

# O'Dwyer's

The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a tropical beach at sunset. Several palm trees are silhouetted against a bright orange and yellow sky. In the foreground, there are beach umbrellas and lounge chairs. Two people are visible in the middle ground, standing near the water's edge and looking out at the sea where a small boat is visible in the distance. The overall mood is serene and vacation-oriented.

Communications & new media

July 2014 | Vol. 28 No. 7

## The Travel Issue

How industry shifts are changing travel PR's role

Experience beats all for today's traveler

Putting your travel brand on the map

Travel marketers: publish or perish

A peek at the next generation of cruise ships

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July: *Travel & Tourism*

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# This is supposed to be the “Information Age?”

**A** free market fixes everything. So much, in fact, that we no longer rely on our corporate employers merely for our healthcare, but now for our education as well.

Global warming is a liberal ruse, but vaccines give children autism.

The only acceptable solution to gun violence in America is more guns.

If our workforce is paid less, somehow our businesses will bring in more customers.

Hollywood has proven that American audiences are so dumb we'll see remakes of the same films indefinitely.

The House Budget Committee Chairman's latest plan to “slash” government spending called for cutting food stamps by \$125 billion over the next five years, but increasing defense spending by \$483 billion over the next decade.

Nevada militiamen who point sniper rifles at federal agents are now “patriots.”

Clean air is a bad thing.

A terrorist group in Nigeria kidnapped more than 200 young girls, but the media was too busy reporting on a Malaysian airline that disappeared a month prior.

We hate “big government,” except when we want to regulate who can marry whom, or who can be in the military, or when we want to ban abortion, or force kids to pray in school, or bail out our banks.

Apparently, science is now something you can simply choose not to believe.

We can't raise the minimum wage because it would kill jobs. The proof: a trickle-down myth from 30 years ago that has never been proven.

Every time there's a school shooting, donations to the NRA skyrocket.

The Supreme Court has decided that women don't need “buffer zones” when visiting abortion clinics, but we can still get one for our funerals.

When we changed federal policies to save the country during the Great Depression, it was noble. When we do it today, it's socialism.

Every day, a “responsible gun owner” kills someone.

We've grown so dull as a culture that our most popular Internet sites have gone beyond mind-numbing lists, to now simply offering lists of pictures. Most involve cats.

The news has to pander to our uninformed worldviews just to get our attention.

We shouldn't increase taxes for our top earners. The last time we did that, our GDP peaked and the national debt disappeared.

Our cognitive biases are so strong that we'll say — with a straight face — the President is “weak” one day, and that he's “a dictator” the next.

We're still arguing about Iraq.

Somehow, by a bizarre economic alchemy that no one understands, cutting taxes is supposed to erase the federal deficit.

GMOs cause cancer, except for the 2,000-plus studies that have never proven this.

Our feelings regarding drones, indefinite detention, unconstitutional wiretaps, and a gradual stripping of our privacy depend solely on who's in office at the time.

We hate welfare, unless it's in the form of corporate tax breaks, which cost us \$180 billion last year alone.

Young people love calling out others for their “privilege,” and they do this on social media sites, using Internet connections, from air-conditioned homes, in America.

Between 2009 and 2012 alone, incomes for the top one-percent of Americans grew by 31%, while incomes for everyone else grew by 0.4%. The incomes of the one-percent now account for 20% of total U.S. income. Strangely, this is fine by us.

Going an entire year without reading a book now makes you normal.

We're obsessed with projecting this narcissistic image of being morality conscious, though it has a habit of disappearing when we're inconvenienced. U.S. retailers have learned that they don't have to improve conditions in their third-world manufacturing plants, because, as it turns out, we really like cheap clothing.

Has-been celebrities are quickly learning that all it takes is one homophobic comment to thrust them back into the spotlight.

We always want to get back to the “good old days.” When was that exactly? ●

— Jon Gingerich

**O'Dwyer's**

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# PR group makes \$1.2 million plea for Nigeria

Washington, DC-based Levick is attempting to build support for Nigeria's effort to "find and safely return" the more than 200 schoolgirls kidnapped in April by terrorist group Boko Haram, according to its \$1.2 million contract.

By Kevin McCauley

**T**he kidnapping focused international media attention on the basic ability of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan to control his massive, oil-rich country.

Nigeria was roundly criticized for its initial reluctance to accept outside help in tracking down and recovering the children. The BBC on June 25 ran an op-ed called "Does Nigeria Have an Image Problem?" The article ridiculed Nigeria for believing such a plea for foreign assistance to help its "clearly overwhelmed armed forces" might affect its image.

Jonathan on June 26 broke his silence about the missing girls via an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* titled "Nothing is more important than bringing home Nigeria's missing girls."

Levick's pact calls for "assisting the

government's efforts to mobilize international support in fighting Islamic break-away group Boko Haram as part of the greater global war on terror." It is charged with communicating Jonathan's "past, present and future priority to foster transparency, democracy and the rule of law throughout Nigeria."

Levick has partnered with Jared

Genser, Managing Director of Perseus Strategies, and Founder of Freedom Now, a non-profit that works to free prisoners of conscience.

Meanwhile on June 25, a bomb detonated in a crowded shopping center in Abuja, Nigeria's capital. It killed at least 22 and wounded dozens of others. Boko Haram is suspected of planting this device.

In November, the U.S. State Dept. designated Boko Haram a terrorist organization. ●

## Google content update hits newswires

PR Newswire has now imposed stricter guidelines to root out "low quality content" and will crack down on releases focused more on gaming search engines than providing useful information.

By Greg Hazley

**G**oogle sent tremors through press release services with its Panda 4.0 update in May. The Panda update

was intended to ensure that authentic, quality content makes it way to the top of Internet search results, over spam and junk results.

A study by Seer Interactive on May 29 claims Google dropped the search rankings on millions of individual press releases online, particularly those published by Vocus' PRweb.com.

PR Newswire Senior VP Jason Edelboim said the recent update to Google's algorithm amounts to a "technology-based editorial guidelines for content quality." He said PRN editorial staff will review releases for analysis and original content, use of varied formats rather than template copy, length to cut down on short releases intended only as link-bait, and overuse of keywords.

Sarah Skerik, VP of Strategic Communications for PR Newswire, said in a June 20 blog post that an audit of PRN's site after the Google update identified spam press releases garnering substantial traffic because of "black hat" SEO tactics.

Skerik said most of PR Newswire's customers will not be affected by the beefed up content guidelines and stressed that, in addition to the millions of visitors to its website, the company's proprietary distribution network reaches a large global audience.

The Panda 4.0 update also whacked results from popular sites like eBay and ask.com. ●



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# Mayor de Blasio gets louder PR bullhorn

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, who rose to power largely due to his “tale of two cities” inequality theme, is now taking his message on the road.

By Kevin McCauley

## de Blasio names PR Chief

de Blasio has named Andrea Hagelgans Director of Agency Communications to handle his ties with various municipal units and his cabinet.

Hagelgans was at Camino Public Relations and handled Planned

Parenthood’s high-profile response to the decision of Susan G. Komen’s Foundation to pull funding. Chelsea-based Camino works for non-profit working on progressive issues.

Earlier, Hagelgans was deputy press secretary for NYC’s campaign finance board.

The Mayor said in a statement that he expects the new hire “will help our cabinet and agencies clearly communicate this administration’s vision and policies to the people of NYC.” ●

**T**he 53-year-old Democrat June 22 earned the Chairman post at the newly created Cities of Opportunity Task Force of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The post gives deBlasio a national platform to speak up for the 99% crowd.

The panel is empowered to develop “aggressive equity agendas” around deBlasio’s campaign platform of higher minimum wage, affordable housing and universal pre-K access.

In accepting the post, de Blasio said the task force “is going to organize the progressive ideas coming out of cities across the US, and put city issues back on the national agenda.”

The task force penciled an August 10-11 kick-off meetings in New York.

The Conference says it’s a bipartisan entity consisting of the leaders of about 1,400 cities with populations of at least 30,000.

The breadth and reach of that organization may soon be an irritant to the one-percent crowd, which deBlasio has pushed to “pay their fair share.”

The Mayor has been at loggerheads with political rival/Wall Street friendly Governor of New York State Andrew Cuomo, who has his eye on the White House.

Both politicians will support Hillary Clinton as the Democratic nominee for the 2016 presidential nomination. Post-Hillary, it’s a wide-open race between the two men.

As mayor of the nation’s media capital, de Blasio enjoys a publicity advantage over Cuomo. Queens-born Cuomo owns the Albany media market.



Bill de Blasio.

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# Industry shifts are changing the role of travel PR

Sometimes a PR professional's job has leaned more toward media relations, while at other times it has included a bigger emphasis on corporate communications. Regardless, there was a time when our roles were clearly defined, and it invariably involved a heavy focus on editorial coverage. Today's roles for PR pros have evolved, however, and now present more opportunities than ever before to redefine the role the industry plays in brand development.

By Marty McDonald and Angela Berardino

**H**ow should PR pros use this changing landscape to their advantage? Here are some trends we're keeping an eye on — followed by some tips for how to embrace them in your daily work.

## Add "publisher" to your resume

By now you've heard the phrase "Content is King." Smart brands are investing in smart content, and the travel industry is leading the charge. Budgets to pay for quality content, from internal and external sources, are growing — but ownership of the content strategy at a brand level is still being defined. For example, it's no longer unusual for a DMO to go beyond visitor's guides to attract guests to their destination; they are also producing apps, content-rich websites with freelance contributors, multiple newsletters and blogs, and running a vast social media network.

Communications leaders have a unique opportunity to own content strategy, and in the process, grow our presence in a space that was once reserved only for the marketing department. We've always acted as storytellers; we now have the opportunity to look at a narrative we might pitch to a journalist, and then extend that idea into content on social media, long form editorial in a visitor's guide, or listicle on a website.

## The space between paid, earned, owned

The lines between what, and who, is paid to produce all of the content referenced above will only continue to blur in the next few years. PR departments are challenged with figuring out when, how and if it is appropriate to compensate media, bloggers, and those hard-to-define influencers for the creation of stories, images, and videos. At the same time, we are seeing more travel editors and well-known personalities launch and expand business ventures and pay-to-play programs. And we're seeing marketing budgets include outlets like BuzzFeed and Yahoo Travel's sponsored content — all of which is designed to look exactly like the editorial we've grown accustomed to pitching.

PR practitioners need to be prepared to counsel, recommend and defend strategic decision-making in this space. Push your way into the planning meetings; pay close

attention not just to the editorial in your targeted outlets, but also the sponsored content that lies in the next column. When you're meeting with editors, ask them about how they're tackling this issue. Educate yourself and ensure you are an invaluable part of the strategic team within your brand. And be aware of the rise of the SuperFan, and the role they can play in your PR program.

## Brand collaborations will continue

While the general concept isn't new (there is a long history of high-end designers collaborating with hotels on everything from one-off suites to entire brand concepts), today's collaborations are more creative and multi-dimensional. Partnerships can lead to great PR stories, of course, but also present an important opportunity for content generation across both parties' social channels and corporate blogs. They can also lead to subsequent micro-partnerships that keep the story fresh. Kimpton's partnership with public bicycles, for example, isn't just a great guest amenity — it's the basis for market-specific hotel packages, restaurant-driven picnic baskets, and loads of high-design visual assets for both public's and Kimpton's websites and social channels.

PR leaders need to pay close attention to ways in which they can stretch a budget and initiate programs that bring in fresh ideas for their brand. One of the simplest — and oft overlooked — opportunities for destinations is to partner with lifestyle brands that are made or produced locally. Often these brands aren't directly involved in the tourism community, but they can lend authenticity to PR programs, provide a whole new army of expert sources, and create endless opportunities for symbiotic social and website content.

## The "Great Reporting Overhaul"

For years, the public relations industry has struggled with meaningful measurement of our efforts. There have been significant changes in the last few years as major travel brands and DMOs have begun adapting more nuanced reporting.

