now you need electrical outlets and lights bright enough to read with — and of course, chargers," Leffel said.

Leffel operates a travel gear blog, among many other blogs.

Another TBEX conference has been slated for this fall, in Girona, Spain. ●

## **FEC: Craig PR spend OK, but funds misused**

**F**ormer Sen. Larry Craig's use of campaign funds for PR and legal support during a Senate Ethics Committee inquiry was deemed permissible by the Federal Election Commission, according to a June 11 court filing.

The FEC has still sued the disgraced senator for alleged misuse of more than \$200,000 from his campaign coffers used to mount a legal defense after his infamous 2007 arrest for allegedly soliciting sex in an airport bathroom.

The FEC noted Craig hired Impact Strategies, the D.C. PR firm of crisis guru Judy Smith, to handle press inquiries during his arrest, conviction and legal efforts to overturn his conviction after he pleaded guilty.

The FEC said the large sum was raised by Craig for the U.S. Senate but converted to personal legal expenses related to his arrest and later, ultimately unsuccessful, effort to get a guilty plea reversed. The FEC filed suit June 11 in federal district court for Washington, D.C., seeking an injunction against future, similar viola-

tions, an order for Craig to repay the funds to his campaign, and civil penalties.

Craig, a Republican of Idaho, left the Senate in January 2009 after completing his third term.

The suit quotes a Senate Ethics Committee "public letter of admonition" dated February 13, 2008 against Craig: "It appears that you have used over \$213,000 in campaign funds to pay legal (and, apparently, "public relations") fees in connection with your appeal of your criminal conviction." The letter admonished Craig for not seeking the committee's approval to use campaign funds for such purposes, per a Senate rule.

An administrative complaint was filed with the FEC in November 2008 and the commission in May 2009 ruled that Craig's use of campaign funds to pay the Brand Law Group and Impact Strategies was permissible. But the FEC voted unanimously, 5-0, in February 2012 that there is "probably cause" to believe Craig's use of campaign funds for legal fees and expenses for his attempt to withdraw his guilty plea constituted personal use. ●

# Educating consumers to the “safer” side of travel

Since 9/11, travel insurance sales have risen steadily. As natural disasters and political unrest continue to make headlines, insurance becomes a service a growing number of travelers realize they can't afford not to have. Communicators with clients in this sector are faced with a challenge however: of educating the public to a service that, while important, may not have the immediate allure of a spa or resort.

By Linda Kundell

2012 started out with the grounding of the Costa Concordia. In 2011 the uprisings associated with the Arab Spring affected travelers in Egypt, and the Japan Tsunami brought tourism there to a halt. In 2010 the ash cloud from the Iceland volcano stranded thousands of travelers for weeks.

There are events that invariably cause trips to be delayed or interrupted, and each cost travelers added expense. Add the impact natural events like hurricanes and blizzards have on travel plans, plus the thousands of travelers each year whose vacations are impacted because of illness or a severe injury.

That's where the story of travel insurance comes in. Travel insurance protects against unforeseen financial loss if a trip is cancelled, delayed, or interrupted for a variety of reasons, from illness or injury to severe rain, floods or snow storms. Travel insurance policies also include picking up medical costs when a policy-holder is injured or becomes ill while traveling, as well as medical evacuation when someone faces life-threatening danger and needs to be transported safely. Assistance services — commonly included in travel insurance policies — coordinate emergency medical care and provide legal consultation and referrals if someone is arrested abroad.

Our client, the US Travel Insurance Association, was formed to educate the public about the value of travel insurance and ensure that travelers have affordable access to travel protection. UStiA estimates that its membership represents over 90% of the travel insurance market in the U.S.

Prior to 9/11, only 8 to 10% of travelers purchased insurance for their trips. Since then, sales of travel insurance have grown steadily between 10 to 20% every two years, according to UStiA's bi-annual Market Survey. In 2010, nearly 124 million people had some form of travel insurance — with travel insurance sales totaling \$1.8 billion.

Despite its growth, travel insurance remains a mystery to many. When people go on vacation, they typically think about having a good time; they don't like to think

about risk and tragedy. But just like everything in life, things can go wrong.

As agency of record for UStiA, we represent the entire travel insurance industry. Our challenge has been to raise awareness of the benefits and value of travel insurance — something considered mundane by many — and to make it relevant and exciting. We need to encourage people to travel, while making them aware of the potential pitfalls and how to protect themselves against the unforeseen.

To that end, our tactic has been: Respond, Engage, and Educate.

**Respond:** Crises and high profile events, such as the Costa Concordia grounding in January, raise awareness of travel insurance. Each time such events occur, UStiA member companies see a spike in interest, and we respond on behalf of the industry, providing media information and interviews.

**Engage:** We monitor media coverage, answering critics and engaging them in dialogue. By so doing, we've been able to turn negatives into positives in high profile media such as CBS Moneywatch and *Consumer Reports*.

**Educate:** Through media contact, and press releases advising travelers how to protect themselves, we educate the public and the travel agent community about the benefits of travel insurance. Our press materials cover industry surveys, consumer issues such as security, safety and health concerns; how travel insurance protects against financial loss; and how it comes to the rescue of travelers caught in medical emergencies. For instance, MSNBC and the *Washington Post* recently ran a story on how travel insurance can ease the pain of a vacation marred by a medical emergency.

## Leveraging a Private Event

To bring the travel insurance story alive and make it relevant, we recently leveraged a UStiA members-only event, showcasing the life-saving benefits of medical evacuation. UStiA invited members attending its



Med workers board a patient onto a plane as part of a reenactment to raise awareness for medical evacuation procedures that occur when travel tragedy strikes.

convention in Phoenix to a private airport for a display of med evac planes. Crews and medical personnel had flown in from all corners of the U.S. to demonstrate their state-of-the-art equipment and capabilities.

We suggested the press be invited to have a firsthand look at what happens when travel medical disaster strikes. A media alert to local TV presented story ideas, and real-life case studies. This included a man on his honeymoon in Belize, whose leg had to be amputated when he was struck by a water taxi while snorkeling, and a woman who became ill on a Mediterranean cruise and needed a medical escort to return home to the U.S.

To add excitement we offered the media an opportunity to film a reenactment of a medical evacuation, go inside a med evac plane, and interview doctors and nurses who work with these aircraft. The story was so compelling that CBS affiliate, KPHO-TV and Spanish language TV station Univision both covered the event. The KPHO segment said: “Getting hurt or seriously ill on vacation is something most people hope never happens to them, but when it does, you want the right people there to help.”

We also hired a local video crew to interview medical personnel, pilots, and UStiA representatives on the benefits of travel insurance. By making the experience visual and exciting, we showed that accidents and illness can happen anywhere and how travel insurance and medical evacuation help save lives.

*Linda R. Kundell heads Kundell Communications in New York. ●*

# Travel agents find new ways to save

**Major travel agent firms have evolved into travel management companies that bring volume discounts worldwide for air travel, hotels, car rentals, meals and other products and services. Savings can amount to 10-15% of overall travel spending.**

By Jack O'Dwyer

“**T**ravel management companies can track a company's worldwide travel spending, and issue reports that put the facts and figures in a single report for the CFO,” said Gloria Bohan, CEO of Fairfax, Va.-based Omega World Travel. Other key executives can also access the data, she added.

“Savings can be significant when a client taps into the global purchasing power of a major travel management company,” said Bohan, whose firm is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Its more than 100 offices blanket the U.S. and owned offices are also in London, India, Romania, and Japan. Partner agencies are in 80 countries via the Radius consortium, of which OWT is a founding member.

A major trend, she notes, is requiring employees to use company credit cards rather than their own in making travel-associated purchases. Volume discounts and credits accrue to the company rather than the individual.

A survey by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives found that more than half of its members favor the use of corporate cards, sometimes referred to as “ghost cards,” rather than personal credit cards. Employees may only have to supply a number to the vendor rather than an actual credit card.

While individual employees may lose some “points” or credits, they don't have to wait for reimbursement from the employer. Vendors like it because they are assured of payment.

## **Frequent flyer miles are exception**

Not readily transferrable to companies are the frequent flyer miles that airlines award to travelers. Airlines have always taken the tack that the frequent flyer miles belong to the person whose name is on the ticket and who occupies the seat. The IRS has gone along with this, ruling in 2002 that frequent flyer miles due to

business travel are tax-free.

Employers, for their part, have been reluctant to argue about this because “FFMs can be complicated to track, difficult to redeem and are highly valued by employees as a perk,” says Bohan. Companies can let staff keep the frequent flyer miles but they must be careful not to offer them as awards or prizes; set up deals with the airlines that give employees extra frequent flyer miles, or require employees to turn in their frequent flyer miles for a cash payment. That could lead to such income being taxable. Citibank brought the issue back to life this year when it sent 1099's to customers who received FFMs as a bonus for opening an account.

## **Latest apps help travelers**

Travel management companies have the latest applications for travel software for mobile phones, which are becoming a dominant form of communication.

An employee who finds that approved airlines, hotels and car services are not available or that a flight has been cancelled can find out in a moment approved alternative airlines, hotels and car services. An employee arriving at a destination can access an APP that reminds him or her that insurance is included in the rental car rate and breakfast may be included at the hotel being used.

Travel management companies, with their fingers on global travel spending of a client and how that interacts with the volume discounts available to the travel management company, act as “travel consultants,” suggesting new patterns of spending that will save clients considerable sums.

Omega currently has total volume of more than \$1 billion.

It was founded by Gloria Bohan as a single storefront agency in Fredericksburg, Va., and is now the sixth largest travel management company in the U.S., according to Business Travel News. DiversityBusiness.com has honored the firm for building a diverse workforce. Bohan in 2011 was inducted



**Omega World Travel CEO Gloria Bohan.**

into the Washington Business Hall of Fame by *Washingtonian Magazine*.

Subsidiaries include Cruise.com, a major seller of cruises, Omega Meetings & Conventions, and TravTech, software development company. Clients include numerous *Fortune* 500 companies and federal, state and city government agencies.

Cruise.com, founded in 1997, handles more than \$200 million in bookings each year, helps companies to arrange group discounts for cruises for their employees via its Meetings and Conventions subsidiary. Many companies use cruises as sales and other incentives.

## **Companies need “travel 101” session**

Companies might consider having an annual “Travel 101” session to bring employees up-to-date on new policies that grapple with the constantly-changing travel scene. Prices and accommodations are in a constant state of flux. Only those who are current on all the changes and opportunities can make their company's travel dollar go the furthest, says Bohan.

Webinars and mobile apps are two methods of informing employees and sharing their experiences and opinions about travel services. This “boots on the ground” approach can result in significant savings as well as steer employees away from undesirable experiences. ●



# Experiences trump destinations for today's travelers

**Executives at PR firms specializing in travel and tourism told *O'Dwyer's* that today's travelers are looking for more in their vacations than mere destinations: they're seeking enriching, authentic and educational cultural experiences.**

By Jon Gingerich

If there's one prevailing theme being tossed around inside travel marketing circles nowadays, it's the idea of experiences: of what happens to visitors when they arrive at a destination; of the people they become as a result of the trip, as opposed to what they merely witness when they're there.