This is it. This is the year that the shift has gained enough momentum to be mainstream, and in the very near future, old-school ad value reports will do more harm

to your department than good. With all the spaces in which PR professionals work — from social media to traditional editorial, and the gray space in between — it's time for us to be able to explain our impact on brands in a meaningful, qualitative manner.

## Visual curation

Strong written skills will always be important to a PR practitioner, and releases have a place, but no longer at the head of the table. Today's audiences want to visualize the narrative as much as they are willing to read it.

Annual reports heavy with statistics now need infographics. Pinterest boards are editorial inspiration. Personalized video pitching (using Vine or a private YouTube link showing a low-budget/phone video pitch immersed in an experience) are becoming part of our everyday.

Try a quick Google search for "drone travel videos" and you'll see just how quickly the impact of technology is affecting how we collect and use visual assets. PR professionals need to learn how to create a holistic version of their brand's story — from visuals and interactive social content to digestible and creative pieces of information.

The travel PR industry is leading a shift in the field as a whole. PR professionals continually develop their stories to entice consumers; and because the travel consumer experience has become nearly entirely interactive, PR professionals need to evolve their capabilities to meet the need.

Marty McDonald is SVP and Tourism Practice Leader at Fahlgren Mortine. Angela Berardino is VP of Travel + Digital, at Turner Public Relations (an independent, wholly owned subsidiary of Fahlgren Mortine). ●



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O'Dwyer's 2013 Top 100 PR Firms

# The brave new world of travel

Today's travelers increasingly seek to trade the comforts of home for an authentic cultural experience. Here's how PR pros can wear the hat of exploration guides.

By Lou Rena Hammond

**A** growing number of travelers opt to venture outside the cloistered gates of resorts in order to engage the broader culture of the surrounding locale. Words like “exclusive,” “manicured” and “pampered” are apt to draw shrugs, while they perk up at terms like “authentic,” “indigenous,” and “experiential.”

Perhaps it's partially fueled by the “Anthony Bourdain effect,” but the trend, propelled largely by the “working wealthy” and millennials, focuses more on soaking up local color than soaking up rays.

A November 2013 *Travel and Market Report* article cites Resonance Consultancy president Chris Fair as attributing the trend largely to the fact that millennials, being more culturally diverse than older generations, are more enticed to travel abroad and closely engage other cultures. Such travelers, rather than regarding foreign (particularly indigenous) cultures as odd and exotic, view them as part of a shared humanity that should be savored and explored. Rather than considering a foreign culture as an artifact to be viewed from the outside looking in, as older generations might be more prone to do, they are more likely to perceive the culture as something to be experienced first-hand. Fair goes on to cite the impact this trend is asserting on affluent consumers as well, as they become increasingly more motivated by “the consumption of experience than the consumption of consumer goods” — a trend he calls “conspicuous leisure” (as opposed to conspicuous consumption).

A 2011 *New York Times* article references the work of economist Emanuel Saez, who observes that “in 1917 the richest one-percent of Americans received only one-fifth of their income from paid work” while in 2004, “in contrast, paid work accounted for 60% of the income of that same sector.” Unlike their early 20th-century predecessors, today's rich tend to maintain the working or middle class values they grew up with rather than aspiring to the aloof aristocratic values of the Gilded Age, which tended to deem “foreign” (i.e., non-Western) cultures as inferior. The shifting attitude of today's affluent consumers extends to their travel habits, where they are much more prone to be

curious about how ordinary locals live, work and re-create.

Russ Alan Prince's well-researched book *Middle Class Millionaires* summarizes the impact of the latest recession on today's affluent class: “78% of the ‘working rich,’ or ‘middle-class millionaires,’ defined [as] having a net worth of between \$1 million and \$10 million and still working for a living, consider themselves ‘very or extremely concerned about their ability to maintain their current financial position.’” Prince's research shows that as early as 2008, 21% of these “middle-class millionaires” had already begun curtailing their spending. Shocked by the reality of the recession, the working rich have adjusted their priorities. While they still seek to enjoy the hard-earned fruits of their labor, they are less acquisitive than they were before the recession.

“They want the experience of flying on the private jet; they don't want to own the jet,” says Steve Zacks, Chief Marketing Officer of 3rd Home, an exclusive web-based home exchange club for owners of luxury vacation homes. “They're mindful of their money, and are more concerned with spending on experiences than on ownership — they want to experience the world and its rich diversity, not acquire it.”

The recent *Travel and Market Report* article echoes Zack's assessment. “Conspicuous Leisure” is the “signaling of social status through consumption of experience rather than through consumer goods. Unique experiences, and not just for the affluent, are social currency.”

Now a home exchange club like 3rd Home allows affluent consumers to use an asset they already own (their vacation home) to exchange for trips to new places and seek fresh adventures. In today's sharing economy, for example, a family who owns a vacation home in the Hamptons can exchange the time they're not using the house to book trips all over the world. “Such a family can trade a week in their house in the U.S. for a week in a traditional Thai villa, which they can use as a base for exploring nearby Buddhist shrines and artisanal shops, or go elephant trekking,” says 3rd Home Founder and CEO Wade Shealy.

But even resorts, both large and small, are wising up to the experiential travel

trend. St. Regis Deer Valley in Park City, Utah, now offers an Olympic ski experience with freestyle medalist Shannon Bahrke. The program allows guests to experience a half- or whole-day Olympic-style training regimen and coaching sessions with the champion.

The Inn at Dos Brisas, centered on a magnificent 313-acre Hill Country ranch midway between Austin and Houston, which hosts one of the best equestrian programs in the country, encourages guests to get their hands dirty on the ranch's 24-acre USDA certified organic garden. Later they enjoy the fruits of their labor (along with a bottle from the ranch's stellar 7,000-bottle wine cellar) in the ranch's restaurant — Texas' only *Forbes* Five Star dining establishment.

The staff at Deep Water Cay, a 2 ½-mile sliver of an island just off the east end of Grand Bahama Island, long revered for its world-class salt water fly-fishing, encourages guests to engage with the local community. Most staff members grew up either on Grand Bahama Island or one of the other nearby cays and are still deeply connected to the close-knit community. It's not unusual for a staff member to pull a boat up to a waterfront bar on tiny Sweetings Cay and introduce them to the locals, or stop in a yard of a friend in route to the resort to pick coconuts. Every October the resort takes guests to nearby McClean's Town for the annual Conch Cracking Festival (and usually a guest or two will amuse the skilled locals by trying a hand at the competition).

Whether flying to worlds away or simply driving to the next state, recently graduated millennials and financially established working rich — two groups that on the surface appear at such opposite ends of the social spectrum — are writing the itinerary for the future of travel. And now as experiential travel increasingly intersects with the other hot travel trend, the sharing economy, more and more people will opt to emerge from the safety of their comfort zones in order to meaningfully engage the wider world.

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



Lou Rena Hammond



# Adjusting to tomorrow's travelers, today

In 2013, iGen — the generation after Gen Y — started becoming adults. They began attending college, voting, and now they're traveling. There's no doubt that the travel industry, as a whole, has spent time and resources in order to market and communicate with Gen Y, yet there may be an assumption that this generation isn't much different.

**B**y 2020, the entire iGen generation will be adults. Today, more than 50% of children under the age of eight have a mobile phone or tablet of their own.

Also consider the fact we have trained this generation to be different from any other generation. We have taught them to know the following:

They have access the history of human knowledge on phones in their pockets.

With instant access to trusted peers and authorities, they should not trust ads, commentary or really any message coming from a brand or untrusted source.

They should not click on ads.

They should DVR past commercials.

They should not trust official statements from companies or organizations.

Customer service issues should be dealt with in real time.

## Travel industry should evolve

The travel industry still uses legacy strategies and tactics, relying on advertising and traditional media. While traditional media still has an important place for travel, it is equally critical that destinations, travel companies, or attractions concede control of their messages to those that influence their audience.

Think, also, that the nature of travel has fundamentally shifted. iGen is growing up in a world with Skype, FaceTime and SnapChat. There are no longer geographical boundaries, inhibiting their ability to connect to each other globally. The rapid-fire ascension of social media has made this doubly poignant as global events unfold real-time, not vetted, filtered or hampered by media or governments.

On an individual level, this means that the desire to see the world and become embedded in other cultures is no longer experience that requires travel. On a family or community level, this means that staying connected with

loved ones no longer requires plane tickets. On a business level, this means national and global relationships can be handled in-person, but from thousands of miles away.

Social needs that once required travel can now be facilitated remotely.

iGen will not remember a time when travel was required to experience the world, connect with loved ones or manage business nationally or globally.

If destinations, travel companies or attractions do not fundamentally integrate this change in the marketplace, they will see tried-and-true tactics falling short. Reasons for travel must now transcend the days when it was required.

Travel must now be experiential, spe-

cial and exclusive. It must appeal to the senses in ways that technology cannot capture. Finding the right experiential qualities of a destination will trump travel needs that can be satisfied through technology.

iGen wants many of the same things their predecessors want, but they must be first convinced through authenticity, trust and experiential engagement. This altruistic and highly-engaged new generation will be your biggest advocate when these pre-qualifications are met.

*Stefan Pollack is President of Pollack PR Marketing Group, with offices in Los Angeles and New York. He is author of *Disrupted, From Gen Y to iGen: Communicating with the Next Generation*. ●*



Stefan Pollack



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# Putting your travel brand on the map

**With the economy on the rebound, a surge of demand has returned to travel. However, consumer expectations have now climbed along with it.**

By Vicky Hastings

**O**ptions have grown for today's travelers. As your target audience ponders going to Croatia or Cancun, Chicago or Charleston, they're using their tablets, smartphones and computers to do so, making it easier than ever to plan where that next trip will be.

More than 90% of travel planning now takes place online, where travelers are researching and booking getaways. Moreover, they're now sharing vacation photos and videos via social media, both during and after their trip.

For savvy travel brands, the opportunity is not only to inform and inspire, but also to recruit, respond and reward potential visitors online. With so many devices and communication platforms to choose from, the challenge is how to be there with the right digital content at every step of travel planning and purchase. The most successful communications programs demonstrate that you "get" travelers as they dream, plan, book, experience and share about their journeys. What are you doing to attract their attention?

Think media coverage when defining travel PR? That's just the start. Today's tourism PR toolkit includes earned media and also paid, owned and shared media. Successful travel promotion programs include both "push" (brand reaches out to potential visitors) and "pull" communications (consumers seek out the travel brand) communications.

Based on our expertise attracting visitors to destinations, hotels and attractions, we offer this travel PR roadmap.

## Be easy to find online

Make it effortless for people to get the information they want. When considering a destination, people most often search for "flights," "hotels," "restaurants," "things to do" and "events." To ensure your website is served up when visitors are wondering where to go and what to do, develop content with staying power based on these terms.

A blog post generated as a result of a food blogger trip we organized, "Top 6 Things To Do In Astoria and Warrenton, Oregon," is one of the top referral sources to our client's website — two years after it was posted.

Commissioning travel writers to visit

and recommend their top things to do can help hotels, attractions and destinations recruit guests.

A small investment in search engine marketing and sponsored posts featuring this content will increase website visits.

## Tell visual stories

Show people what your destination looks like. Once you've attracted potential visitors to your website, show them what they will see and do on their trip. Images and videos generate the most clicks and prompt the greatest engagement of any online content. Because consumers trust "real" photos from people like them, streaming a local Instagram feed on your website is a great way to affordably showcase authentic experiences from the travelers' lens.

A compelling image or video has a long life. It can be repurposed and reused in many ways, including sponsored content — search and social media ads — enabling you to attract the attention of potential visitors.

## Partner with influencers

Tapping into the loyal audiences of influential online media can help you grow your consumer base. For example, Tasting Table, a popular lifestyle brand publishing daily emails about food trends and happenings, created a microsite featuring "Oregon's Tastiest Trails" featuring editors' recommendations for their favorite Oregon restaurants, hotels and attractions — plus contest prizes of seven Oregon culinary trips.