For PR pros, dabbling in these narratives means travel messages must wholly empathize with what visitors will take away from a trip, rather than trying to offer pre-packaged narratives regarding what amenities await them. Ultimately, it's the practice of imagining a destination as it will be seen through a visitor's eyes.

But how do you access such subjectively interpreted experiences, and how do communications professionals share something so abstract in an effective, digestible manner?

Cathleen Johnson, Executive Vice President at Edelman and leader of the company's travel practice, said the idea of touting experiences over destinations is a matter of asking how the act of being somewhere changes someone, versus what they simply see.

"As marketers we're always asking: what's the secret to travel, what's the allure? We know it's not just the image of travel, it's what happens when you get there. It's the person you become," she said. "When we offer deep cultural ties, we're going beyond the veneer. We're getting to the crux of what a destination, of what a culture, is all about."

"Everyone is using that word nowadays," said Florence Quinn, President and Founder of Quinn & Co in New York. Quinn stepped out of the annual Association of Travel Marketing Executives (ATME) in Chicago to speak with *O'Dwyer's*, and said the notion of touting the experience of travel is a broad one, albeit an idea that's nimble enough to be shaped into many potential messages.

"It can mean a lot of things, but if you ask customers and travelers I think you'll find it's a word we're using to describe something everyone wants," Quinn said. "As a culture, we have more choices and more information than we used to, so we're going to demand more. When peo-

ple go on vacation nowadays, we want to learn something."

Johnson said the idea of experience is especially powerful because different generations are latching onto these messages for different reasons.

"People travel more than they used to, and many people are more seasoned travelers than they were before," Johnson said. "And our access to imagery is so great now. Travelers are looking to dig deeper than they did before. They're looking to enhance their lives with deeper experiences. They're looking to answer the question: 'what have we learned once we come home?'"

Lisa Ross, President and Principal of rbb Public Relations, said it's imperative that brands focus on showcasing the experience they can offer travelers by conveying a feeling of "this could be you right now," which creates an instant connection and can influence traveler decisions.

"Consumers are still taking fewer vacations than before, so when they do take leisure trips there are greater expectations or they are centered around a purpose, like learning or volunteerism," Ross said. "Consumers today are more socially aware and discerning with their dollar."

## Value remains, albeit in different form

The economy is improving, and studies show hotels have gotten their occupancies back. Now the industry goal is to return rates to pre-recession levels. Quinn said value still remains a top priority for consumers however, and one reason for this is because the Internet has extended the shelf-life of the value hunt. Consumers are now familiar with the ritual of searching for deals, and marketing campaigns are similarly used to the idea of putting them into the ether.

"People are still looking for value. Deals are still the drivers, because it's something people still respond to. It's always the hotel with a deal that gets the response," she said. "But it's not just an economic thing. We've trained ourselves to look for the best deal, and with social media we have both a place to find them and a vehicle for putting them out there."

However, the concept of value has evolved. By and large, value has begun to embrace a more subjective meaning

beyond what impacts the wallet. Quinn said one common buzzword today is "value proposition," or the idea of offering a unique amenity that competitors can't deliver.

"Maybe it's great service, maybe it's an impeccable suite. The idea of value proposition is to ultimately answer: 'why should someone book with you instead of someone else?'"

## Social media permeates travel

Perhaps more than any other area of marketing and PR, it should come as no surprise that the integration of social media and technology have literally transformed the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors.

"Travel is absolutely the perfect industry for social media," said Johnson. "People share info on their trips with social media, they send photos of places they've been, and there's no more surprise in the destination, because we've seen it online. As a result, travel's presence in social media is absolutely everywhere."

Quinn said the convergence of social media with travel marketing has created a place "where everyone's focus is right now" in terms of outreach and brand awareness.

As a result, Ross said travel's recent influence on the blogosphere has been immense, but it's still a tricky landscape to gauge effectiveness.

"Over the last few years, we've seen bloggers grow in importance in the PR equation from their growth and influence with target audiences. Now, we're asking clients to take a step back and look beyond the largest unit of marketing value. One blogger's numbers may be smaller than the next, but their readers could be more engaged and on target for your service. Therefore, you need to analyze a blogger's circle of influence and how far can they take your message." ●



Cathleen Johnson



Lisa Ross



Florence Quinn

# Los Angeles hosts biggest travel trade show yet

More than 6,000 travel officials, industry pros and members of the press exchanged ideas and business cards for five days in April during the annual International PowWow, hosted by the U.S. Travel Association and held in Los Angeles.

By Carla Marie Rupp & Jason Rupp

A five-day marketing and networking extravaganza, the International PowWow is the travel industry's premier tradeshow, drawing more than 1,000 U.S. travel organizations and 1,200 buyers from more than 70 countries to share products and discuss destinations.

Held at the Los Angeles Convention Center, it was the first time in eight years Los Angeles had hosted the event.

"We're officially inviting the world to come visit us," said former U.S. Secretary of Commerce John Bryson, who was the keynote speaker at the event. "Everybody thinks they know about the United States and our attractions, but we want our visitors to look at them in a fresh and authentic way."

President Obama echoed the theme in a taped message that was shown to PowWow delegates at the opening luncheon. "I want America to be the top tourist destination in the world," he said, "and let the world know that America is open for business."

"It's full steam ahead for travel in the United States," said Bryson, noting that he anticipates substantial increases in tourism from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, and Korea in the coming years. A key goal for the foreseeable future, Bryson said, is to let foreigners know about America's national parks, which he called the U.S.'s

"best-kept secret."

Another boost to potential tourism was no doubt earned by the massive publicity provided by some 600 visiting journalists during the PowWow. "People wouldn't know about America if you didn't write about us," U.S. Travel Association President Roger Dow said.

Journalists attended press conferences, rubbed elbows at an evening gala, and participated in dozens of local tours, including a short stay in Mammoth Lakes, a motorcycle trip to Malibu and a harbor cruise in San Pedro. Los Angeles teamed with its neighboring convention bureaus and the statewide Visit California agency to provide familiarization tours before, during and after the event.

For journalists, PowWow started with an outdoor media brunch at the Museum of Natural History. This included "Hollywood Premiere," a red-carpet event featuring food from local restaurants and entertainment from Cirque du Soleil.

According to Mark Liberman, President and CEO of the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board, the city's goal was to give delegates and journalists "the experience of a lifetime."

That sentiment was echoed by U.S. Travel Association Convention Chair Rossi Ralenkotter, Liberman's counterpart at the Las Vegas Convention & Visitors Authority. "Take your enthusiasm home and continue to spread the excitement for traveling to the U.S.," he told delegates at a PowWow luncheon.

At the same event, Roseanne Cash sang a song she composed for the new Brand USA campaign. The eldest daughter of the late country music icon Johnny Cash, Roseanne said she wanted to "discuss this great land like never before."

"I made new contacts and renewed old ones at the media marketplace," said PowWow veteran Dan Schlossberg, Founder and long-time President of the North American Travel Journalists Association.

An estimated \$3.5 billion in future

travel to the United States was booked at the convention, which featured an enormous trade show staffed by executives and publicists representing city convention and visitors bureaus, state tourism offices, hotels, cruise lines, airlines, railroads, and other industry suppliers.

The immediate beneficiary was the city of Los Angeles, gleaming with restored historic buildings, new properties, and a wide variety of cafes, bistros, and shopping meccas. Billing itself as "the Creative Capital of the World," Los Angeles has undergone a \$7 billion facelift since the last PowWow was held there eight years ago. A building boom has also helped such suburbs as Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, Pasadena, and Anaheim.



All photos by Carla Marie Rupp.

"PowWow provides us with a great opportunity to tell our destination's story on a global level," said Elaine Cali, Vice President of Communications for the Anaheim/Orange County Visitor and Convention Bureau.

The 2012 International PowWow formally introduced Brand USA as the new marketing partner of the U.S. Travel Association, the host and organizer of the annual conference. Brand USA was established by the Travel Promotion Act in 2010 to spearhead the country's first worldwide marketing effort in promoting the United States as a premier travel destination.

"We want to show the world we are a welcoming nation," said James Evans, first CEO of Brand USA. "We have to unite to create a coalition like we've never dreamed possible." ●



# O'Dwyer's TRAVEL & TOURISM COMMUNICATIONS Guide to:

7.12



Coyne PR was enlisted as the agency of record for South African Tourism to promote and educate media and consumers on the rich and vibrant culture of South Africa. In addition to news bureau, FAM/VIP trips, consumer and trade events, tradeshows, media tours and key partnerships, Coyne PR is charged with producing creative platforms to reinforce South African Tourism's promotional efforts in the U.S.

## ALPAYTAC MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS / PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Huma Gruaz**, *President/CEO*  
**Caroline Sherman**, *Vice President*  
**Michelle Meky**, *Vice President*

Alpaytac Marketing Comms. / Public Relations is an award-winning full service integrated marketing and public relations firm with an accomplished track record in the travel and tourism industry.

Founded in 2004 under the leadership of multi-lingual Huma Gruaz, a praised PR, marketing and branding expert named 2011 Brand Marketer of the Year by *PR News*, Alpaytac's travel industry practice includes clients such as Turkish Airlines, British Airways, OpenSkies, Jet Edge International, private airlines such



A group of top-tier national journalists sail in Bodrum, Turkey, as part of a press trip for Alpaytac client Turkish Airlines.

as Avantair — as well as countries across the world. The agency has strategically helped build and maintain strong brand presence and generate unparalleled nationwide media coverage in major publications and on national television shows for our travel industry clients. Alpaytac is renowned for organizing exclusive press trips recognized as “best in industry” by top-tier journalists which have resulted in millions of impressions. We have partnered with international hotels including the Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts to bring national exposure to their properties and countries. Alpaytac's executive team has also represented major hotel brands including Marriott, Renaissance, Swissotel and W Hotels Worldwide.

Our comprehensive services include public relations, integrated strategic marketing, cutting-edge social media initiatives, event marketing, trade show support, and crisis communications.

Alpaytac has offices in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. We are also the leading U.S. agency for ECCO, one of the world's largest networks of independent PR agencies providing the opportunity to represent our clients in 40 countries.

## BLAZE

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**Matt Kovacs**, *EVP/GM*

Blaze is the nationally recognized PR firm that attracts compelling and aggressive consumer brands that need to win. Blaze develops campaigns that help our clients create relevance in the marketplace. Utilizing comprehensive strategic communications campaigns to differentiate and elevate our clients from their competitors, we are able to exceed our clients' expectations when it comes to positioning them to their audiences, and attracting positive

attention from both consumers and the media. Blaze creates and manages interactive communities using Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest and YouTube for clients. Our social media division works hand-in-hand with the PR team to reach targeted media, influencers and consumers to support all PR initiatives. Blaze also offers full public affairs capabilities through its parent company Davies.

Clients: 7-Eleven, Ama Waterways, BrunchButler, Claremont Hotel, Club & Spa, Drupp Coffee, Grill Concepts, Marina del Rey CVB, Natural Ad Campaign, SnöBar Cocktails, Royal Jelly, Snowcreek Resort, The Bank of Santa Barbara, The Living Christmas Company, The Original Tommy's Burgers and The Veggie Grill.