Sponsored by Travel Oregon and managed by our firm, this PR initiative was one of Tasting Table's most successful promotions, garnering substantially more engagement than other programs. The reputation of Oregon as a foodie destination earned through extensive national media coverage, combined with the chance to win a free trip to this storied place, was compelling. For our client, validation from Tasting Table, a culinary travel thought leader, and the opportunity to connect with its loyal, influential following, was a win.

Special interest media opportunities are abundant, ranging from foodies to families, Millennials to Baby Boomers and outdoor adventurers or urbanites. Some of the best paid media partnerships result when the editorial and advertising teams brainstorm

ideas and collaborate on execution. Reach out to several media outlets among your target audience for proposals on how to obtain the outcome you're seeking.

## Listen, respond and help

Social media is a great customer service tool. Keep an eye on your social channels and quickly respond to comments and questions about your brand. If there is a problem, take the discussion offline and do what you can to resolve it.

Sometimes flights are cancelled, guests check in to find dirty towels in their rooms, and more. Most people call for assistance, while the disgruntled but vocal few may hop on Twitter to complain. By monitoring the social media conversation about your brand, you can step in to apologize and make good, as well as offer helpful tips and recommendations.

## Reward customers for their business

When planning your content calendar, weave in ways to thank your fans.

Airlines provide inspiring examples of delighting customers. In Amsterdam, KLM surprised travelers checking in on Foursquare with gifts related to their trips. In London, when cancelled Christmas Eve flights left hundreds stranded at the airport, SpanAir sent wrapped presents for each passenger down the baggage claim carousel. Both companies scored big-time social media conversations, acknowledgement from travel industry influencers and media coverage as a result.

## Measure, optimize online performance

Regularly review your social media and website analytics, swapping out underperforming content for more engaging material. At least once a quarter, evaluate overall progress. It's easy to get inundated with too much data, so select one or two key metrics relating to your communications objectives and build a story around it.

Content with staying power. Great photos and videos. Surprise and delight. Try one or two of these approaches to increasing consumer loyalty and putting your travel brand on the map. The results will be rewarding.

*Vicky Hastings, APR, is Managing Director, Studio West, at Maxwell PR + Engagement. ●*



Vicky Hastings



# Amenities abound for new generation of cruise ships

**Cruise operators are going to great lengths to ensure that passengers of all ages have plenty to do while their vessels traverse the oceans. As a result, a new breed of cruise ships with a score of new features are making their debut this year.**

**By Gloria Bohan**

**T**he Quantum of the Seas, a 4,180-passenger, 1,141-ft. long vessel, is set to be launched in November by Royal Caribbean. It will be the Royal Caribbean's largest ship. A sister ship, Anthem of the Seas, will be launched next year.

One of the many amenities onboard Quantum of the Seas is a capsule that takes passengers 300 feet above the top deck and sides. Quantum of the Seas will also feature the first skydiving simulator at sea, "RipCord by iFLY." Passengers "float in the air" above giant fans. Bumper cars, solo cabins and "virtual" balconies that have floor-to-ceiling LCD TV screen offering sea views are other features that will be included. Expanded dining options include 18 restaurants.

Launching in October is the 3,725 passenger Costa Diadema, the largest vessel for Italian cruise line Costa Crociere. Costa will have 15 bars, including one for wine, and seven restaurants. There is a two-deck gaming area, with videos and lasers; a Country Rock Club, 4D cinema, three-deck theater and a large Portobello Market piazza filled with a diverse array of shops.

Designed to reflect her home-port of Miami, Norwegian Cruise Line's 4,028-passenger Norwegian Getaway sails to the Caribbean. It has numerous dining options, 12 bars, an outdoor boardwalk, lined with eateries; an Aqua Park with five water slides — including free falls — sure to keep the kids thrilled, plus a multi-level Sports Complex with a zip-line, rock-climbing wall and a ropes course. Entertainment includes "Legally Blonde" and "Illusionarium," a dinner combining magic and special effects.

## **Norwegian line launches biggest ship**

NCL's largest ship to date, the 4,200-passenger Norwegian Escape, will debut in the fall and sail year-round from Miami to the Eastern Caribbean. First of the line's Breakaway-Plus class, it will be followed in 2017 by sister ship Norwegian Bliss.

Highlights include The Haven by Norwegian — a two-level luxurious complex. It has 55 suites, an outdoor terrace and its own restaurant. Another showcase feature is The Waterfront outdoor promenade which has numerous bars, eateries and lounges. Cruisers will have their choice of 25 dining options.

Following her successful sister ship, Royal Princess, the 3,560-guest Regal Princess, which launched in May, is another vessel from Princess Cruises. A three-deck-high piazza offers a signature International Café, The Pastry Shop, Alfredo's Pizzeria, Crooners Bar with a piano and a '60s feel, as well as a Vines wine and tapas bar.

The Retreat Pool and Bar are an adults-only Sanctuary. Dining includes Sabatini's, a Tuscan-inspired restaurant. Regal Princess has one of the biggest health facilities at sea, The Lotus Spa, a tranquil hide-away offering numerous rejuvenating treatments. Also featured is the retreat-within-a-retreat, The Enclave, with such features as a hydro-therapy pool, heated stone beds and four "sensory showers."



**Slated for release in November, Quantum of the Seas will be Royal Caribbean's largest ship, and takes cruise line amenities and experiences to a new level.**

## **Passengers offered pampering, vistas**

A cruise offers fun, pampering and a convenient way to see the world. Only one packing and unpacking is needed. Cruise lines are offering intriguing new destinations, more dining options and onboard amenities than ever before, such as pools, restaurants and elegant cabanas. New onboard features range from expanded atri-

ums, more and diverse dining options, to more specialty restaurants.

Highly acclaimed spas such as Canyon Ranch and Mandara are featured on many ships. Rejuvenating is now as much a part of the cruise experience as relaxing.

Seeking new horizons in 2015, Disney Cruise Line's popular Disney Wonder will be exploring the Hawaiian Islands on 10-night sailings and will also offer cruises from San Diego. Upscale Regent Seven Seas Cruises introduced several new productions, including on the Seven Seas Mariner, called "Cirque Rock 'n Roll" with music that includes Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson. Enjoy "The Piano Men" on Seven Seas Navigator and a tribute to Paris on the Seven Seas Voyager, called "Cirque L'Amour," complete with an aerial ballet. Shoppers will want to head to the new Michael Kors boutique on Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Equinox.

## **Ships take new routes, new terrain**

Unique cruise itineraries to destinations such as Kotor, Montenegro, a Mediterranean coastal town, are now offered by Royal Caribbean.

Other cruises now go to the Amazon, China, Cambodia and Vietnam. One popular route is the river cruise along the Mekong Delta. Worldwide itineraries today visit uncommon ports, some of which are close to home, such as Bequia, in the Caribbean's Grenadines.

Luxury line Crystal Cruises is making a maiden call in Oban, Scotland and Luanda, Angola. Holland America Line, which has cruises out of Singapore, has also added Myanmar, Labrador and Angola.

River cruising continues to grow in popularity, with more than 30 new ships making their debut this year. Passengers are able to dock in the hearts of cities and

towns and immerse themselves in shore excursions. Christmas Market itineraries and special wine tasting voyages are also popular. Viking Cruises recently made it into Guinness World Records by christening 16 Viking Longships in one day. All sail to Europe.

*Gloria Bohan is President of Omega Travel.* ●

# Travel marketing pros: publish or perish

**As the travel journalism industry continues to shrink, brands specializing in hospitality and leisure have not only a newfound opportunity to fill the content gap — they have a professional obligation as well.**

By Alice Diaz

**W**hen staff members at *The New York Times* opined in their leaked May internal Innovation Report that “we are falling behind in .... the art and science of getting our journalism to our readers,” you know the debate about how to connect with consumers in a fragmented, distracted, on-demand culture has reached a new level.

The now-infamous *Times* report is telling. The fact is, public relations professionals and communications teams in the travel industry are faced with the very same challenge.

Travel is a vast global industry. It's crucial to the health of economies, and it's seen as a fundamental element of a life well lived. Yet traditional spaces for telling our stories are becoming less numerous.

Most travel editors disappeared years ago, and the pages they oversaw have dwindled in many cities to a lifestyle add-on. Glossy travel magazines have shuttered, and survivors are remaking themselves to appeal to readers who are on the bus, waiting in line or walking down the street.

How do destinations, cruise lines, hotels and others break through when broad circulation publications struggle, multi-tasking readers cherry pick content and consumers, especially Millennials, are no longer trustful of or influenced by advertising?

## Why storytelling matters

Boomers may travel for bragging rights, and Millennials may travel for experience. In either case the story is the essential, and public relations professionals long-ago mastered the art of figuring out the story. Now we can pair that expertise with the science — understanding where travelers get information, keywords they search for, and real-time analysis of what they talk about — enabling us to be the best storytellers of today.

Traditionalists in the travel industry may take exception to this approach; they may feel that public relations

agencies are not *Condé Nast Traveler* and should stay out of the publishing business. Everyone is in the publishing business these days, and the publishing business itself changes every day. Trip Advisor is not a traditional publisher, and yet the experience and editorial judgment that Travel Advocate Wendy Perrin brings to the site from her days as a writer with *Condé Nast Traveler* is a valuable development none of us would have predicted a year ago. And as the contraction among travel writers continues, our clients have not only an opportunity but an obligation to customers to fill the content gap.

## The expert's experience, insider's voice

Why does public relations need to lead the charge in storytelling for travel clients? In our Travel & Lifestyle practice at Weber Shandwick, we are an extension of the client team and immerse ourselves in the business and the experience. For many years, editors had to hear the passion in our voices and listen to our stories. Because we dive deep into our clients' experience and learn its nuances, we frame richer stories that go beyond the features and benefits of a display ad. We can also tell a story through the lens of consumers' passions in a way that ensures the content is being discovered and shared in travelers' news feeds.

Last, and most certainly not least, we are exceptionally well connected to editors, reporters, producers, bloggers and influencers. We know the story needs to be strategic, consistent with business goals and well framed, but it also needs to be handled as a dynamic piece of content that must travel well from the drawing board to the brand publishing platform and on to the wider web of connections through new and emerging social channels to capture the attention of consumers.

## Publishing is just the beginning

The Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle practice has already evolved alongside many clients, including Royal Caribbean International, which introduced the line's newest ship,

Quantum of the Seas, not only with a global media event, but also by utilizing Mediaco, our brand publishing unit that provides an end-to-end solution helping brands become full-scale media networks.

The plan was to facilitate expanded media coverage but also to self-publish stories to ensure consumers learned about the world's most technologically advanced ship. We provided the expected “new cruise ship” content and dissected the cruise story to create culturally relevant lifestyle topics that would expand our reach.

But publishing the story is just the beginning. *The New York Times* Innovation Report proved that publishers need to promote their own content. Doing so ensures greater reach with the right audiences.

Our Royal Caribbean team worked directly with contacts at Gizmodo, Eater, *The Wall Street Journal* and independent influencers to drive coverage. In addition, we saw publishers like Yahoo! Travel, Just Jared and *Condé Nast Traveler* pick up the content we produced, demonstrating the need to work with journalists as publishing partners. No standard press release or native ad could have ever been as effective at reaching media and consumers.

*The Times* is a titan of journalism. As its soul-searching treatise says, the goal is “to get more out of the journalism we are already creating.” It's a good time for marketing professionals to begin asking themselves if they are fully utilizing the talent and knowledge of their public relations agencies, and whether they even have a public relations agency that is prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that change in the media industry has created. You can publish and yet perish without the strategy and connections to find, be found and be shared by engaged consumers.

Alice Diaz is Executive Vice President and leader of Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle Practice. ●



Alice Diaz



# Why driving revenue is all that matters

**We have a habit of putting PR initiatives under two categories: conveying the brand story and driving business. While a campaign typically involves one or the other, both strategies build awareness, and on occasion a program accomplishes both.**

By Florence Quinn

**T**he goal of telling the brand story is to create buzz and place the client's narrative and key message points in front of its target audiences. These initiatives typically take the form of creative ideas, such as the creation of New York's first outdoor bedroom for AKA, delivering bees to the Waldorf Astoria New York via a town car and developing a Mermaid Wedding for Sheraton Fort Lauderdale Beach Hotel.