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**Jennifer Kamienski**, *Vice President*  
**Lauren Mackiel Gory**, *Assistant Vice President*  
**Min Tak**, *Assistant Vice President*

Coyne PR's Travel practice possesses the creativity, experience and passion to make a game-changing impact on your business. Our team has managed and executed world-class events and promotions, brand building campaigns, social media programs and media relations for some of the travel industry's most prominent brands and destinations. Clients include: Hard Rock International, Disney Parks & Resorts, Adventures by Disney, Disney Cruise Lines, South African Tourism, Heathrow Airport and the Hong Kong Tourism Board. The Coyne Travel

team has developed ideas and campaigns that take our clients where they want to be — and beyond. Our in-depth knowledge of the travel industry and long-standing relationships with the travel media help brands stand out in the crowded travel marketplace.

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**Andrew Levine**, *President/Chief Creative Officer*  
**Karyl Leigh Barnes**, *Senior Vice President/Partner*

DCI is the leader in marketing places. Since 1960, our firm has represented more than 400 destinations around the world, stimulating visitor arrivals and investment through economic development and tourism marketing. DCI's Tourism Practice features three divisions: public relations/consumer marketing; travel trade marketing/representation and meetings/incentive sales.

Each division has access to our tourism digital/social media strategist, whose recommended programs can be implemented in-house. Our current client roster includes some of the most dynamic destination brands in the travel space including such states as California, Massachusetts, North Carolina; cities such as Park City, Portland (OR), and Toronto (ON); and international destinations including Dubai, Namibia, Scotland, Tasmania; as well as the U.S. Travel Association. These destinations are served by our staff of more than 50 destination marketers, from our New York headquarters, and regional offices in Denver, Los Angeles, Tampa and Toronto.

**EDELMAN**

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**Julie Freeman**, *Executive Vice*

*President*  
**Cathleen Johnson**, *Executive Vice President*

Edelman is a global family of public relations companies, ranked #1 on *O'Dwyer's* list of agencies specializing in tourism since 1999. Edelman's Travel, Hospitality and Lifestyle practice is unique among its peers for strategic combination of consumer branding, digital innovation and media relations savvy within the travel landscape. Our global team of passionate, involved tourism experts uses the worldwide reach and resources of the Edelman network to deliver award-winning results with a boutique service ethic and dedication to clients. Clients include destinations, hospitality brands, airlines, iconic attractions, cruise lines, online tourism providers and technology companies and industry associations.

In the rapidly changing world of tourism, Edelman is helping its clients find new perspective and solutions to marketing challenges, particularly in social media integration. A new breed of traveler is focused on technology for the travel process, a change that has led to online travel agencies, websites, mobile applications and travel aggregators all fighting for the travelers' attention and dollars. We develop programs that are grounded in research and strategy, demonstrate thought leadership and integrate marketing needs from traditional media relations to crisis and corporate social responsibility, to the many opportunities that abound in social media management.

**FAHLGREN  
MORTINE**

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**Neil Mortine**, *President and CEO*  
**Melissa Dykstra**, *Chief Engagement Officer*  
**Marty McDonald**, *VP, Tourism Practice Leader*

Fahlgren Mortine works with clients in various industries in 29 states and is a top 30 independent firm nationally. The firm has been recognized with dozens of



**Fahlgren Mortine CEO Neil Mortine and members of the FM tourism team enjoyed some sand between their toes after a presentation in Myrtle Beach, S.C.**

national PR and tourism awards, including Silver and Bronze Anvils from PRSA and a Mercury Award from the U.S. Travel Association, and was most recently recognized as a 2011 *Bulldog Reporter Agency* of the Year and a 2012 *PRWeek Agency* of the Year finalist.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine also has locations in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dayton and Toledo, Ohio; Parkersburg and Charleston, W. Va.; Denver, Colo.; Ft Lauderdale, Fla.;

Lexington, Ky.; Chattanooga, Tenn.; and Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Travel industry client experience includes Ohio Office of Tourism; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; Experience Columbus; Hilton Columbus Downtown; Hocking Hills Tourism Association; U.S. Department of the Interior; National Park Service; North Dakota National Parks; Franklin Park Conservatory; and many other destinations, regions, festivals, hospitality properties and more.

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- "O'Dwyer's Directory of PR firms is the finest source of information on PR firms."  
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**Why O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is so popular ...**

- ✓ Has brought billions of dollars in business to PR firms.
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- ✓ Easy-to-use, PR firms sorted geographically and by 21 types of PR specialties. Firms listed alphabetically.



The global media spotlight shined on Jamaica as Prince Harry visited the island nation as part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee tour. Prince Harry raced the fastest man in the world, Usain Bolt, in a friendly match among dozens of media and spectators. Finn Partners is AOR for the Jamaica Tourist Board in the Americas.

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The Finn Partners Travel and Economic Development practice is a team unrivaled by the creativity, execution and commitment we bring to our clients. It is a commitment to being available 24/7, to sacrificing, engaging and achieving on their behalf. It's a commitment we've always made, with dynamic, research-based PR programs customized to the specific challenges of the travel industry. It's a commitment to being an extension of our clients' brands — a true partner in every sense of the word. When that commitment is united with unsurpassed skill and experience in all the critical areas of tourism marketing and economic development — including promotions, crisis management, and strategic public relations planning — and a global network of travel media, trade and sales contacts, we produce the results our clients demand and deserve.

**FRENCH / WEST / VAUGHAN**

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**Rick French, Chairman & CEO**  
**David Gwyn, President / Principal**  
**Natalie Best, Executive Vice President / Principal**

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs and brand communications agency, independent or otherwise. Founded in April 1997 by Agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV now employs 70 public relations, advertising and digital marketing experts. Headquartered in Raleigh, N.C., FWV also has offices in New York City, Tampa, Dallas and Los Angeles.

FWV's dedicated travel and tourism practice, ranked as the #15 firm for Travel and Tourism PR by *O'Dwyer's*, boasts extensive destination marketing experience, specializing in lifestyle and leisure marketing and public relations. Current travel and tourism industry clients include the Dude Ranchers' Association, the Wilmington and Beaches CVB (N.C.), Carolina Beach,

Kurie Beach, Wrightsville Beach, and Tweetsie Railroad — North Carolina's Oldest Theme Park. In addition, FWV has worked with Divi Resorts and its nine Caribbean properties, and co-operative destination marketing with each of the tourism organizations for Aruba, Barbados, Bonaire, St. Croix (U.S.V.I. Dept. of Tourism) and St. Maarten; Gatlinburg, Tenn.; Cabarrus County, N.C. — home to NASCAR's Lowe's Motor Speedway; Oakland County, Mich.; Branson, Mo.; the Old Salem Moravian Village in N.C.; the Greater Raleigh CVB; and America's Historic Triangle, located in Williamsburg, Va.

In addition to its diverse range of travel and tourism clients, FWV works with many of the world's leading companies and brands, including international utility provider ABB, Wrangler, SAS, RBC Bank, Justin Boot Company, Melitta Coffee, Moe's Southwest Grill restaurants, spirits company Hood River Distillery (Pendleton Whisky, Pendleton 1910, Yazi Ginger Vodka, Broker's Gin and SinFire Cinnamon Whisky), and the U.S. Polo Association. The agency's fully integrated creative and digital team provides award-winning advertising, graphic design and digital and social media services for a wide range of clients.

**GRAHAM & ASSOCIATES**

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Graham & Associates is renowned for award-winning expertise in strategic national and international PR, communications, branding and social media programs for travel and hospitality, consumer lifestyle and real estate clients. The agency also has a proven specialty working with companies with an environmental and socially responsible focus.

Founded in 1996, the agency is known for its successful launches, relauches and highly creative and results-driven campaigns. Graham & Associates has a successful track record with hallmark and emerging compa-

nies and properties, including Cavallo Point, Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort, Post Ranch Inn, El Capitan Canyon, Evergreen Lodge, Wyndham Worldwide, Luma, and more.

Graham is recognized in the industry with 59 top national PR awards (since 2002) including Stevie's Best Communication Campaign, North America, PRSA's Silver Anvil; a Special Creativity Award from the International Public Relations Association (all in tourism); and the Magellan "Best Agency Communications Campaign Worldwide." Graham operates throughout Europe via Plexus, an exclusive organization of agencies, it co-founded.

**GREGORY FCA**

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**Greg Matusky, President**  
**Kristin Elliott, Vice President, Business Development**  
**Jackie Zima-Evans, Associate Vice President**

Gregory FCA is a full service, strategically integrated public relations firm with over 20 years of experience, located outside Philadelphia. Considered one of the finest travel and tourism PR firms, Gregory FCA develops award-winning solutions to marketing challenges for its clients to engage target audiences with maximum credibility and effectiveness, grounded in measurement and reporting. Travel industry experience includes strategic public relations counseling, social media campaign development, integrated digital marketing programs, travel deal and campaign launches, trade show support and speaking engagements, issues management for world events, reputation management, press tours and new destination launches.

Travel industry client experience: Friendly Planet Travel, a full-service leading tour operator that offers exotic travel at exceptional prices around the globe; United Airlines; LAN Airlines; Emirates Airline; Lufthansa; Air China; EgyptAir; Singapore Airlines; Sheraton; Marriott; Renaissance; and Crowne Plaza.

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**LDPR with its clients from Atlantis Resort, Paradise Island celebrate the "Best of Show" win at the HSMAI gala in New York City. From Left: Ashley Day and Sara Geen Hill from LDPR, Caitlin Austin, Jennifer Ferguson and Megan Marchesini of Kerzner International**

## J PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Kim Julin Guyader, Jamie Lynn Sigler, Founding Partners**  
**Sarah Evans, Managing Partner**

J Public Relations (JPR) is a savvy, connected and proven bi-coastal public relations firm specializing in innovative travel, hospitality and lifestyle clientele. With offices on both coasts, in New York City and San Diego, JPR is committed to devising strategic media relations cam-

paigns designed to have personal appeal while maximizing brand visibility and media coverage across a broad range of top tier media outlets. We are known for creating a sustainable "buzz" among media, influencers and industry insiders. Our clear strategy is based on specific client goals, "wish lists" and revenue-driving markets and verticals.

Our long-standing relationships with top national journalists and freelancers, coupled with our extensive travel, hospitality and lifestyle expertise, has earned the JPR team a reputation as a trusted industry resource. We are committed to providing our contacts with spot-on, newsworthy content ideas related to consumer focused, travel, design, culinary and lifestyle articles, as well as respected industry trade and business focused publications in key regional and national markets.

We are publicists, strategists, tastemakers, social media

mavens, foodies, travelers, and above all — passionate. We consider ourselves an extension of our clients' internal sales and marketing teams, providing a personal, customized approach to our clientele and their media campaigns. Having added several new international travel clients to our roster over the past year, our portfolio continues to expand, solidifying our position as one of the top hospitality public relations firms in the country.

A sampling of our current client list includes: Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Fairmont Mayakoba, The Surrey, Rancho Valencia Resort, Washington School House, Lake Placid Lodge, The Regent Palms Turks & Caicos, Vanderbilt Grace, THE US GRANT, L'Auberge de Sedona, JC Resorts, The Chanler Hotel, Y.CO Yachts, Sprinkles Cupcakes, Enlightened Hospitality Group, and RMD Group.

## JANINE GORDON ASSOCIATES

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**Janine Gordon, President & CEO**  
**Alvin Schechter, Chairman and Director, Branding**  
**John Donofrio, CFO**

Janine Gordon Associates excels at expanding brand connections for travel and tourism clients through big ideas and flawless execution. The agency is highly focused on luxury lifestyle brands. JGA understands the challenges inherent in building relationships with high net worth and super-affluent travelers.

Established in 1993 by Janine Gordon, formerly CEO Of Saatchi & Saatchi Public Relations, JGA is a cutting-edge New York City PR boutique with the sophistication and energy required to pierce the clutter of communications in the travel industry. Chairman Alvin Schechter, a former CEO of Interbrand, brings world-class branding skills to JGA clients.

As long-term publicists for the annual American Express-Harrison Group Survey of Affluence and Wealth in America, we are privy to the most up-to-date findings on what drives the behavior of the rich and the

super-rich. Our work is characterized by ingenuity in thinking and transparency in style. We are experts in the full range of communications tools. Our goal is to deliver shrewd brand strategy, high profile media coverage, A-list events, compelling celebrity endorsements, social media content with viral appeal and high-impact strategic alliances — always within the context of a fully integrated strategy.

Result: Positive brand awareness, increased sales and long-term brand value for JGA clients. If you want to expand your brand's connections, start by visiting our website.

## K. SUTHERLAND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Kerry Sutherland, Founder**

K. Sutherland PR is a boutique public relations, social media and branding agency providing insight-driven, cross-platform, and grassroots solutions to communications challenges.

From international luxury resorts, boutique hotels, adventure destinations, spas, lifestyle travel brands and more, the team at K. Sutherland PR executes innovative, personalized and targeted campaigns comprising of both traditional and new media avenues that help clients achieve their business goals. In addition, everyone within the agency has a deep appreciation for and love of travel and culture. The agency is multilingual and works with travel clients from around the world. Learn more at KSutherlandPR.com.

## LAURA DAVIDSON PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Laura Davidson, President**  
**Leslie Cohen, Executive Vice President**

In February 2012, Laura Davidson Public Relations (LDPR) received the public rela-



**The staff at J Public Relations.**

tions industry's biggest honor, winning the "Best of Show" Adrian Award from The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI). HSMAI presented its Adrian Awards to the top companies in hospitality, travel and tourism for achievements in advertising, public relations and digital marketing.

LDPR won 17 awards including the Best of Show, One Platinum, 5 Gold, 5 Silver and 5 Bronze for PR excellence. The coveted Platinum was for a consumer marketing campaign for the opening of "CRUSH" Teen Club at Atlantis, Paradise Island, which also won BEST OF SHOW in the PR category among six other Platinum winners.

LDPR represents many of the most prestigious destinations and resorts in the world. Our client roster includes VisitScotland; Tourisme Montréal; Melbourne / Tourism Victoria, Australia; Bal Harbour, Florida; the island of Mustique; Eden Rock, St Barths; Curtain Bluff, Antigua; The Resort at Paws Up, Montana; Preferred Hotel Group; Loews Hotels; Trump SoHo New York; Abercrombie & Kent; Mayflower Renaissance, Washington DC; Millennium UN Plaza Hotel New York; The Ocean House, Watch Hill, Rhode Island; SELMAN Marrakech and The Somerset on Grace Bay in Turks & Caicos, among others.

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**Lou Hammond**, Founder and Chairman  
**Stephen Hammond**, President  
**Terence Gallagher**, Executive Vice President

Founded in 1984, Lou Hammond & Associates (LH&A) is the recognized leader in travel and hospitality public relations. LH&A's experience in all facets of tourism from destination, where LH&A represents a diverse clientele

that includes cities and states, counties and countries, some 16 worldwide, to hotel, spa, cruise and culinary, is among the most highly honored and recognized in the industry, winning more Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) Adrian Awards over the past dozen years more than any other entrant.

The company's passion as well as an unswerving commitment to quality is a legacy driven by its legendary founder and chairman, Lou Hammond, regarded as one of the most well-known and enthusiastic advocates for LH&A clients and the industry as a whole.

The Lou Hammond approach is no nonsense and straightforward. The company creates innovative, value-driven campaigns for traditional and social mediums marked by strategic thinking and swift action that lead to measurable, bottom-line results. This method, along with an ability to respond to market changes quickly, has earned the company the trust of its clients and most proudly for the agency, long-term relationships — including Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, an LH&A client for more than 25 years.

This year, Lou Hammond & Associates has added to their list of distinguished tourism clients including: American Express; Paradise Coast (Naples, Marco Island, Everglades), FL; The Great American Steamboat Co.; OHEKA CASTLE Hotel & Estate; Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa and the State of New Hampshire.

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**Margaret Booth**, CEO  
**Katie Barr Cornish**, Vice President/Director, Travel

M Booth, Creative Agency of the Year, excels in creating public relations programs that inspire today's traveler and drive bottom-line results for our clients. Our creative science approach — the intersection of research, insight and imagination — shapes opinion, enhances rep-



Lou Hammond & Associates at the "adopted" bench in New York City's Central Park that celebrates Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group's 25 year association with the team. Pictured are members from the luxury group's New York office and the Lou Hammond & Associates client account staff.

utation and drives business results for some of the world's most influential travel brands. We reach today's traveler in new and creative ways by using traditional media relations as a platform for larger, more comprehensive campaigns that leverage social media, strategic partnerships, co-branded promotions and TV/film integration.

Over the last 15 years, our travel practice has collaborated with high-profile destinations, both domestic and international, as well as leading travel and hospitality brands in the following categories: hotels and resorts, cruise, online travel sites, travel content and guidebooks and travel service providers. Current clients include Allianz Global Assistance USA, Montage Hotels & Resorts, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, Waze and Wyndham Rewards.

**MISSY FARREN & ASSOCIATES**

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Missy Farren & Associates is a mid-sized agency offering the personal attention of a boutique firm while delivering meaningful results that impact bottom line. Our passion for travel drives professional success and relationships in various niches, including: culinary, adventure, family, romance, Caribbean, wellness/spa, culture, wine/spirits

and sports. The agency specializes in strategic media relations; social media strategy and management; partnership development; event facilitation; spokesperson positioning; and crisis communications.

Our team of agile, professional marketers pairs innovative thinking and never-say-never attitudes to deliver significant results and exceed expectations.

Industry experience includes: Aspen Ski Co.; Cayman Airways; Cayman Cookout; The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Colorado Ski Country; Disneyland 50th Anniversary; Disneyland Food & Beverage; Golden Horseshoe Golf Club; Limelight Hotel; The Little Nell; The Lodge at Woodloch; Michelin Food & Travel; Mission Hill Family Estate; Montagna Restaurant; National Trust for Historic Preservation; Proximity Hotel; The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New York; Roadtrips Inc.; Royal Plantation Collection; Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort; The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg; Squaw Valley; Steamboat; Trapp Family Lodge; Twin Farms; Whistler Blackcomb; and more.

The August issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile PR firms that specialize in investor relations and professional services. If you would like your firm to be listed in the August magazine's profile section, contact Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or [jon@odwyerpr.com](mailto:jon@odwyerpr.com)



**At the 25th Anniversary celebration the Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations Team gathered with friends, colleagues, clients and media at the Bowery Hotel in NYC.**

**MMGY GLOBAL  
PR**

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**Charles Mardiks**, *Managing Director*  
**Elisa Fershtadt**, *Senior Vice President*  
**Roland Alonzi**, *Vice President*

MMGY Global PR (formerly MMG Mardiks) is a division of MMGY Global, a full-service marketing communications company working exclusively in the travel and tourism industry. MMGY Global was formed earlier this year as a result of the merger of MMG Worldwide and Y Partnership.

Providing expert strategic counsel in media relations, branding, event marketing and crisis communications, our team has a track record of developing and implementing award-winning, creative public relations programs and brand-building campaigns for clients from around the world. We've recently added expert research capabilities to include development of primary client insights, brand and strategy creation, analysis of traveler trends and an unmatched understanding of consumer and intermediary audiences. Through our Digital Media Practice, MMGY has integrated new media, social networking and LiveWeb strategies into an overall strategic direction for our clients.

While we offer large agency resources, our PR team is small enough to provide each client with senior-level, hands-on involvement and service. Our dynamic PR team

has solid industry experience and maintains close contacts with both traditional print and broadcast media in addition to emerging social/digital media and new buzz-building channels.

Current clients include: American Association for Nude Recreation; Barceló Hotels and Resorts; Choice Hotels; Colorado Tourism Office; Fiesta Americana Grand, by Grupo Posadas; German National Tourist Office; Gideon Putnam Resort & Spa, Saratoga, NY; Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, MI; Hotel Missoni; Lebuá Hotels & Resorts; The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, FL; Live Aqua Cancun, by Grupo Posadas; The May Fair Hotel, London; The Napa Valley Destination Council; Radisson Blu Hotels & Resorts; Radisson Edwardian Hotels; Regent Hotels & Resorts; Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino; Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino; Rocky Mountaineer; Visit Sarasota County; Select Registry; Distinguished Inns of North America; Sterling Resorts; Telluride, CO; Terranea Resort, CA; Travel Guard and the Vacation Rental Managers Association.

**M. SILVER  
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747 Third Avenue, 23rd Floor  
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www.msilver-pr.com

**Morris Silver**, *Chairman & CEO*  
**Virginia M. Sheridan**, *President*  
**Rosalie Hagel**, *Executive VP*  
**Linda Ayares**, *Senior VP*

In business for 35 years and with offices in New York and

South Florida, M. Silver Associates is one of the country's leading mid-sized public relations and marketing communications agencies specializing in travel, tourism and the hospitality industry. MSA has received more than 350 awards for excellence and agency principals Morris Silver and Virginia M. Sheridan have been honored with Lifetime Achievement awards by Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association (HSMIA) and other organizations.

Clients have included leading international and domestic destinations, multinational hospitality companies, individual hotels and resorts, airlines, cruise lines, rail companies, travel industry associations, and gaming operations. MSA also has worked in luxury branding, consumer products, resort real estate, spas, food & beverage, cause-related, CRS, digital applications and crisis management.

Recent achievements include the "Defrost your Swimsuit" and "Vacation like a VIP" marketing programs for Greater Fort Lauderdale, and for the Singapore Tourist Board, two episodes of Top Chef, as well as an Anthony Bourdain media luncheon for 50 and segments on the Martha Stewart Show on Turkey. MSA also supported the 26 member lines of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) in responding to the global economic crisis and tragic Costa Concordia sinking.

The agency is represented globally by its partnership in the Worldcom Public Relations Group — a worldwide alliance of more than 100 independent agencies in 96 cities on 6 continents.