Sure, on occasion someone will book a hotel room upon reading about rooftop beehives. However, it's a rare occurrence and rarely track-able. Mostly we can't prove these unique ideas positively affect business even though we strongly believe they do. This can be frustrating for us creative types who find ourselves living in a world of click-throughs and measurements.

On the other hand, initiatives that are measurable and directly produce revenue are high-fived by everyone. These campaigns often include a discounted offer to entice consumers to take action. Here are two examples:

A compelling \$110 110th Anniversary rate for Hotel Wolcott in NYC produced 1,812 room nights and \$222,795 in revenue in one month. The hotel team had never seen the phone lines light up like they did for this offer.

A well-priced summer offer for Marriott New Orleans resulted in 543 bookings for \$450,000 in revenue.

Revenue-producing programs can also take the form of ads placed on social media sites. A strategically targeted Facebook advertising campaign for the Guerlain Spa New York spiked gift card sales a dramatic 68%.

I mentioned that sometimes the creative idea is revenue generating. Here are some examples of the right and the left side of the brain working together:

The glamping package on the newly renovated deck overlooking the ocean at The Westin Hilton produced over 55 bookings. It was so popular that the hotel is bringing it back this September.

Hot wings — so hot you had to sign a

waiver and they came with a fire extinguisher — for Jake Melnick's Corner Tap in Chicago rocked Super Bowl sales by 400%.



**A 110th anniversary rate for the Hotel Wolcott drove 1,812 room nights and \$222,795 in revenue during one month.**

A good example of a successful campaign that told the brand story and pro-

duced significant revenue was the TLC (Tender Loving Comfort) Movement, a service offer for Affinia Hotels, which also improved customer satisfaction.

TLC took home Best of Show at the HSMAI Awards. It garnered \$1.2 million in revenue. More than 50% of Americans were exposed to the TLC story via 1-billion media impressions, including the front page of *USA Today*.

Customer-service scores rose to #1 among upper upscale hotel brands.

Driving revenue is the ultimate goal. Everything we do, including the creative, must lead to that. The only measurement that matters in the end is the sale.

*Florence Quinn is the Founder and President of Quinn, a lifestyle PR firm with offices in NYC and Miami.* ●



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# Why public relations shouldn't forget its publics

**We work in an industry that helps organizations manage their reputations, yet paradoxically, “public relations” itself faces a grossly negative perception today.**

By Sam Ford

**J**ust in the past two weeks, I've seen the following statements being lobbed against our profession:

A commenter on Reddit referred to PR as “... companies that are paid to lie.”

From the comments section of TechDirt, one poster said that “PR firms and spokespeople are only needed when it's necessary to lie, conceal, deceive, mislead ... That's why they exist. That's what they do.”

Experienced editors struggle to restrain and control the venal PR gusher every single day ... the predictable eruptions of the common money grubbers. To each his or her own. My tombstone will say something inspiring, I hope. (From the comments section on *Harvard Business Review*.)

I don't blame people for such sentiments (even if their particular tone is unfair and their lack of empathy frustrating for starting a productive conversation.)

We describe the benefit we bring to the public very poorly. We, as a whole, have too often taken a seat far down the decision-making chain of an organization, accepting roles as vendors rather than as strategic consultants.

And, if we're being honest, we unfortunately talk far too little about ethics as a profession ... at least compared to the flood of panels, articles and blog posts about the most successful tactics for Facebook likes or the best way to achieve “ROI” on earned media.

When ethics do come up, it most often becomes a conversation about compliance with laws and governmental guidelines — as if we are content to outsource our ethical due diligence to external parties.

Instead, we talk in our industry jargon about how we can “leverage,” “convert,” “drive,” and “manage” people/communities.

What's missing in that conversation is the “publics” we've supposedly been tasked with “relating” to. We're communication professionals, yet 90% or more of our work — and our focus — has been on what our organizations want to say, rather than on serving those audiences we seek to reach. We “release,” “state,” and

“announce,” but we rarely listen, empathize, and advocate on the audience's behalf.

I don't mean to imply that ethics aren't deeply important to people in our field. Quite the opposite. From top to bottom, the vast majority of professionals I've engaged with care deeply about behaving ethically — from senior leaders to interns. Some large agencies have Chief Ethics Officers, and leaders throughout our field work hard to maintain ethical standards and educational programs for their clients.

Further, many of our industry organizations are passionate about “best practices” in ethics. I've personally worked with the Word of Mouth Marketing Association and the Council of PR Firms and know firsthand how those organizations have put their energy behind ethics in our industry (as have others, like the Arthur W. Page Society, the Institute for Public Relations, and the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.)

But that dedication hasn't yet manifested itself in overt, everyday, industry-wide discussion about our obligations to the audience. Instead, almost all the conversations focus on what we owe our brands/clients.

Thus, our organizations, and our profession, suffer from a lack of trust. And, as a result, we have a limited ability to truly help improve the long-term reputation of our organizations.

The quotes that began this article came in response to news that my agency, Peppercomm, and several others had issued a statement pledging to engage with the Wikipedia project in an ethical manner, consistent with the Terms of Use of the Wikimedia Foundation and the guidelines/policies of the Wikipedia editor community.

The reality is that bad actors in our industry have been intentionally lying on their clients'/employers' behalf when engaging with Wikipedia for years — adding in marketing copy, deleting unflattering information, and/or making edits/suggestions without disclosing their own relationship with the organization in question.

And they are surrounded by a much greater number of communications professionals who have seen Wikipedia as a

repository for information rather than a collaboratively edited encyclopedia. They don't understand why adding that bio of their founder or an entry for every product they sell is a violation of the very *raison d'être* of the Wikipedia project.

As a result, the volunteer Wikipedia editor community is now so cynical of our profession that they are hesitant to believe anyone speaking on an organization's behalf could even have a helpful suggestion to make an entry more accurate or comprehensive.

Ultimately, who suffers from the current situation? Wikipedia readers. We have a larger obligation to the publics our clients look to serve — and we often have information that would serve the interests of those publics who come to a Wikipedia entry trying to find an objective, accurate, and up-to-date overview about the subject in question.

PR professionals who are acting ethically have the same goal as Wikipedia editors should have—to ensure that entries on the site are accurate, objective, and up-to-date. That will likely mean there will be some information included that our clients are proud of...and perhaps some they wouldn't put on a brochure. But we as PR professionals have to think of every article we read that isn't about our clients and consider what we'd want an objective entry to provide.

Jack O'Dwyer's recent column on the Wikipedia debate makes the point that, despite our firms' pledges, many others will continue to act deceptively. He's right, but that doesn't change the need for us to act ethically for our own sake — and, more importantly, for the sake of the reader.

Transparency and disclosure are not purely Wikipedia issues; they are a vital issue for our industry as a whole. I hope we can all come together to make this a priority. The audiences we're charged with serving depend on it.

*Sam Ford is Director of Audience Engagement at Peppercomm and co-author of the book *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture*. ●*



Sam Ford



# College pals head fast-growing travel PR firm

Jamie Lynn Sigler and Sarah Evans met at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, in 1997. In the years since they became not only lifelong friends but successful business partners, now leading a fast-growing travel and hospitality PR Firm.

By Jack O'Dwyer



Jamie Lynn Sigler & Sarah Evans, Partners at J Public Relations.

Public Relations, grew 26% to \$3,308,00 in 2013, an increase matched or topped by only 15 other firms among the 100 largest in O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms. Since 2011 JPR has grown nearly 100%, and has received numerous accolades. Additionally, the agency is listed on Inc. Magazine's Inc. 5000 List, ranking #12 in the country for fastest growing hospitality companies. In the digital space, JPR is listed #5 on UWire's list of the Top 25 PR Firms on Social Media.

Luxury lifestyle and hospitality brands brought revenues of \$2,432,570 in 2013, giving JPR the No. 9 spot on O'Dwyer's travel/hospitality ranking. Restaurant and food clients are also an important part of the business, generating \$875,435 in fees in 2013. Clients in that realm include Suja Juice, Tessemae's and Block 16 Hospitality.

Testimony to their expertise and that of more than 30 other staffers is a client list of world-renowned brands such as Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Triumph Hotels, Grace Hotels, Autograph Collection, Vail Resorts Hospitality, Four Seasons Lana'i, MetWest Terra Hospitality, Rancho La Puerta, and Relais & Chateaux properties, including

Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, Mayflower Grace, The White Barn Inn, Twin Farms, The Lodge at Glendorn and The Goring.

Sigler and Evans moved to San Diego after graduation from ECU in 2001, working in PR and also waitressing in order to meet expenses. Sigler launched JPR in San Diego in 2005, and they partnered in early 2009. Today they have robust offices in New York City and California, with a presence in Arizona. They are on track to bill over \$5 million in 2014.

## "Boutique powerhouse"

Sigler and Evans describe their firm as "a boutique powerhouse of more than 30 experienced, passionate publicists specializing in hospitality and luxury lifestyle PR on both coasts."

"We are experienced at launching brands and maintaining relevancy through solid, newsworthy PR campaigns, brand partnerships and creative programming," said Sigler.

JPR staffers are "travelers, foodies and trendsetters who live and breathe these industries personally and professionally," said Evans. ●

## PR News Briefs

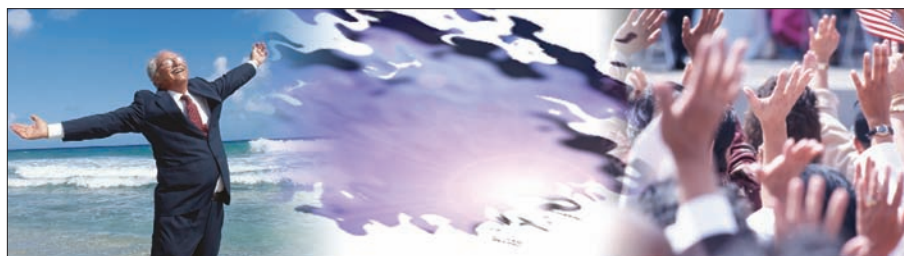
### Barokas PR aids Atari's latest comeback

Video game pioneer Atari has engaged Seattle's Barokas PR as it plots its latest comeback attempt, a bid to leverage its iconic history in the online era.

The "Pong" pioneer spent 2013 in Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection but said June 18 that it has a new corporate strategy to produce online video games, apps, casinos, and video content. Licensing is also expected play a key role as its portfolio of more than 200 classic games, including "Asteroids" and "Centipede," will be rented out to adorn everything from slot machines to t-shirts.

Sixteen-year-old Barokas PR is led by CEO Howie Barokas, a veteran of Imagio, the storied Seattle tech advertising and PR firm that was sold to JWT in 2000.

Paris-based Atari, which also has offices in New York, was founded in 1972.



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# IPW Chicago promotes travel in a big way

**The U.S. Travel Association's annual IPW — formerly known International PowWow — brings together tourism officials from every corner of the globe, as well as professionals representing hotels, museums, amusement parks and other travel attractions. The largest single generator of travel in the United States, IPW held its 46th annual meeting in Chicago this year, bringing in more than 6,000 attendees from more than 70 countries.**

By Carla Marie Rupp and Jason Rupp

**T**he U.S. Travel Association event hosted nearly 1,400 international and domestic travel buyers at the 2014 IPW, the highest since 2001. Appointments were made — 95,000 this year, generally for intensive deal-making — and billions in travel billings were accounted for at the trade show, the travel industry's premiere annual marketplace. Publicists pitched thousands of story ideas and PR material to 500 international and domestic travel writers and broadcasters during scheduled media events.

"IPW is the place we come to celebrate the travel industry, and I'm happy to be part of that story," said Caroline Beteta, President and CEO of California Travel and Tourism.

IPW Chicago 2014 also provided unforgettable experiences for public relations professionals and journalists, with extensive networking and pitching opportunities that resulted in scores of stories about American destinations.

"At IPW, the most important travel industry professionals in the entire international marketplace come to the U.S.," said U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger J. Dow. "The IPW delivers more impact than the Super Bowl!"

## Chicago-style hospitality

Of course, all 6,200 IPW attendees were entertained royally as well: at luncheons, receptions, and on specialty sightseeing tours and at extravagant events throughout the city.

Choose Chicago, the official public relations and tourism organization for Chicago, and other sponsors showed off the city to global travel professionals, with numerous delegate and press tours, exclusive invitations and extravagant parties featuring Chicago-style food, attractions, neighborhoods and entertainment.

Chicago was well-prepared. The city

knew, rightly, that international visitors would be attracted to the glamour of the filming that occurs in the Windy City. So, it was no accident that during IPW's Sunday grand opening night the chosen venue was Cinespace Chicago Film Studios, where Chicago Fire and Chicago PD are filmed for television. It was a reminder that Chicago is one of America's major television and film hubs. The large studio was transformed into an ultimate entertainment, networking and food attraction, with even Grammy-nominated Janelle Monae giving a headlining performance. Broadway's "Motown: the Musical" and

style band to Indian to Mambo music, to sounds that might be found on Chicago's Southside, Wicker Park, and Bucktown, as well as music from the city's noted Latin culture. Even celebrity Jennifer Hudson made an appearance.

Great Chicago neighborhoods were shared in a Chicago Film Tour. One of the most requested tours from overseas journalists, it was a hit.

The vibrant Chicago theater scene was the focal point of another IPW hit tour, which made stops at the Cadillac Palace, Second City, the Goodman Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.

A Segway tour of Chicago's scenic Lake Michigan and other sights followed.

## Rock-and-roll legends play

During an upbeat event held on Monday, entertainers were scheduled to perform after lunch. They included classic rock-and-roll legends from bands Journey, Boston, Steppenwolf, Lynyrd Skynyrd and Santana. Sponsored by Brand USA, the United States destination marketing organization, the event included news of Brand USA continuing with efforts in Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom and expanding into Australia, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Germany, Mexico and South Korea for a bigger share of travel visitation to America.

A Taste of America Networking Luncheon, in its second successful year, allowed plenty of networking and elbow-rubbing between tables featuring regional foods. It was a special highlight during IPW. Sponsors Visit Anchorage, Visit Florida, Louisiana Office of Tourism, Travel Oregon (which provided

regional wines), and Texas Tourism provided plenty of fun activities as guests mingled among the state's offerings of



**The U.S. Travel Association's 2014 IPW, held in April at McCormick Place in Chicago, drew 6,200 travel professionals from all over the world.**

Photo: Choose Chicago

other acts were also on the bill.

Chicago's iconic Museum of Science and Industry was the location of the closing night party, with a dazzling variety of musical acts, from a Rat-Pack

— Continued on next page



photo opportunities, games and food areas. Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders were on hand to pose for photos and sign autographs.

Chicago's John Hancock building's 94th and 95th floors were spectacular viewing sites and the setting of a media brunch, which featured an enormous selection of the city's best eating fare. Live jazz musicians performed for journalists as they sampled foods from some of Chicago's best restaurants.

#### **Travel PR pros face the press**

A reverse media marketplace, where publicists walked around and pitched stories to journalists, was required for the international journalists, who sat at tables in sections listed by country. United States journalists were given spaces at tables with name placards if they registered in advance.

U.S. travel media personnel staffed the press room to help the journalists with their schedules and answered questions. Computers and internet access and spaces for materials were provided for the journalists' comfort.

Brand USA Media Marketplace gave plenty of time for journalists and publicists to interact and talk about potential stories. That evening, there were a variety of parties and receptions around the city. One noted event was a Visit Phoenix media reception for selected invitees to attend the restaurant Tavernita, with culinary specialties, welcome cocktails and music from solo guitarist Ivan Martirena. Networking was intimate and hospitable with the hosts, who also included the Arizona Office of Tourism, Glendale CVB, Visit Mesa, Scottsdale CVB, Visit Tucson, Arizona Biltmore, Pointe Hilton Resorts, Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel, Sheraton Wild Horse Pass & Spa, Talking Stick Resort, and The Westin Phoenix Downtown. Many of the hosts kept in close friendly contact with the media guests, inviting them to visit their properties for possible stories.

San Francisco's party bash, with lavish entertainers, even offering a charming "drag queen" Hecklina, brought out the laughter and the dancing spirit. The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce hosted a special "Brooklyn Night" event, a lively party with plenty of Brooklyn hand-outs that was organized for invited clients and domestic and international

media. It was also a sneak peek of the Brooklyn Boulders-Chicago branch, for rock-climbing and adventure activities. In announcements, the press was told that Brooklyn's shoreline has bounced back from Hurricane Sandy, and that this borough could serve as a stand-alone visitor destination apart from Manhattan because of all of its attractions, restaurants, parks, sporting events and "cool neighborhoods."

#### **Travel journalists honored**

Travel writer awards were announced at a reception sponsored by CityPASS, presided over by IPW executives.

"If you don't write it, it didn't happen," said Dow. He urged journalists to stay excited about travel journalism because, he said "travel inspires and educates our minds. Through your writing, we readers are able to discover new places. With your help, we are able to discover the world and we appreciate it."

Winning one of the IPW Travel Writer Awards was a prestigious honor that also included a \$1,000 check.

"It's not really about the money. It's about getting exposure for quality narrative traveling writing," said Spud Hilton, Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* travel section. He was one of four winners this year, and won for his story, "A Cruise Up the Mississippi on a Paddle Wheeler," in the category of best

Spanish language monthly magazine. "It's a great honor for me. I'm a journalist for 50 years," Galvan said. "This is my third PowWow. It's a great event, and I have a lot of friends here."

#### **Regions, media join travel forces**

Don Welsh, Choose Chicago CEO, said Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's newfound attention to tourism has paid off and that Chicago has now opened 10 international tourism offices in China, Japan, Brazil, the U.K., and other destinations in the last several years. Interestingly, the delegation to IPW from China, a critical emerging travel market, set a record this year with 109 attendees.

Several states worked with Choose Chicago to line up post-IPW tours for delegates. These included the State of Illinois, the State of Michigan and others. Pure Michigan, the promotion arm of the state, took a group of journalists and other IPW delegates on a road trip through various towns and cities of Michigan, such as Ann Arbor, Flint and Frankenmuth, ending in Detroit for a look at Motor City, including a visit to Greenfield Village, the Motown Museum, and the Detroit Institute of Art.

The event also broke news regarding several upcoming media team-ups as well. A Brand USA press conference announced that the destination marketing organization had recently partnered

with *National Geographic* to create "The Great American Road Trip: Five Different Journeys," a campaign featuring renowned "Digital Nomad" Andrew Evans. The campaign will showcase Evans embarking on classic road trips across America for international audiences. Brand USA also partnered with Producer Peter Greenberg, known in the industry as "The Travel Detective." Greenberg is developing upcoming segments on the impact of international travel in 10 destinations: Austin; Portland, OR; Myrtle Beach; Chicago; Miami; Phoenix; Lansing, MI; Richmond, VA; Loudon County, VA; and Baton Rouge, LA.

The next IPW is set to be held May 30-June 3, 2015, in Orlando, FL, with the theme of "Bringing the World to America," followed by Miami in 2016; Washington, D.C., 2017; Denver, 2018; Las Vegas, 2019, and 10 cities vying for IPW for 2020. ●



**Several sightseeing tours of Chicago were arranged for travel pros, including visits to the city's vibrant downtown and theater district.**

Photo: Cesar Russ Photography

U.S. destination story.

There was a total of 200 entries in three categories. Peter Ellegard, a journalist from the United Kingdom, won first place in the category of writing the best story on last year's host city of Las Vegas. Long-time journalist Carlos Perez Galvan, from Mexico City, won first place for his travel trade article in a

# O'Dwyer's guide to: TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR

## 5W PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Ronn Torossian**, *President & CEO*

5W Public Relations helps some of the world's most admired travel and hospitality brands reach travelers, providing inspiration for their next adventure.

Whether it's introducing a destination to travelers, launching a new property or promotion, building engagement or developing strategies to dominate a market, our team of professionals creates sophisticated programs that capture attention for travel and hospitality brands in a crowded, distracted world.

We help our clients garner ongoing publicity, educating business and leisure travelers, media and travel influencers about destinations, properties and tourism programs. We've helped our clients create news that breaks them out of travel media, generating coverage that spans lifestyle, digital, business and more. Our clients have benefitted from experiential events that help them imagine themselves at a destination, and have reached passionate travelers through digital approaches that reach consumers as they're making decisions about where to go, where to stay and what to enjoy.

5W Public Relations' clients in the Travel & Hospitality division recognize our PR agency's ability to drive brands to the ultimate level within the consumer market. We understand the need for results and target a broad arena of media to yield consumer interest, brand recognition and overall, to establish authority of our travel brands on a local and global level. 5W Public Relations has quickly established itself as a leader in travel and hospitality PR, with a unique talent for developing integrated communications campaigns that get results.

Client experience includes Travel Alberta, The Wyndham Hotel Group, Gray Line NY, Marriott Hotels, Tourism Ministry of Morocco, NY Sightseeing, The

Loews Regency, Tzell Travel/Travel Leaders Group, Luna Park at Coney Island, Fareportal, EL AL Airlines, Oyster Hotel Reviews, Buckingham Hotel, 1-800-CHEAPSEATS, Roomer.com, Cheap-O-Air, The Israel Ministry of Tourism, and The Ice Rink at Rockefeller Center.

## BENDEL COMMUNICATIONS INTERNATIONAL

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**Peggy Bendel**, *President*  
**Sue Lomenzo**, *Strategic Communications/Social Marketing*  
**Leora Lanz**, *Hospitality Marketing*  
**Bill Baker**, *Destination Branding*

Travel is our passion, and among our team, we've covered the globe — well, not Antarctica (yet)! Headed by HSMIA Lifetime Achievement public relations award-winner Peggy Bendel, we're a consortium of senior travel industry professionals with more than a century's real world experience, representing almost every facet of the travel industry, including countries, regions, cities, NGOs, hotels, trade shows, cruise lines and tour operators.

We've created award-winning solutions to marketing challenges, led teams of top marketers, handled crises of startling proportions, escorted press trips, planned special events and promotions, solved thorny problems, spoken at conferences and trade shows around the world, written articles and books — and had an exciting and fulfilling time doing so.

We also enjoy working in partnership with other firms to tackle special assignments that might disrupt ongoing client services, from crisis communications to special events.

Public speaking is a forte, as well: among us, we have served as keynote speakers, workshop leaders and panelists on the topics

of public relations, marketing, social media, destination branding, strategic communications, media training and organizational structure at conferences around the world, most recently in Canada, Norway, Madeira, Uganda and the US.

Current tourism clients include Peter Sommer Travels (petersommer.com), offering historic and culinary gulet sailing and land tours of coastal Turkey, Greece and Sicily; Montana-based Ecology Project International (ecologyproject.org), pairing US high school students with their peers in Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to enhance and restore wildlife and habitat; the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway, one of the most remarkable destinations in the country; TerraVelo Tours (terravelotours.com), the only company to offer luxury cycling combined with mobile luxury camping; and Villa le Barone, 28-room 4-star hotel in the beautiful countryside of Chianti, Italy. Peggy sits on the Boards of the Destination and Travel Foundation, the Association of Travel Marketing Executives, and the Society of American Travel Writers (satw.org). She is the author of *It's a Crisis! NOW What? A Step-By-Step Crisis Communications Handbook for the Global Hospitality Industry*.

## BLAZE

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**Matt Kovacs**, *President*

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 or reclaim 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 also offers full public affairs capabilities through its parent company DAVIES.