**NANCY J.  
FRIEDMAN  
PUBLIC RELATIONS,  
INC.**

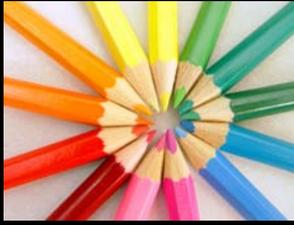
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**Nancy J. Friedman**, *President*  
**Emily Wilson**, *Managing Director*

NJFPR's "Leave No Stone Unturned" philosophy has catapulted the firm to the top of the category in travel and hospitality. For clients seeking senior

level counsel, advocacy of their product and unrivalled media savvy, Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations is a first-stop. A self-described "media junkie with wanderlust", Nancy and her team pride themselves on long-term partnerships with clients and the ability to wring every ounce of marketing potential out of a property or destination utilizing social media, traditional media, events and creative promotions. The Agency pioneered NY's first Hotel Week in January 2012 to great success and will be increasing participation for January 2013.

Clients: Inn at Little Washington, VA; The Nantucket, MA; Refinery Hotel, NY; Sea Island, GA; The Cloister, Sea Island, GA; The Lodge, Sea Island, GA; The OUT NYC, New York; Fodor's Travel Guidebooks; The Charles Hotel, Boston; Le Sport/Body Holiday, St. Lucia; Rendezvous, St. Lucia; Waldorf Astoria Chicago, IL; Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Atlantic City; The Water Club — A Signature Hotel by Borgata; Sheraton Hotels & Resorts Worldwide; Westin Hotels & Resorts Worldwide; Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort & Casino; Gansevoort, Turks and Caicos; Gansevoort Park, New York; Hotel Gansevoort, New York; The Maritime Hotel, New York; The Bowery Hotel, New York; The Jane, New York; The Pod Hotel, New York; Grand Hyatt New York; Broadway @ Times Square, New York; The Hotel @ Times Square, New York; nyma, the new york manhattan hotel, New York; The Quin Hotel, New York; JW Marriott Camelback Inn Resort & Spa, Scottsdale; JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa, Palm Desert; Spring Creek Ranch, Jackson Hole, WY; The Condado Vanderbilt, Puerto Rico; Doubletree Hilton, San Juan, Puerto Rico; The Courtyard Isla Verde, Puerto Rico; La Concha Resort: A Renaissance Hotel, Puerto Rico; El Convento, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Copamarina Beach Resort & Spa, Guanica, Puerto Rico; St. Petersburg/Clearwater, Florida; Cooperstown, New York; The Otesaga Hotel, Cooperstown, NY; Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown, NY; Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY; Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, NY; Ria at the Waldorf Astoria Chicago, IL; and Hotel Week.



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**Quinn & Co. VP Katie Coleman experiences Abu Dhabi from atop a camel while leading a press trip for client Etihad Airways.**

**OGILVY PUBLIC RELATIONS WORLDWIDE**

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**Mitch Markson, President,**  
*Global Consumer Marketing*

Ogilvy Public Relations knows tourism. Our team consists of travel and tourism experts with specific strengths in the areas of consumer and brand PR, corporate communications, crisis communications and reputation management, events management, trade marketing, partnership and alliances, sponsorship creation and leverage, content creation and development, digital and traditional media relations. Ogilvy PR has successfully elevated brands across a variety of travel industry categories including, hospitality, tour, cruise, air-

line, transportation, technology and destinations.

Our combination of research-based strategy, break through creativity, and flawless execution deliver strong media talkability and business building impact. Our work has helped clients to reach potential travelers where they work, live and play. Relevant travel and tourism clients include the Mexico Tourism Board and the Government of Mexico, Virgin Airlines, Tourism New South Wales, Hilton Hotels, Tourism Australia, Ireland Golf, Singapore Airlines, Brazil, Scotland, France, Chile, Malta and Puerto Rico.

**PADILLA SPEER BEARDSLEY**

101 W. River Parkway  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
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www.padillaspeer.com

**Tom Jollie, Senior VP**  
**John Anderson, Director**



**rbb Public Relations worked with the Los Cabos Convention and Visitors Bureau to host a group of key travel and lifestyle journalists — ranging from bloggers and freelance writers to trade and consumer publication editors — for a multi-brand experiential trip that showcased the Los Cabos experience, combined with the benefits of the luxury all-inclusive stay.**

Padilla Speer Beardsley is an integrated communications firm with offices in Minneapolis and New York City. We create and reenergize brands, develop integrated marketing campaigns, stage high-profile events and promotions, and handle crises. Our approach utilizes a proprietary methodology that provides insight, guides strategy and generates measurable outcomes. Our award-winning programs have driven business results for clients for more than 50 years.

Padilla's travel and tourism experience includes work for Jefferson Lines, Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport, the Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership, and Meet Minneapolis.

**QUINN & CO.**

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**Katie Coleman, Vice President and Digital Media Contact,** @Kate212  
**Morgan Painvin, Vice President,** @morganbreadwine

Q&C combines strong strategic thinking and passionate media relations with our signature creative to develop highly effective integrated PR programs that help our clients in Consumer; Digital Media; Food, Wine + Spirits; Lifestyle; Real Estate and Travel achieve their goals and, ultimately, drive business.

In digital media, we conduct audits, identify opportunities and challenges then generate recommendations and campaigns to meet goals, manage reputation and engage.

Our unique, creative approach, recognized globally, has produced significant results for clients, a number of industry firsts and many accolades.

Here are a few examples of our work in Travel:

U.S. PR firm behind the

blockbuster *The Best Job in the World* (Tourism Queensland), a viral phenomenon that generated more than \$100 million worth of ad value and 6.7 million website visitors.

Created AKA's outdoor bedroom, an industry-first that generated coverage in many outlets, including WSJ, NYT, Travel + Leisure and internationally

Helped develop Affinia Hotel's TLC (Tender Living Comforts) Movement that has produced over 1 billion in media impressions to date.

Created *Luxury Manifesto*, a series of video chats between the Waldorf=Astoria Hotels & Resorts brand leader and luxury pundits such as Tommy Hilfiger, Danny Meyer and Richard David Story to position the collection at the forefront of the luxury conversation.

We developed Occidental Hotels & Resorts' social media and reputation management strategy and plan, trained 40 executives and staff from 13 properties and are now leading the implementation.

Produced a "red-carpet" media swarm for the arrival of rooftop beehives at The Waldorf=Astoria Hotel with feature stories in AP, WSJ, NYT and on ABC World News with Diane Sawyer, CNN, Good Morning America, FOX and CBS.

Developed the first-ever National Hamentaschen Eating Championship for EL AL Israel Airlines. The WSJ covered it in a feature.

Invented Martini on the Rock, the \$10,000 martini at The Algonquin Hotel that was covered by more than 400 TV segments and made it into *Trivial Pursuit*.

**RBB PUBLIC RELATIONS**

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**Christina Barney, CEO**  
**Lisa Ross, President**  
**Tina Elmowitz, Executive Vice President**

Three-time winner of the "PR Agency of the Year", rbb Public Relations is a national marketing PR firm that helps hospitality



Model and tsunami survivor Petra Nemcova poses with Chris Spring, President of Spring O'Brien, and Cristobal Luna, Global Market Director of Turismo Chile, in front of an exact replica of the pod that rescued the 33 Chilean miners in October 2010 at the first annual Travel + Leisure Global Bazaar Night Market on September 17, 2011.



Redpoint Marketing PR stages an "unbelievable" event in celebration of World Sword Swallower's Day for client Ripley's Believe It or Not Times Square.

brands break out from the competition, and motivate and influence customers.

Working with Homewood Suites by Hilton, the agency received five 2011 HSMIA Adrian Awards and won Adrian and *The Holmes Report* SABRE awards two years in a row for the best travel crisis communication campaign for AMResorts. The firm's hospitality client roster also includes Home2 Suites by Hilton, Zoëtry Wellness & Spa Resorts, Secrets, Dreams, Now and Sunscape Resorts & Spas by AMResorts and PriceTravel.

rbb offers best practices in media relations, corporate and crisis communications, product introductions and digital/social media, and gives its clients strategic counsel and results with the individual attention only a boutique agency can provide. Find out how rbb can help your brand break out by visiting [www.rbbpr.com](http://www.rbbpr.com) or call 305/448-7457.

**REDPOINT  
MARKETING PR,  
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**Victoria Feldman de Falco,**  
*Principal*  
**Christina Miranda Diaz,**  
*Principal*

Specializing in travel, hospi-

talities, interior design, and home furnishings, Redpoint is a full service marketing PR firm with an entrepreneurial style, brand building expertise, and a passion for results. We orchestrate compelling campaigns that integrate traditional PR with sophisticated digital and social media marketing initiatives.

Select travel/hospitality clients include the Saint Lucia Tourist Board, Oceania Cruises; Regent Seven Seas Cruises; Woodstock Inn & Resort, VT; Ripley's Believe It or Not! Times Square; US Tour Operations Association; Hidden Pond Resort, ME; The Tides Beach Club, ME; The Kennebunkport Inn, ME; The Cottages at Cabot Cove, ME; The Old Fort Inn, ME; The Dylan Hotel, Amsterdam; Simon Pearce.

Redpoint executives bring a "nose for news" to every client challenge, ensuring that marketing ideas have just the right dash of risk to make them significantly newsworthy without being operationally challenging to implement.

**ROGERS &  
COWAN**

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**Tom Tardio, CEO**  
**Tara Walls, EVP**

Rogers & Cowan offers signif-

icant experience in creating and executing integrated marketing, PR and social media campaigns for clients in the travel and tourism industries, including resorts and resort developers, hotel associations, government tourism offices, visitors bureaus, museum and cultural exhibits, live shows, airlines, cruise lines, sporting events and travel media.

We create marketing communications and social media strategies that elevate a client's core messages beyond travel outlets and into lifestyle media through the influence of entertainment. Our distinctive approach goes beyond core media relations to include destination integration into entertainment content, Facebook promotions, influencer seeding / outreach, special events, social media strategies and green / sustainability initiatives. The agency's work has included building awareness for hotels and resorts through celebrity seeding programs, positioning countries as perfect travel destinations through destination integrations in films and television shows, creating online content tied to entertainment properties, activating sponsorship of sports and entertainment events, managing PR for consumer-focused travel shows, and driving ticket sales for shows / exhibits, among others.

Current / past clients include American Airlines, Canadian Tourism Commission, Travel Alberta, Royal Caribbean, InterContinental Hotels Group, Miami Boutique Hotels, Los Angeles Times Travel Show, Bodies the Exhibition, Titanic the

Artifact Exhibition, How to Train Your Dragon, Fuerza Bruta, Cirque Dreams, Yo Gabba Gabba Live!, The Seaport, USA Pro Cycling Challenge and Rock N Roll Hall of Fame.

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Ruder Finn is a global agency, headquartered in New York with a major presence in China, the world's second largest market for communications. The agency has a strategic focus on four areas of expertise: health & wellness, corporate and public trust, technology and innovation and consumer lifestyle, all underpinned with digital strategy and social media, offered through its in-house digital agency, RFI Studios. Specialized services include brand and corporate positioning, reputation management, public affairs, corporate social responsibility, senior executive communication and employee engagement with a particular focus on building confidence and credibility in times of change.

Ruder Finn has four offices in China, where our dedicated Travel & Tourism team has helped clients

Continued on page 30



Martha Stewart tours Israel with Weill President Geoffrey Weill.

**RUDER FINN**

Continued from page 29

such as the Canadian Tourism Commission, Four Seasons, the Marianas Visitors Authority, and Emirates Airline tap into the country's enormous T&T market potential. China's travelers are increasingly discerning and many are shifting from traditional group travel to FIT.

**SPRING O'BRIEN**

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**Chris Spring, President**  
**Lauren Kaufman, Senior Vice President**

Spring O'Brien is a full-service marketing communications agency specializing in travel and hospitality PR for over two decades. We have successfully represented new and established companies across every segment of the travel industry including tourism boards, cruise lines, airlines, railways, hotels, resorts, tour operators, web sites, associations, and credit card companies.

We uniquely achieve a compet-

itive edge for clients with integrated solutions, developing public relations, social media and branding campaigns, as well as online marketing and advertising.

We consistently achieve high-visibility TV, print and online coverage to catapult client brands beyond the fray. We pride ourselves on our inventive approach to partnerships, promotions, package and product development, rebranding, special events and strategic counsel.

PR highlights this year included garnering over one billion media impressions for Insight Cuba's launch of legal tours to Cuba with features in the top 20 newspapers plus CNN and network TV, and developing the Digital Detox campaign for St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority, which created massive coverage in North America and Europe, positioning the islands as the ultimate getaway destination.

**TJM COMMUNICATIONS INC.**

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treva@tjmcommunications.com  
www.tjmcommunications.com

**Treva J. Marshall, President**

TJM Communications is a boutique lifestyle public relations firm specializing in travel and related industries: food, wine and the arts.

Since 2001, the agency has serviced a range of international and domestic clients from its Orlando, Florida location and maintains a strong reputation for quality service, professionalism and returning value and results to our clients. Our personalized, hands-on approach ensures our work is strategically aligned with the client's needs.

Comprised of a team of passionate professionals, we are especially proud of the diverse nature of our company, with staff members representing origins from around the globe, possessing vast professional travel experience.

TJM Communications has been called upon to service clients in Spain, South Africa, Canada, and throughout the United States. Our travel and tourism practice currently includes clients such as: Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism; Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort; Valesa Cultural Services and Hotel Majestic in Spain.

**WEBER SHANDWICK**

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**Rene Mack, President, Travel & Lifestyle**  
**Alice Diaz, Executive Vice President, Travel & Lifestyle**

Fusing the mind of a travel-industry insider with the muscle of a consumer powerhouse, Weber Shandwick's Travel & Lifestyle Marketing practice is committed to providing its clients with award-winning capabilities and counsel in a broad range of disciplines.

Our client work ranges from small assignments to global campaigns in our dedicated Travel practice. We represent countries, states, CVB's and provinces. We work for airlines, cruise lines, motorcycle companies, hotels, resorts, casinos, travel suppliers and attractions. We've launched theme parks, travel websites and even a Papal museum.

Our client roster includes: Singapore Airlines, Harley-

Davidson, New Orleans, Pure Michigan, The Bahamas, Royal Caribbean International, Canada, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Fontainebleau (Miami Beach), Revel (Atlantic City), Time Warner Center (New York), Hilton Head Island, Wyndham Vacation & Rentals, Rand-McNally, InterContinental Hotels Group, and American Airlines.

**WEILL**

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www.geoffreyweill.com

**Geoffrey Weill, President**  
**Ann-Rebecca Laschever, Exec. VP**  
**Tania Philip, Sr. VP**

Now in its 17th year of business, Geoffrey Weill Associates is a boutique PR company specializing in high-end travel, tourism, cultural clients. Throughout the years, the company has been known for its fierce dedication to integrity and creativity, and in finding new ways to highlight and promote its clients.

As the media world constantly changes, WEILL has found different ways of reaching the public faster and more efficiently — through social media, blogs, and other digital portals. In the past year, WEILL has made a special effort to bring celebrities to its various destinations as a way of getting attention and also spoken, and unspoken, endorsements. Highlights of these initiatives include a visit by Martha Stewart to Israel; a visit by the cast of Fox TV's series "House" to Israel; Neil Patrick Harris on the Orient-Express and at Fouquet's Barriere in Paris; an episode of "The Bachelorette" at The Greenbrier in West Virginia; a visit by Chris O'Donnell to Ashford Castle, Ireland; shooting of episodes of "Gene Simmons Family Jewels" in Israel; and a visit by David Arquette to Israel. These trips have resulted in media coverage reaching tens of millions on the web, in print and via social media such as Twitter, Tumblr and Facebook.

In addition to traditional account executives, WEILL now has staff members wholly dedicated to social media initiatives. www.geoffreyweill.com. ●

# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TOP TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

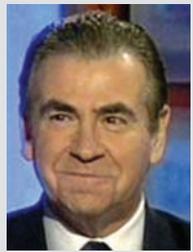
<b>1.</b>	Edelman	New York	<b>\$22,288,557</b>
<b>2.</b>	The Zimmerman Agency	Tallahassee	<b>6,950,000</b>
<b>3.</b>	Lou Hammond & Assocs.	New York	<b>5,059,922</b>
<b>4.</b>	MMGY Global	New York	<b>2,924,704</b>
<b>5.</b>	Development Counsellors Int'l	New York	<b>2,910,765</b>
<b>6.</b>	Allison+Partners	San Francisco	<b>2,700,000</b>
<b>7.</b>	Quinn & Co.	New York	<b>2,650,202</b>
<b>8.</b>	Coyne PR	Parsippany, NJ	<b>1,520,000</b>
<b>9.</b>	Finn Partners	New York	<b>1,372,000</b>
<b>10.</b>	Lane PR	Portland, OR	<b>1,258,452</b>
<b>11.</b>	CRT/tanaka	Richmond, VA	<b>1,209,640</b>
<b>12.</b>	J Public Relations	San Diego	<b>1,133,748</b>
<b>13.</b>	Zeno Group	New York	<b>1,070,368</b>
<b>14.</b>	Jackson Spalding	Atlanta	<b>1,021,596</b>
<b>15.</b>	French   West   Vaughan	Raleigh	<b>1,009,872</b>
<b>16.</b>	Fahlgren Mortine	Columbus	<b>821,934</b>
<b>17.</b>	rbb Public Relations	Miami	<b>802,721</b>
<b>18.</b>	Ruder Finn	New York	<b>746,510</b>
<b>19.</b>	Padilla Speer Beardsley	Minneapolis	<b>735,313</b>
<b>20.</b>	Seigenthaler PR	Nashville	<b>542,000</b>
<b>21.</b>	Standing Partnership	St. Louis	<b>444,339</b>
<b>22.</b>	Blaze	Los Angeles	<b>390,200</b>
<b>23.</b>	Black Twig Comms.	St. Louis	<b>390,000</b>
<b>24.</b>	MDi media group	Mobile, AL	<b>343,835</b>
<b>25.</b>	Richmond PR	Seattle	<b>341,667</b>
<b>26.</b>	McNeely Pigott & Fox	Nashville	<b>307,390</b>
<b>27.</b>	Formula PR	San Diego	<b>195,881</b>
<b>28.</b>	Linhart Public Relations	Denver	<b>121,871</b>
<b>29.</b>	IW Group	W. Hollywood	<b>112,000</b>
<b>30.</b>	Gregory FCA	Ardmore, PA	<b>100,000</b>
<b>31.</b>	Bridge Global Strategies	New York	<b>80,869</b>
<b>32.</b>	Shelton Group	Dallas	<b>66,647</b>
<b>33.</b>	WordHampton PR	E. Hampton, NY	<b>58,730</b>
<b>34.</b>	Red Sky Public Relations	Boise	<b>51,233</b>
<b>35.</b>	Maccabee	Minneapolis	<b>38,763</b>
<b>36.</b>	Open Channels Group	Ft. Worth	<b>33,750</b>
<b>37.</b>	Guthrie/Mayes & Assocs.	St. Louis	<b>30,136</b>
<b>38.</b>	GodwinGroup	Jackson, MS	<b>22,776</b>

# Cutting your losses: the Adidas shoe crisis

By Fraser Seitel

Several years ago, some nitwit wrote a book in which he posited that companies shouldn't apologize when they're confronted by crisis. It makes them seem weak, he said, or even "guilty," which gives their adversaries an advantage.

Evidently, the good PR people at Adidas, headquartered in Herzogenaurach, Germany, never read the book.



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

Had Adidas not acted quick enough to douse a burgeoning firestorm, it easily might have found itself forever dodging charges of "racism," or worse.

The story of Adidas' ill-fated JS Roundhouse Mid training shoe should serve as an object

lesson to any public relations professional, whose company has done something monumentally stupid and then wonders if

it should "cut its losses."

While every situation is different, the general answer — in a 21st century society in which Twitter and Facebook information move around the world at the speed of the 'net — is most usually, "cut early and don't look back."

## The Adidas sneaker saga

Scoring a marketing disaster three-pointer on June 18, news was revealed on the Internet that Adidas was introducing new sneakers with ankle bracelets and chains, reminiscent of the kind worn by chain-gang prisoners.

The shoes, created by designer Jeremy Scott, were attached to the plastic, day-glo orange shackles, according to Adidas, to accommodate players with "a sneaker game so hot you lock your kicks to your ankles."

Huh?

Obviously, what Adidas was really trying to do with its shackle-bound sneaks — although it wouldn't admit it — was evoke an image of "gangsta," so popular among today's youth. What the company apparently didn't anticipate, however, was that the shackles would also evoke images of another bygone period in American history — the era of slavery.

Almost immediately, Mr. Scott's innovative design was met with a fusillade of opprobrium on the Adidas Facebook page.

- Wrote one unfaithful follower, "Adidas, you should be ashamed of yourselves. The mockery of oppression that has not been overcome."

- Another wrote, "Slavery isn't a fashion example. Everyone involved in this show should be fired ASAP! This is the new reason I won't buy any Adidas anymore!"

- Summarized yet another unhappy non-customer, "It's offensive and inappropriate in many ways. Not to mention ugly."

So in one fell swoop, then, Adidas had introduced a new product that not only was dumb and ugly, but also offensive — in basketball parlance, a three-pointer.

## Learning to cut and run

The first indication that Adidas had been caught completely off guard by the Net attack was the meek defense of the product and its creator, offered by a spokeswoman.

"Jeremy Scott is renowned as a

designer whose style is quirky and light-hearted and his previous shoe designs for Adidas Originals have, for example, included panda heads and Mickey Mouse. Any suggestion that this is linked to slavery is untruthful."

Clearly, the company was treading water.

And so Adidas may have turned for inspiration to another apparel firm that found itself in the crosshairs of bias accusation a month ago, Urban Outfitters.

In late April, the Danish shirt manufacturer introduced a \$100 t-shirt with a pocket patch that resembled the Star of David symbol that Jews were made to wear in Nazi Germany. Again, the outcry on the Web was immediate. And Urban Outfitters quickly realized that the world wasn't quite ready for "Nazi chic," and the company kept the shirt and removed the star.