Clients include: AmaWaterways, Anaheim Marriott, Citadel Outlets, Claremont Hotel, Club & Spa, Los Angeles Airport Marriott, Long Beach Renaissance Hotel, Manhattan Beach Marriott, Marina del Rey Marriott, Monterey Marriott, TAITRA, and Toro Ride.

## BPCM

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**Vanessa Von Bismarck**, *Partner*  
**Carrie Phillips**, *Partner*  
**Sarah Pallack**, *Lifestyle Department Supervisor*

BPCM is a fully integrated agency with offices in New York, Los Angeles and London that specializes in brand building and communications for luxury travel, tourism, and global hospitality companies. Founded by Carrie Ellen Phillips and Vanessa von Bismarck in 1999, BPCM began with a focus on fashion and has since proven the ability to build and grow brands to become leaders across all luxury markets.

We believe in a comprehensive style and in addition to global media coverage some of our greatest successes have been in partnership development, event planning and influencer engagement. BPCM's hallmark is developing programming that elevates brand awareness on a global scale, taking hospitality brands beyond travel and into the lifestyle sphere.

Current clients include: The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts, Mustique, Monte-Carlo SBM, and Langham Place, Fifth Avenue. Past clients and consultation projects include: Marrakech International Film Festival, Le Meridien Hotels, Moroccan National Tourist Office, Krug Champagne, Volkswagen, and more.



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**Tom Coyne, CEO**  
**Rich Lukis, President**  
**John Gogarty, Executive Vice President**  
**Jennifer Kamienski, Senior Vice President**  
**Lauren Mackiel Gory, 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 South African Tourism, Disney Parks & Resorts, Adventures by Disney, Disney Cruise Lines, Heathrow Airport, TripAdvisor, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Outrigger Resorts and Hard Rock International. 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.

## DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL (DCI)

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**Andrew Levine, President/Chief Creative Officer**  
**Karyl Leigh Barnes, Executive 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. Our Tourism Practice's digital/social media team designs digital strategy and tactical programs for DMOs. DCI's current client roster includes some of the most dynamic destination brands in the travel space including such states as California and North Carolina; cities such as Louisville, Park City, and Toronto; and international destinations including Australia, Dubai, Chile, Namibia and Scotland; 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.

## DQMPR

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**Yves Gentil, President**

Headquartered in New York City with a satellite office in Miami, DQMPR is an award-winning, multi-lingual boutique travel and lifestyle public relations agency. DQMPR leverages its extensive network to organize coast-to-coast targeted media campaigns on behalf of clients, from morning television to print and online coverage. Clients rely on the agency's industry experience, compelling storytelling and relationships in the execution of media events, press trips and trade shows. In addition to media relations, DQMPR's trade division works with the travel trade and cruise industries on behalf of clients. DQMPR's excellence in public relations has been recognized by Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International with 12 Gold Adrian Awards as well as the Society of American Travel Writers with two gold and one silver award for work with Extraordinary Journeys Africa, Finnair and Tourism Quebec. The agency was hon-



Coyne PR and South African Tourism welcomed Blair Underwood and Alfre Woodard, actors and co-founders of Artists for a New South Africa (ANSA), to accept South African Tourism's "Friend of South Africa Award" on behalf of ANSA at the fifth annual Ubuntu Awards at Gotham Hall in New York. (Photo by Diane Bondareff/Invision for South African Tourism)

ored with HSMIA's Platinum award for its work with the "Today Show" and an Emmy nomination for bringing WNYW Fox 5's "Toni On!" to Quebec for segments in Mount Tremblant and Quebec City during its 400th anniversary.

Current clients include the Croatian National Tourist Board, CroisiEurope, Extraordinary Journeys Africa, Finnair, Geringer Global Travel, Perillo Tours, Tourism New Zealand, Tourism Quebec and Zicasso Handcrafted Travel.



DQMPR's (L to R) Erin Levi, Yves Gentil and Julia Levi at the HSMIA awards in January 2013, where they received six Gold Adrian Awards.



Members of the Fahlgren Mortine Team at the PRSA Tourism Section conference in June.

## EVINS COMMUNICATIONS

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**Mathew L. Evins**, Chairman  
**Louise R. Evins**, CEO  
**Elyse Heckman**, Vice President /  
Director of Travel & Hospitality  
**David Harrison**, Director, Digital  
& Social Integration

We help to define a brand's essence and create emotive experiences that bring brands to life.

We utilize brand experiences to

catalyze brand passion and engagement.

We cultivate and nurture brand engagement to foster brand advocacy and storytelling.

We optimize brand mind-share through brand advocacy and storytelling.

We transform brand mind-share into brand market-share.

EVINS is the leading branding, marketing, communications and public relations firm in the luxury and prestige sectors, with specialist expertise in travel and hospitality. Over nearly thirty years, we have made an invaluable contribution to the growth and development of numerous industry icons, including American Express Centurion/Platinum, DEPARTURES Magazine, Exclusive

Resorts, Groupe Floirat, Hotels & Resorts of Halekulani, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Rosewood Hotel & Resorts, The Lanesborough and Wheels Up, amongst many others. Our client work has garnered numerous awards and accolades, and we are consistently recognized for excellence in creativity, strategies and tactics.

Mathew Evins, the firm's Chairman, has lectured on luxury and hospitality at the Cornell Hotel School and NYU's Graduate School of Business, and has contributed to numerous industry publications and business media. Questex Hospitality + Travel appointed Mr. Evins to serve on the Boards of the International Hotel Investment Forum Berlin (IHIF), the leading international meeting place for the hotel investment community; Luxury Travel Exchange International (LTX), the leading event for today's travel professional focused on luxury and premium niche markets, and of ULTRA Luxury Exchange (ULTRA), an invitation-only conference engaging the world's elite travel professionals.

## FAHLGREN MORTINE

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**Neil Mortine**, President and CEO  
**Marty McDonald**, SVP, Tourism Practice Leader

Fahlgren Mortine works with clients in 29 states and is a top 30 independent firm nationally. The agency has been recognized with dozens of national PR and tourism awards, including Silver and Bronze Anvils from PRSA and a Mercury Award from the U.S. Travel Association. In 2013, Fahlgren Mortine was recognized with a PRSA Bronze Anvil for media relations for the Office of TourismOhio, and a *Travel + Leisure Magazine* SMITTY Award for work on behalf of Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine also has locations in West Virginia, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky and South Carolina. Travel industry client experience includes Office of TourismOhio; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; Experience Columbus; Hyatt Regency; Hilton; North Dakota

Department of Commerce/Tourism; Hocking Hills Tourism Association; and many other destinations, regions, festivals, hospitality properties and more.

## FINN PARTNERS TRAVEL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**Gail L. Moaney**, Director  
and Managing Partner, Travel /  
Lifestyle Group  
**Morris Silver**, Managing Partner  
**Virginia M. Sheridan**, Managing Partner

The Finn Partners Travel / Lifestyle Group is one of the largest travel practices in the public relations industry. Our team is unrivaled for the creativity, execution and commitment we bring to our clients. Our capabilities and experience has been proven by our successful representation of some of the world's top travel brands.

We have consistently gained and retained clients through our measurable bottom-line results and by comprehending their unique histories, preserving and bolstering their reputations and understanding their vision for the future.

Our commitment to our clients is to be an extension of their brands — a true partner in every way. When that commitment is combined with unsurpassed skill and experience in all the critical areas of travel and lifestyle marketing, we deliver results that provide an elevated, long term brand life, a stronger share of mind and an increased share of market.

Our services include strategic public relations planning and execution, global consumer / travel and trade media relations, crisis communication, reputation management, brand development, social and digital applications, partnership alliances, promotions and special events.

With a staff of over 50 highly skilled professionals, we represent airlines, cruise lines, domestic and international destinations, hotels, resorts, rail companies, real estate developers, travel associations and travel service providers.

The greatest measure of our



Finn Partners Travel/Lifestyle Group secured a partnership between Manhattan's elite members-only Core Club and their client, the Jamaica Tourist Board, to host a private "Journey to Jamaica" bash in June 2014. Festivities included Grammy-winning Jamaican recording artist Shaggy (pictured here) entertaining the audience.

Photo by: Zoe Hiigli Studio



success is the satisfaction of our clients, the longevity of our client relationships, and the recognition we've received from industry influencers and clients alike for delivering high-quality, substantive work.

## FRENCH/WEST/ VAUGHAN

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**Rick French**, Chairman & CEO  
**David Gwyn**, President / Principal  
**Natalie Best**, Executive Vice President / Director of Client Services / 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 89 research, public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital marketing experts among its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Dallas, Los Angeles and Tampa offices.

FWV's dedicated travel and tourism practice, ranked as the #12 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, Kure 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 portfolio of travel and tourism clients, FWV works with many of the world's leading companies and brands, including international utility provider ABB, Saft Batteries, Wrangler, Justin Brands, Melitta

Coffee, Moe's Southwest Grill restaurants, the International Gemological Institute (IGI) and Hood River Distillers. 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, and consumer lifestyle clients. The agency also has established expertise working with companies with an environmental and socially responsible focus.

Founded in 1996, the agency is known for its successful launches, relaunches and highly creative and results-driven campaigns. Graham & Associates has a successful track record with hall-mark and emerging companies and properties, including Cavallo Point, Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort, Post Ranch Inn, El Capitan Canyon, Evergreen Lodge, Wyndham Worldwide, and more.

Graham is recognized in the industry with more than 80 top national PR awards 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.

## JGAPEPPERCOMM

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**Ed Moed**, Managing Partner & Co-Founder



**The Dude Ranchers' Association (DRA), a non-profit representing 95 dude ranches across North America, engaged FWV to increase awareness of dude ranches and encourage consideration of the Western U.S. as a vacation option through an earned media campaign.**

**Janine Gordon**, President  
**Maggie O'Neill**, Partner & Managing Director

JGApeppercomm is the luxury and lifestyle specialty team within Peppercomm, an award-winning, independently owned 19-year-old integrated marketing communications agency headquartered in New York, with offices in San Francisco and London.

Our approach marries fully integrated marketing strategy with high-touch service and depth of experience in the travel, tourism, hospitality and luxury lifestyle categories. With clients ranging from developers of choice real estate to world-class hotels, four-star destination resorts and more, our team of experts has the know-how and passion to build and nurture brands. We've partnered multi-million dollar residential properties with the jets that get you

there, educated UHNWI regarding the finer points of travel and counseled some of the world's leading financial and consulting groups on the relationship among lifestyle, leisure and investment.

The key to success, we believe, is to understand premium brand values. We craft compelling stories based upon a thorough appreciation of your brand's attributes. Our approach is focused on "outside-in" thinking: strategy and execution that let clients envision — and realize — the potential of connecting with their target audiences more effectively and more meaningfully than ever before.

We listen to our clients' needs and to those of their stakeholders. By putting ourselves at the table with your customers, we are able to fully engage and build powerful connections with them — where they live, work, play, shop and

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**K. Sutherland PR, from left to right: Stephanie Fasi, Kerry Sutherland, Jill O'Driscoll and Sarah Hinckley.**

## JGA PEPPERCOMM

— Continued from page 25

share. To insure optimum results, we repeat these high-impact tactics, refining, as needed.

This approach drives the strategy for all our integrated marketing services, including PR/social media, branding, experiential/events, crisis communications, celebrity endorsements, co-branding/strategic alliances, licensing, digital/creative services and more. At JGA/Peppercomm, we consistently deliver exceptional, business-building results for the brands we serve.

To learn more, please visit us at [www.peppercomm.com](http://www.peppercomm.com), drop us a line at [jgordon@peppercomm.com](mailto:jgordon@peppercomm.com) or call President Janine Gordon, at 212/931-6185.

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A bi-coastal force with offices in New York and California, and a presence in Arizona, J Public Relations (JPR), has become one of the most admired companies in the competitive travel, hospitality and luxury lifestyle PR industry. The agency continues to develop and manage highly successful media

relations, social media and digital campaigns, and has elevated the art of brand positioning and messaging through development of creative programs and packages for hospitality clients and global hotel brands. The agency's client roster includes many of the world's most highly esteemed hospitality brands, hotels, restaurants, spas and luxury lifestyle brands. The agency has grown more than 250 percent in the past three years, ranking among *O'Dwyer's* top 100 fastest growing agencies in the U.S. JPR has also earned a spot on the *Inc.* 5000 list of fastest growing private companies, placing 12th in the nation for fastest growing private companies in travel and hospitality.

JPR achieves results designed to enhance each client's brand and directly impact revenue. Areas of expertise include media relations, digital and social media strategy and management, media events and tours, brand launches, property openings and repositioning campaigns. True to the company motto "don't let the pink fool you," JPR is a powerhouse of savvy specialists, experienced at launching brands and keeping them relevant through consistent innovation, creativity and enthusiasm.

## K. SUTHERLAND PUBLIC RELATIONS

California • Nevada  
[KSutherlandPR.com](http://KSutherlandPR.com)  
949/328-4895

K. Sutherland PR is a boutique public relations agency that specializes in the travel and tourism industry. The resorts, destinations,

and travel brands the agency represents have been featured in targeted media on a local, regional, national and even international level with placements in outlets such as Huffington Post, Yahoo!, CNN, *Wall Street Journal*, *Men's Journal* and many more.

From international luxury resorts, boutique hotels, world cruise lines, adventure destinations, spas, travel accessories, lifestyle 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's team is multilingual and works with travel clients from around the world. Learn more at [KSutherlandPR.com](http://KSutherlandPR.com).

## KTCPR

77 N. Centre Ave., Suite 215  
Rockville Centre, NY 11570  
516/594-4100  
[www.KTCpr.com](http://www.KTCpr.com)  
[info@KTCpr.com](mailto:info@KTCpr.com)

**Richard S. Kahn, President**  
**Theresa M. Oakes, Senior Accounts Supervisor**  
**Josh Kahn, Senior Accounts Supervisor**

KTCpr, formerly known as Kahn Travel Communications, is a 23-year-old boutique public relations, marketing and publishing agency created by Richard S. Kahn, former editor-in-chief and associate publisher of *Travel Agent* magazine. KTCpr has developed its practice around the niche travel and tourism markets with clients in the public and private sectors.

Kahn, having spent 22 years as a reporter, writer and editor for newspapers and magazines, has a strong understanding and connection to the media — the end game for any public relations agency. Kahn was the 2014 recipient of the HSMAL Winthrop W. Grice Lifetime Achievement Award for public relations excellence.

KTCpr was launched with a purpose — to be responsive to the media and act as a "go to" resource. With that mantra at the forefront, the company has sustained steady growth based on achieving results thanks to Kahn and his staff's relationships with the media. KTCpr's expertise covers media relations, the creation of promotions (print,

radio and Internet), the launch of new hotels and resorts, marketing consultation, crisis communication, social media campaigns, speech writing and publishing services.

KTCpr's client roster runs the gamut of the diverse niches in the travel and tourism industries and includes: Brite Spokes by Kuoni, Apple Vacations, CheapCaribbean.com, Travel Impressions, Fareportal, the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW), April Travel Protection, the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, Spice Island Beach Resort in Grenada, Mango Bay Hotel Group in Barbados, Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort in Tobago, Morritt's Resort in the Cayman Islands, Victoria Cruises in China, Aranui Cruises in the South Pacific, Pacific Delight Tours, St. Maarten Tourist Bureau and Interval International.

Key placements over the years have been TV exposure on "Today," "The Early Show" and local New York news stations as well as feature print coverage in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *New York Newsday*, *The Boston Globe*, *Miami Herald*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Black Enterprise* and many more in addition to all the major travel trade publications. Internet coverage has been prominent as well including *Frommers.com* and the *Huffington Post*.

## LANE

905 SW 16th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97205  
503/221-0480  
[www.lanepr.com](http://www.lanepr.com)

500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2720  
New York, NY 10110

**Wendy Lane Stevens, President**

LANE delivers results that build business for clients. Drawing on more than 20 years of experience in the travel and tourism industry, we create integrated public relations strategies that connect with key audiences and stakeholders across all communication channels. We track trends, monitor consumer sentiments, and place stories where key audiences seek information: online, in print or over the airwaves. We reach our clients' audi-

— Continued on page 28





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Lots of horsing around on this press trip! Showing off the best of Montana at The Resort at Paws Up, Jessica Foreman (3rd from right) from LDPR takes the media riding through Big Sky country, as part of a recent "glamping" (i.e. "glamorous camping") trip.

## LANE

Continued from page 26

ences wherever they reside, garnering proven results in markets that matter most.

Whether elevating a property or a destination, we use fresh ideas and creative energy to educate, inform and inspire people to action. Our award-winning campaigns have produced measurable results for clients such as Travel Oregon, Brasada Ranch Resort, Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, Eagle Crest Resort, Evergreen Wings & Waves Waterpark, Sokol Blosser Winery, Wines from Spain, The Heathman Hotel Group and Travel Portland.

## LAURA DAVIDSON PUBLIC RELATIONS

72 Madison Ave., 8th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
212/696-0660  
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Facebook.com/lauradavidsonpr  
www.twitter.com/ldpr

**Laura Davidson**, President  
**Leslie Cohen**, Executive Vice President  
**Meghna Patel**, Senior Vice President

For over 20 years LDPR has guided some of the world's most prestigious travel brands through an evolving media landscape with creativity, profes-

sionalism and enthusiasm. We are a highly driven and innovative travel/lifestyle agency with a global roster of clients from destinations and tour companies to some of the world's leading hotels and resorts. Our integrated approach to our clients' communications programs delivers the right mix of traditional media outreach, strategic partnerships and strong digital and social media solutions designed to enhance every program.

LDPR prides itself on a culture defined by our collaborative and strategic approach to working with clients, media and our staff, leading to successful partnerships with measurable results.

Our client roster includes Abercrombie & Kent, Rocco Forte Hotels, VisitScotland; Sydney/Destination New South Wales, Australia; Bal Harbour, Florida; Kittittian Hill, St. Kitts; Eden Rock, St. Barths; Curtain Bluff, Antigua; Waterfall Resorts, Alaska; The Resort at Paws Up, Montana; The Thinking Traveller luxury villas in Italy and Greece; Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento, Italy; Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas; Residence Inn by Marriott; Mayflower Renaissance, Washington DC; The Ocean House, Watch Hill, Rhode Island; The Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott Grande Lakes Orlando; Marriott Marquis Washington, DC and Millennium Hotels & Resorts, North America, among others.



LH&A agency client Wild Dunes Resort partnered with James Beard award-winning cookbook authors and TV personalities, The Lee Brothers, to share an unforgettable, authentic Southern experience for meetings and groups. With package choices ranging from conversational cooking classes to a traditional Lowcountry oyster roast to custom dinners, groups sip, savor and shuck their way through Charleston led by the Lowcountry's culinary pioneers — Ted and Matt Lee.

## LOU HAMMOND & ASSOCIATES

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www.facebook.com/louhammondpr  
www.pinterest.com/louhammondpr

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

Marking three decades of service this year, Lou Hammond & Associates (LH&A) has long set the gold standard as the recognized leader in travel and hospitality public relations. The company's passion, as well as an unwavering commitment to quality, is driven by its legendary founder and chairman, Lou Hammond, who is regarded as one of the most well-known and enthusiastic advocates in the industry.

LH&A is renowned as an innovator in the field, as evidenced by its award-winning work. In fact, the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIA) has honored the agency with more of its

prestigious Adrian Awards over the past 16 years than any other entrant.

Last year the agency launched its boutique digital firm, Hammond Digital+, which is led by an experienced specialist. The agency's latest enterprise offers custom social media and digital marketing services that capture the media's attention, drive consumer engagement, and build long-lasting following for clients. Backed by the company's nearly 30 years of quality PR service, HD+ combines traditional and new strategies to develop attention-grabbing campaigns across all platforms.

Although LH&A celebrates its past, most brilliantly through the longevity of its client relationships, the past year marked exciting changes for the agency that signals its continued vitality. This March, LH&A left its iconic townhouse on East 51st Street for more spacious accommodations on Third Avenue in Midtown East. The agency also embarked on a rebranding campaign in late 2013, resulting in a revamped website and a redesigned logo that honors the agency's past as it strides boldly into the future. LH&A's offices in Charleston, SC, and Miami, FL, also continue to see marked growth.

Over the past year, the agency welcomed as partners two cruise



lines (Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, including the launch of Regent's new ship Seven Seas Explorer in 2016) and one rail service (Premier Rail Collection); one hotel group (Groupe Lucien Barrière, France) and five resorts (Elbow Beach, Bermuda; Pink Sands, Bahamas; St. Regis Deer Valley, Utah; JW Marriott Guanacaste, Costa Rica; and The Inn at Dos Brisas, Texas); three destinations (Fort Worth; Le Massif de Charlevoix, Quebec; and Paducah, Kentucky); and one home-exchange travel club (3RD HOME).

## MAXWELL PR + ENGAGEMENT

3934 SW Corbett Ave.  
Portland, OR 97239  
503/231-3086  
www.maxwellpr.com

47 Maple St.  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802/338-2556

**Jennifer Maxwell-Muir**, *Founder and Principal*  
**Vicky Hastings**, *Managing Director, Studio West*  
**Chrystie Heimert**, *Managing Director, Studio East*  
**Erika Simms**, *Vice President*

An independently owned public relations and consumer engagement agency, Maxwell specializes in media and blogger relations, social media engagement, content marketing, consumer promotions and paid media. We work with leading consumer brands, premier tourism destinations and attractions, and businesses advancing new models that leave the world a better place.

The Maxwell team members are experts in: Generating news and conversation; Packaging destinations and experiences; Building community and relationships; Prompting consumer engagement and strengthening loyalty; Helping destinations speak louder, break through the clutter and integrate across channels to increase overnight stays.

Our 15 years of award-winning travel and tourism client experience includes Travel Oregon; McMenamins Pubs, Breweries and Historic Hotels; Argyle Winery; Inn at the 5th; Travel Astoria-Warrenton; Tourism Walla Walla; Portland Walking Tours; Oregon Garden; Woodland Park Zoo;

Willamette Valley Visitors Association; and Oregon Coast Visitors Association.

## MIDDLETON & GENDRON

845 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
212/980-9060  
www.mg-pr.com

**Yvonne Middleton**, *Chairman*

Middleton & Gendron represents best-in-class travel, hospitality and lifestyle brands. Over three decades, the agency has launched iconic hospitality brands and directed groundbreaking PR and social media campaigns. It has put an airline client's name on a major fireworks display at the Brooklyn Bridge, and persuaded a sitting U.S. president to play sax at a casino's grand opening.

M&G's award-winning legacy business provides comprehensive, customized public relations services from strategy through execution and is supported by the agency's digital and production practice.

The agency continues to prove that the most effective PR programs integrate traditional media with online and social networking. In recent months, M&G teams have applied that approach to successful campaigns ranging from the re-launches of Jade Bar at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain and The Umstead Spa in Cary, N.C. to the 100th anniversary of Cape Cod's Chatham Bars Inn.

M&G enjoys great bench depth while also cultivating up and comers among its talented staff. Clients are guaranteed a team that thinks creatively, acts nimbly, and pursues their goals with absolute purpose.

## MISSY FARREN & ASSOCIATES (MFA)

33 E. 33rd Street, Suite 905  
New York, NY 10016  
212/528-1691  
www.mfaltld.com

**Missy Farren**, *Founder & CEO*  
**Agatha Capacchione**, *Vice President*  
**Samantha Lacher**, *Director, Travel, Culture & Design*

MFA is a mid-sized agency offering a powerful combination of customer assistance, attention to detail and dynamic, meaningful coverage and social media results. Our passion for travel drives pro-



Cape Cod's beloved Chatham Bars Inn celebrates 100 years with the help of Middleton & Gendron.

fessional success and relationships in various niches, including: culinary, adventure, ski/snow, family, romance, arts/culture, Caribbean, wellness/ spa, culture, wine/spirits and fitness/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: The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg; Aspen Ski Co.; Auden Bar & Bistro; Cayman Airways; Cayman Cookout; The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism; Charlie Bird Restaurant (NYC); The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Colorado Ski Country; Disneyland; Disneyland Food & Beverage; Golden Horseshoe Golf Club; Intrawest; Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month; Limelight Hotel; The Little Nell; The Lodge at Woodloch; The Mark Anthony Group; Michelin Food & Travel; Mission Hill Family Estate; Montagna Restaurant; National Trust for Historic Preservation; 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.