So, too, after Adidas was attacked by Jesse Jackson, who practically jumped out of his gym shorts to condemn the company for attempting "to commercialize and make popular more than 200 years of human degradation," Adidas folded.

On Tuesday morning, June 19, less than 24 hours after the first wave of criticism, Adidas announced it was keeping the shoe and dropping the shackles. The days of "racist chic" also would have to wait.

The fact that Adidas meant no harm — and certainly wasn't attempting to glorify racism — mattered not at all. In a day dominated by blogs and Facebook and Twitter and instantaneous castigation, perception is reality. And no billion-dollar retailer wants to risk being perceived as "racist."

## Lessons learned

So what can the rest of us take away from the Adidas shackle saga?

Three things:

1. PR advisors must always consider the "worst case" before introducing any new product; meaning that PR people must be "at the table" with marketing.

2. If you're a huge corporation with multiple products around the world, you must always err on the side of caution.

3. Whether or not your action was deliberate, if you find yourself amidst a social media-fueled crisis, the best advice may well be to cut your losses immediately and live another day. ●

## PR news briefs

### WEBER SHANDWICK, H+K SETTLE LAWSUIT

Weber Shandwick and Hill+Knowlton Strategies in June announced the settlement of a legal suit filed by WS earlier this year against H&K and former staffers Jody Venturoni/Ken Luce, who each headed its Texas operation before joining H+K, for allegedly misappropriating documents and improperly soliciting staffers and clients.

Terms of the settlement are confidential, but WS says the deal "protects its business interests, its clients' confidential data and its clients' confidential information."

As part of the settlement, Venturoni issued the following statement: "During my last year of employment with Weber Shandwick and immediately after my resignation, I took confidential information belonging to Weber Shandwick. I shared some of this information with employees at Hill & Knowlton.

"This information has since been returned to Weber Shandwick or destroyed. Weber Shandwick took justified legal action to protect its own business interests and those of its clients. We have reached a confidential settlement of this matter."

Elisabeth Rutledge, Senior VP in H+K's Dallas office, said the WPP unit is "glad the settlement is behind us because our primary focus is our clients. We welcome a resolution to this distraction."

# Financial ratios to manage profit

By Richard Goldstein

As a result of Rick Gould's newly published management handbook on PR agency financial management, commentators have been offering advice on how to make money in the PR business.

Some housekeeping. I do not want to be presumptuous in saying I know more about the PR business than some of the leaders in the industry. However, I've been part of the



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

management of some outstanding CPA firms and have been a principal in a small successful CPA firm that was integrated into a larger organization. I therefore feel I have some expertise and understanding on how to manage a service business for growth and prosperity.

For as long as I can remember, the PR industry had benchmarked a 20% operating profit standard. This number is arrived at by allocating 50% to direct labor, 30% to operating expenses, the balance being 20% to operating profit. If you shoot for 5/3/2, you will, in my view, be on a slow road to mediocrity.

So, you have a \$2 million agency, and have an operating profit of \$400,000. Congratulations, you hit the magic number. For most agencies this is what is left for owner(s) compensation before taxes. If owner base salary is included in the direct labor pool, the numbers are better, but you will not get rich! A service business is a hard way to make a living — it is labor intensive and you need to deal with many different client personalities. There is a big difference between the compensation of a family physician and a surgeon. Which of the two is your agency?

As you move on in years, managing a labor intensive business makes you wish for an oasis. Okay, so you have an agency that turns in 20% consistent operating profitability year after year. This will give you a possible valuation (I am not an appraiser) of \$2.5 million. If you live and work in New York City, you walk away with approximately \$1.9 million (using a combined federal and state tax rate of 25%) if a buyer writes a check on the spot. Wow! A better wow is to double the price by having 40%

operating profit. Herein lies the thrust of my column. How do you get to 40% or more? Can't be done? Close your magazine, sell your agency and become a plumber. They do better than 20%!

## The basics

A first step. I am a proponent of "RGAC." Don't know what this stands for? It is Rick Gould and Al Croft. Here are some of the basics of success, not in any particular order:

1. Have an effective time and billing system. A time and billing system does not mean it is always the basis for a client billing. If it were, there would never be "value billing." A time and billing system is an information tool. It helps you determine staff utilization, client realization, and client profitability among other benefits.

2. Monitor accounts receivable. If you do not collect the cash it is a bad debt. There goes your 20% or 40%.

3. Try and mark up rebillables. I get push back on this concept by many firms. Try it again.

4. Prepare a budget and make a resource allocation matrix part of the budget process. (I will discuss this as part of a future column.)

5. Bill regularly. Clients should be on a

fixed retainer or a retainer with a clean up. Twelve monthly bills of \$3,000 will go over a lot better than two of \$18,000. The two at \$18,000 may just have your client wondering what is going on, slow the collection of money due you, and possibly cause you to lose a client.

6. Know your overhead percentage as a percentage of direct labor. Overhead should be in the 80-100% range.

7. Keep an eye on staff productivity. If you have no time and billing system, this is not going to happen.

8. Make sure your accounting or finance department provides you with solid information: weekly or daily cash reports; billing reports; or work in progress reports.

Mike Muraszko of SGS wrote a column last year on what he believes are the most game-changing metrics for PR firms that are thriving (all as a percentage of net revenue):

1. Base account salaries: 38%
2. Total labor cost: 49%
3. Rent and utilities: 7%
4. Total operating expenses: 25%
5. Agency operating profit: 26%
6. Annual revenue per professional: \$236,000
7. Annual staff turnover: 26%.

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# Jobs propaganda is a facade

By Joseph Honick

There's a fascinating rumor making the rounds suggesting the very people condemning the president for low job production are helping to keep hiring low until the election.

It's no secret the major contributors to the Romney campaign are from big corporations or massively financed stand-ins like the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Koch Brothers. These are also some of the same companies that repeatedly accuse the President of killing jobs.



**Joseph H. Honick**, is president of GMA International in Bainbridge Island, Wash.

Oddly enough, these accusers are the same people who just as loudly claim the government cannot produce jobs; only

the private sector does that.

What's being whispered about election circles, however, is the idea that these same major actual and potential employers are inhibiting their own hiring to keep the President on the ropes. And why not? There is no hurry as they see it. Delays keep all sorts of financial commitments in check even as major government contracts keep refueling these big operations with taxpayer money. Certainly, the daily hundreds of millions in defense contracts that rollout of the Department of Defense alone have produced hundreds of thousands of taxpayer produced jobs for more than a decade.

A political strategy that keeps the damper on new or limited job production benefits all these industries because they know their heavy contributions could indeed produce a Republican victory in November and have made no secret of their support for candidate Mitt Romney.

Just as important, the Supreme Court decision that converted corporations into personhood changed forever how

American citizens have to contend on an uneven field in almost all political conflicts.

Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, 558 U.S. 50 (2010), is a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court, which held that the First Amendment prohibited the government from restricting independent political expenditures by corporations and unions.

The decision overruled *Austin v. Michigan Chamber of Commerce* (1990) and partially overruled *McConnell v. Federal Election Commission* (2003).[4] The Court, however, upheld requirements for public disclosure by sponsors of advertisements (BCRA §201 and §311). The case did not involve the federal ban on direct contributions from corporations or unions to candidate campaigns or political parties, which remain illegal in races for federal office.

In short, corporations could pump literally billions into politics as persons themselves without seeking any vote or other permission of stockholders. To be sure, labor unions possess much the same power, but there is little evidence memberships are in opposition to overall union politics. However those memberships may see things, there is no comparison to the economic impact of the major corporations that have profited hugely from government business for years and especially in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars that seem to have no real end.

In Iraq alone, the international oil combines have reaped hundreds of billions of benefits from the efforts of NATO (mainly American) forces to rehabilitate the country's oil fields.

So back to the current and unseemly campaign to control the most powerful piece of real estate in the entire world: the White House, a campaign in which the economy and mostly jobs have been the main focal points.

Republican strategists are said to have persuaded the beneficiaries of the Supreme Court decision to hold the line on hiring to maintain their effort to embarrass President Obama despite the impact on the unemployed and millions facing potential foreclosure on their homes.

What is just as confusing and discouraging has been the inability of the Democratic candidate and sitting world leader to deploy his own minions to strike back very publicly. ●

## Vatican fortifies PR powers

The Holy See, the Catholic Church's insular governing body, has hired Fox News correspondent Greg Burke as a senior communications advisor as it copes with ongoing crises and other PR issues.

The move comes after a simmering Vatican scandal involving leaked church documents — dubbed “Vatileaks” by the European press — reached a boiling point last month with the arrest of Pope Benedict XVI's personal butler.

Burke, who covers Europe and the Middle East for Fox News based in Rome and was a *Time* correspondent in the city for 10 years, is a member of the church's conservative lay group *Opus Dei*. He told Reuters, which he worked for earlier in his career, that he turned down overtures from the Vatican twice before agreeing to take the post last week.

“Anything that can show an openness and willingness to meet the press is a step in the right direction,” Burke told the *Daily Beast*. “But more than an attempt to humanize it, I would say it's

an attempt to modernize it. It's going to be a slow process. The Vatican is not going to change in a day.”

He reports to Vatican deputy secretary of state, Archbishop Angelo Beccui.

Father Federico Lombardi is the Vatican's on-the-record spokesman. He told a press conference May 27 that, “it is painful to see such a negative image” of the Holy See, adding the scandal “put trust in the church and the Holy See to the test.”

On Burke, Lombardi told the Associated Press in Vatican City that the correspondent will “integrate communications issues within the Vatican's top administrative office, the secretariat of state, and will help handle its relations with the Holy See press office and other Vatican communications offices.”

The pope's butler, Paolo Gabriele, meanwhile, faces up to 30 years in prison, charged with aggravated theft for allegedly passing Vatican documents to an Italian journalist. But some Vatican watchers and media have speculated that Gabriele is a fall guy and likely did not act alone. ●

## Hamp rolls to Toyota

**J**ulie Hamp, who left the top communications post at PepsiCo in March, took the Toyota North America Chief Communications Officer slot on June 25.

She takes over for Jim Wiseman, who retired at the end of June after 23 years at Toyota, the last two serving as its first CCO.



Hamp

Hamp will be based in Torrance, Calif., reporting to Toyota Motor Sales President and CEO Jim Lentz.

Toyota has 1,800 dealerships in the North America, including Toyota, Lexus and Scion,

with sales of 1.8 million vehicles in 2011. It employs 37,000 people in the region.

Prior to PepsiCo, she worked in marketing communications and PR at General Motors, including VP, comms., Europe, general director, comms., Latin America, Africa and the Middle East, and VP/comms., Saturn.

PepsiCo in April tapped Brunswick and Bush administration alum Jim Wilkinson to head communications. ●

## Faulkner to BGR

**C**harles Faulkner, a veteran of the defense business and Republican political circles, has joined BGR Government Affairs as VP.

Most recently, Faulkner was at consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton supporting the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and promoting technical systems data programs for the Dept. of Defense and U.S. foreign governments.

Previously, he was Senior Analyst for Science Applications International Corp., counseling the DOD and the U.S. Strategic Command.

He also was legislative liaison for the Commander of the U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command.

In the Bush White House (2003-2009), Faulkner was Senior Advisor for Legislative Affairs at the State Dept.

Earlier, he worked the Capitol Hill beat for Louisiana Congressman Jim McCrery and supported daily operations in the Republican Whip's office. ●

## Gore aid returns to Fenton

**K**alee Kreider, environmental advisor and communications director for Vice President Al Gore, is back at Fenton Communications as managing director of its Washington office.

She had been senior VP at Fenton from 2003-06, handling media, crisis and Capitol Hill outreach for MoveOne.org, Win Without War, Environmental Media Services and True Majority.

Earlier, Kreider spent ten years at non-profits Greenpeace, Ozone Action and National Environment Trust, which is now Pew Environmental Group.

With Gore, Kreider handled promotion of his best-seller, "An Inconvenient Truth," and his roles at Current TV (co-founder), Generation Investment Management (co-founder), Apple (board member), Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (partner) and Google (senior advisor). Betsy McManus, who handled communications for the William J. Clinton Foundation, is Gore's new communications director. ●



Kreider

## GOP operative joins B-M

**M**att Burns, communications director at the 2008 Republican National Convention in Saint Paul, is now Southwest PA Market Leader for Burson-Marsteller in Dallas.

He reports to Nate Tibbits, U.S. PA Practice Chair.

Burns led a team of more than 200 communicators at the GOP confab, which resulted in more than 2,600 surrogate media interviews. He also handled engagement with Google, Ustream TV and Microsoft.

Earlier, he did a two-year stint as press secretary in George W. Bush's Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

Burns joins B-M from UnitedHealth Group's United Healthcare Medicare & Retirement unit, where he led PR, legal, government affairs, regulatory, marketing and sales functions. He also handled the



Burns

strategic partnership with the National Council on Aging. ●

## Cumberbatch goes to Cleveland Fed

**I**ris Cumberbatch, a top corporate communications for Wells Fargo who did stints at Wachovia, Bank of America and Citigate, has moved to the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland as VP of public affairs.

She started May 31 and covers public information, strategic communications, web services and executive outreach for the headquarters of the Fed's Fourth District.

Cumberbatch was Senior VP/Comms. for Wachovia Corp. from 2005 through the financial crisis, exiting in 2009 for Wells Fargo, where she was Senior VP of Corporate Comms. under EVP Oscar Suris and based in Charlotte, N.C.

She earlier held senior roles at BoA, Citibank and the National Securities Clearing Corp.

Cleveland Fed chief Sandra Pianalto was profiled in the *Wall*

*Street Journal* June 4. ●

## MWW grabs Schuerman for L.A.

**M**WW Group has acquired Los Angeles-based boutique shop Enso Communications, adding Founding Partner JP Schuerman as an executive VP and general manager of MWW's Los Angeles office.

Schuerman previously led Edelman's L.A. operation and takes the MWW GM slot vacated by Coby King in April.

MWW CEO Michael Kempner said the move is part of the independent firm's push to "accelerate our growth" in Southern California.

Eighteen-month-old Enso is agency of record for the University of Southern California, Triptrotting and Danhov.

Schuerman, who praised MWW's "independent and entrepreneurial culture," has counseled ESPN, Coors, Mattel and Google, among others.

He led Edelman/L.A. for two years as Executive VP and GM and earlier was EVP and Chief Strategist for L.A.-based CarryOn Communication. He was PR Director for Event411 during the dot-com craze. ●



Cumberbatch

## State Dept. PA Chief sworn in

Former White House communications aide Mike Hammer was officially sworn in as the State Department's public affairs chief by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in June, although he has been in the job since March.

Hammer, a former Special Assistant to President Obama, senior Director for Press and Communications, and National Security Council Spokesman, moved to State last year and has the title Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

"He understands the importance of what we're trying to do, not just government-to-government diplomacy, but people to people," said Clinton. "And with information rocketing around the globe faster and in more varied ways, we have to be exercising smart power in how we communicate. And that's why Mike has led Public Affairs to become a collaborative, comprehensive, one-stop shop for all State Department bureaus."

Hammer said at the ceremony that the U.S. government can't "cede the ground to the Al Jazeeras and Xinhuas of this world," noting the State Dept. has increased the numbers of press briefing, bolstered its six regional media hubs, and launched 10 foreign-language Twitter feeds, among other efforts. "We have to be the ones telling our narrative," he said.

Hammer, who grew up in Latin America and is fluent in Spanish, said to the press covering his swearing-in that media keeps government honest, accountable and sustains democracy. He added: "Perhaps we do not always make it easy for you, but we have a shared common goal: to inform the American people and the world."

Hammer moved from the White House after the high-profile exit of P.J. Crowley in 2011, the State Dept. public affairs head who criticized the U.S. government's detention of suspected Wikileaks source Pfc. Bradley Manning. ●

## CDC reviews anti-tobacco PR

The Centers for Disease Control is reviewing its national tobacco education campaign aimed to counter tobacco industry marketing efforts.

The CDC says cigarette companies spend about \$1 million an hour to promote their products and "glamorize and normalize tobacco use."

CDC's Office on Smoking and Health currently works with Alexandria, Va.-based Plowshare Group and on the \$54 million "Tips from Former Smokers" campaign, a PSA-driven effort with some PR support handled by GolinHarris.

Plowshare is led by former Ad Council director Jeff Boal.

The CDC office is reviewing the account to "extend and complement" its current efforts without duplicating what's already been done, according to a solicitation document.

The overall goal of the campaign is to educate the public about the harmful effects of tobacco use and encourage people to quit smoking. Creation and deployment of the PSA ads is the primary component of the work, complemented by



Hammer



social/digital and media relations.

Proposals are due July 20. The solicitation documents can be downloaded at [fbo.gov](http://fbo.gov). ●

## GOP convention enlists Downey

Seasoned Republican PR aide Kyle Downey has been enlisted as Press Secretary for the 2012 Republican National Convention in Tampa in August.

Downey, who was Communications Director for two legislators considered possible vice presidential picks by GOP nominee Mitt Romney, is one the party's "most effective and respected voices," said Williams Harris, CEO of the convention's Organizing Committee.

Jim Davis, a former Gibraltar Associates and Brunswick Group staffer, is Communications Director for the confab.

Downey exits the Senate Republican Conference, where he was Communications Director for the group of the party's 47 senators. He held the same title for the Senate Republican Policy Committee, Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), and Rep. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), the latter two who are reportedly in the conversation for Vice President.

The GOP convention is set for Aug. 27-30. ●

## Cadmus bolsters communications unit

Ellen Field, who held top public affairs and communications posts at the Dept. of Health and Human Services, Porter Novelli and the Peace Corps., has landed at The Cadmus Group in its strategic communications and market transformation unit.



Field

Field, who takes a Principal title at the Arlington, Va.-based consulting firm focused on environmental and public health issues, was deputy assistant secretary for PA at HHS during the last two years of the recent Bush administration.

She moved to HHS from Porter Novelli, where she was Executive VP for Health and Social Marketing.

For the Bush administration's first term, she was Communications Director for the Peace Corps. over four years. ●

## WPP shareholders nix Sorrell's pay hike

**W**PP shareholders rejected a proposed 60% compensation hike for CEO Martin Sorrell at the ad/PR conglomerate's annual meeting in Dublin in May.

In that non-binding vote, 59.5% of the proxies opposed WPP's remuneration report.

Philip Lader, WPP chairman, told the meeting that the board will take the "remuneration report very seriously." "It's premature to determine if Sorrell's compensation will be adjusted," he added.

Sorrell argued in favor of the comp hike, saying he deserved to be compensated as an owner and entrepreneur. He founded WPP in 1985. Meanwhile, WPP reports revenues for the first four months of 2012 are up seven percent to \$5.1 billion with operating profit "ahead of budget."

The RLM Finsbury, Burson-Marsteller, Cohn & Wolfe, Glover Park Group, Public Strategies Inc, and Hill+Knowlton Strategies PR/PA unit also was up seven percent.

WPP expects overall 2012 growth to top last year's record year, but sees challenges ahead for 2013 as the U.S. confronts its budget deficit with a possible deadlocked Congress.

Sorrell is more bullish on 2014, spurred by the World Cup in Brazil, Winter Olympics in Sochi and mid-term U.S. Congressional elections.

### WPP moves on media monitoring shop

WPP has entered exclusive negotiations to acquire European media monitoring giant Press Index in a deal valuing the com-

pany at 11.2 million euro (\$14.1 million).

The company, founded in 1997 and publicly traded on NYSE Alternext, has 250 employees across four offices in Paris, London, Milan and Madrid tracking print, digital, broadcast and social media.

Clients include Google, Kellogg's, Weber Shandwick, IBM, Havas and Lewis PR, among others. Revenue for 2010 was 16.3 million euro.

WPP said it is in exclusive negotiations to acquire 87% of Press Index's outstanding shares from founders and other sellers at 6.8 euro in cash. If that deal is completed, it will kick off an all-cash tender offer for the remaining stake. ●

## B-M makes splash in France

**B**urson-Marsteller has acquired Paris-based i&e, which is France's biggest PR firm with about 110 staffers and revenues in the \$16 million range.

The combined Burson-Marsteller i&e has more than 150 staffers, making it B-M's largest outpost in Europe, Middle East and Africa region.

Tristan Follin and Jean-Pierre Beaudoin, owners and co-chairmen at i&e, now report to Philippe Pailliart, who was chairman of France's B-M SAS. The WPP unit opened in Paris in 1977.

General Electric, Johnson & Johnson, Mars, Microsoft, Coca-Cola, Allianz, BDF Beiersdorf and MasterCard are among i&e's clients.

i&e launched in 1962. The B-M team moves into i&e's office space in August. ●

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

**Gorvis Communications**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 1, 2012** **NATS Services, United Kingdom**, to provide public and media relations and communications support.

**Daniel J. Edelman, Inc.**, Chicago, IL, **registered June 6, 2012** for **United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, to build communications and research capacity within the Directorate of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and effectively execute communications while transferring knowledge and communications skills to DECC staff over a 15 month period.

**Wiley Rein, LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 11, 2012** for **Oleksandr Tymoshenko, Ukraine**, to communicate with government officials and members of Congress regarding the recent imprisonment by the Ukrainian government of Yulia Tymoshenko, the former Prime Minister of Ukraine. Will educate U.S. policymakers about this humanitarian issue and also actively encourage the U.S. to be supportive of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's request that Mrs. Tymoshenko be released to a hospital in Berlin.

### Lobbying News



## NEW LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT FILINGS

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

**Strategic Policies, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 12, 2012** for **Daimler Trucks North America**, Portland, OR, for greenhouse gas emissions and transportation issues.

**Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 15, 2012** for **eHealth, Inc.**, Mountain View, CA, regarding delay in obtaining business license from Chinese Government; denial of market access in China.

**Patton Boggs LLP**, Washington, DC, **registered June 18, 2012** for **PhotoCure**, Princeton, NJ, for issues related to coverage of pharmaceuticals.

**Daly Consulting Group**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 15, 2012** for **PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues relating to accounting and auditing.

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