## MMGY GLOBAL

245 Fifth Ave., Ste. 902  
New York, NY 10016  
212/219-7560  
www.mmggyglobal.com

**Clayton Reid**, *President & CEO*  
**Julie Freeman**, *EVP & Managing Director, PR*  
**David Perez**, *Vice President, PR*

At MMGY Global, "We Inspire People To Go Places."

As the leading integrated marketing communications firm specializing in the travel, hospitality, lifestyle and entertainment industries for more than 30 years, our mission is to help travel companies grow revenue by motivating their customers. With offices in New York City, Kansas City, Orlando, Ft. Myers and Denver, and an international partner network, Consul, we serve many of the world's premier travel and tourism brands.

Our public relations team has a track record of developing and implementing award-winning, strategic campaigns that are rooted in research and insights. We are master storytellers and content creators. Through integrated traditional and social media programs, we reach our audiences where they live, work and play.

We offer personalized, senior level service with the resources of the larger agency in traditional and social consumer and trade media

Continued on page 30



**Karen Murphy, Chairman and CEO, and Brett O'Brien, Managing Director, of Murphy O'Brien Public Relations.**

## MMGY GLOBAL

Continued from page 29

relations, corporate and brand positioning, partnership marketing, promotions, event marketing, and crisis communications. MMGY is the author of the widely acclaimed Portrait of American Travelers annual research study.

Our PR clients include cities and states, international destinations, hospitality brands, airlines, iconic attractions, travel technology and services and industry associations.

Other MMGY Global areas of expertise include research and insights, strategic communications planning and implementation, traditional and social media buying, digital/social media strategy, website development and management, e-CRM, and travel industry relations.

## MURPHY O'BRIEN PUBLIC RELATIONS

11444 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 600  
Los Angeles, CA 90064  
310/453-2539  
www.murphyobrien.com

Twenty-five years ago, Karen Murphy O'Brien and Brett O'Brien launched Murphy O'Brien Public Relations out of a Century City apartment with a single client — the Sunset Marquis Hotel and Villas.

Today, in addition to its impressive lifestyle and real estate clients, Murphy O'Brien continues its reign as a leader in travel PR, representing such luxury brands as The Peninsula Hotels, Shutters on the Beach, Esperanza, and Auberge Resorts, among others, and tourism boards such as Nicaragua Tourism Board. Murphy O'Brien's campaigns have resulted in story placements in national outlets such as "Today Show," CNN, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Food*



**Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations, AOR for Westin Hotels & Resorts, "running" a wellness press trip with resident running concierge Chris Heusler for the launch of Punta Cana, Dominican Republic.**

and *Wine* and *Vogue*, to name a few, as well as prestigious awards including Hermes Creative Awards, *PRWeek* Awards, HSMIA Adrian Awards, and more.

In addition to creating award-winning campaigns that move the needle for their clients, Murphy O'Brien is consistently ranked as one of the 10 Best Places To Work by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

## MWW

Sunset Media Center  
6255 W. Sunset Boulevard  
Los Angeles, CA 90028  
213/405-3788  
jfoley@mww.com  
www.mww.com

**Jamie Foley, Vice President**

MWW's Travel & Tourism practice can take you anywhere you want to go. From hotels and destination marketing to airlines and travel publishers, we've worked with both established and emerging brands within the travel industry. Through our strategic, award-winning campaigns, we connect these brands to consumers and key stakeholders alike.

Our team is made up of the top hospitality industry strategists, who rely on years of deep-rooted experience in the space to create ownable campaigns and positioning programs that elevate brand awareness and increase traffic and bookings. We have proprietary research and analysis on the travel and tourism industry, which we combine with the power of the social media landscape to develop digital strategies that engage and resonate with travelers.

Our recent work for Stronger

Than the Storm, created to drive visitor traffic to the Jersey Shore after Hurricane Sandy, has been recognized with top industry awards, including "PR Campaign of the Year" at the 2014 SABRE Awards, a PRSA Silver Anvil, and multiple American Business Awards. MWW was also selected as 2013 "PR Agency of the Year," by the International Business Awards, 2013 "Midsize Agency of the Year" by the Bulldog Stars of PR Awards as well as 2014 "Best Places to Work in New Jersey" by *NJBiz* and 2013 "Top Places to Work in PR" by *PR News*.

## NANCY J. FRIEDMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS, INC.

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mail@njfpr.com  
www.njfpr.com

2014 brought many firsts to NJFPR! The travel, hospitality and lifestyle PR firm entered its 27th year with the opening of an LA outpost. In addition to launching the Santa Monica office, the agency will debut Hotel Week LA™, which it pioneered three years ago in New York. To date, Hotel Week NYC™ has resulted in nearly 200 million impressions and generated over \$400,000 in incremental revenue for participating hotels. The agency will follow Hotel Week NYC and LA with Miami, Chicago and Washington, DC.

NJFPR also added a social media practice led by strategist Kristin Heise. The division consults



**MMGY Global is helping Fairfield Inn & Suites connect with Millennials by launching "Every Day Connect." The PR and social media campaign offers advice on mentorship and networking as ways to ignite and maintain momentum throughout their careers. Pictured here are the campaign's ambassadors, all of whom are featured in this year's *Forbes* 30 Under 30 list.**



clients on best practices and assists with creating compelling online and social media initiatives in tandem with the agency's comprehensive PR offerings.

Clients include: 66 Rockwell, New York; Apple Core Hotels, New York; Battery Maritime Building, New York; Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Atlantic City; Condado Vanderbilt, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Cooperstown, New York; Copamarina Beach Resort & Spa, Guanica, Puerto Rico; Dermot Real Estate, New York; Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, NY; Fenimore Art Museum, Cooperstown, NY; Gansevoort Park Avenue NYC; Gansevoort Turks + Caicos; Gemma at The Bowery Hotel, New York; Hotel El Convento, San Juan, Puerto Rico; Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Casino & Spa; Marmara Park Avenue, New York; Parker & Quinn, New York; Pier A Harbor House, New York; Refinery Hotel, NYC; Rendezvous, St. Lucia; Riff Hotels, New York; Sea Island, Georgia; Sheraton Hotels & Resorts; SIXTY SoHo, New York; Spring Creek Ranch, Jackson Hole, WY; St. Petersburg/Clearwater, Florida; The Body Holiday, St. Lucia; The Bowery Hotel, New York; The Elysian Spa & Health Club, Chicago; The Jade, NYC; The Jane, New York; The Ludlow, New York; The Maritime Hotel, New York; The Marlton, NYC; The New York Palace, New York; The Pod 39 Hotel, New York; The Pod Hotel, New York; The Waldorf Astoria Chicago; The Water Club - A Signature Hotel by Borgata; and Westin Hotels & Resorts.

## OGILVY PUBLIC RELATIONS

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New York, NY 10036  
212/880-5345  
mitch.markson@ogilvy.com

**Mitch Markson, President,**  
Global Brand 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, and digital and traditional media relations. Ogilvy PR has successfully elevat-

ed brands across a variety of travel industry categories including hospitality, tour, cruise, airline, transportation, technology and destinations.

Our combination of research-based strategy, breakthrough creativity, and flawless execution delivers 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 Tourism Fiji, Tourism New South Wales, Hilton Hotels, Tourism Australia, PROEXPORT Colombia, Brazil, Brand USA, Guinness Storehouse and British Airways.

## PADILLACRT

320 West 13th Street, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10014  
212/229-0500  
www.padillacrt.com

**Greg Tarmin, SVP and Managing Director,** New York

**Patrice Tanaka, Chief Counselor and Creative Strategist**  
**Marcy Walsh, Vice President**

PadillaCRT is one of the top 15 independent public relations and marketing firms in the country and one of the largest employee-owned firms in the world. With nearly 200 employees in Minneapolis; New York; Los Angeles; Richmond, Va; Washington, D.C.; and Norfolk, Va., PadillaCRT helps national and regional clients articulate and achieve their purpose as a powerful way to build brands, protect reputations and reach business goals.

PadillaCRT's travel and tourism experience includes work for the Greater Houston Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Air New Zealand, Cambria Suites (Choice Hotels International), Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport, the Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership Jefferson Lines, Meet Minneapolis, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, State of Connecticut Tourism, South African Tourism and Coasts Cruises.

## QUINN

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Facebook: @WeAreQuinn  
LinkedIn: @Quinn PR  
Twitter: @QuinnPR\_

407 Lincoln Road, 10H



Quinn's work promoting the sustainability efforts of the Waldorf Astoria New York took home this year's HSMIAI Adrian Best of Show award for top travel PR program of the year, worldwide.

Miami Beach, FL 33139  
786/600-3954

**Florence Quinn, President**  
**John Frazier, Executive Vice President, Head of Travel Group**  
**Morgan Painvin, Senior VP**  
**Jim Lee, Senior VP, Miami**

Quinn is a lifestyle public relations agency with global impact. Our disciplined, strategic approach to PR has built some of the largest audiences in the world.

We develop creative strategies that build the reputations, tell the stories, and grow the businesses of lifestyle brands around the world. With offices in New York and Miami and affiliates worldwide, we serve clients in Travel, Real Estate, Spa, Experiences and Retail as well as Food, Wine & Spirits.

We work collaboratively to develop narrative-based ideation, resulting in strategies that capture the attention of today's sophisticated consumer. We integrate multiple communication channels with partnerships, events and ideation to produce work that is highly effective — and measurable. Our innovative

initiatives, which are recognized globally, have resulted in a number of industry "firsts."

We believe there is magic to be found at the intersection of creative thinking and value-driven strategies. Many of the world's most recognized brands believe as well. That's why companies like the Waldorf Astoria, Guerlain Spa, Etihad Airways, and The Ritz Carlton Residences choose Quinn.

## RBB PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Christine Barney, CEO**  
**Lisa Ross, President & Travel Practice Leader**  
**Tina Elmowitz, EVP**  
**John Quinn, EVP**

rbb is a marketing communications firm and four-time U.S. Agency of the Year that has

— Continued on page 32



Since 2007, rbb Public Relations has worked with AMResorts, a leading brand marketing and sales company, on award-winning PR campaigns for its six luxury resort brands. Recent work includes a partnership with celebrity athlete Rafael Nadal (pictured at Secrets Aura Cozumel).



Cars driving on the ocean? It's the best way to get media attention for a new ship launch in cruise-ship-saturated Miami. A partnership with Fiat to leverage a fleet of Fiat 500 Personal Watercraft helped Redpoint score the cover of the *Miami Herald*, plus WSJ, AP, and more for client MSC Cruises.

## RBB PUBLIC RELATIONS

— Continued from page 31

earned a reputation for continually delivering results to its clients through award-winning campaigns. The agency's hospitality portfolio has included national and international brands across all travel segments ranging from hotel chains, boutique resorts and destinations to airlines, cruise lines and online travel agencies.

rbb is recognized for creating programs that blend creativity with traditional and social media campaigns, marketing activations and affinity partnerships to boost brand awareness, drive bookings and support clients' business goals.

In 2014, rbb was awarded five HSMIAI Adrian Awards, including two Platinum awards, for its work with Homewood Suites by Hilton, Home2 Suites by Hilton, and AMResorts and its six luxury resort brands. Recently, rbb and AMResorts were also awarded the Public Relations Society of America's prestigious Silver Anvil for the industry leading "Flu Free Guarantee" in response to the H1N1 epidemic.

Recent work includes the launch of Norwegian Cruise Line's Getaway; TV show integrations with "The Bachelor" and "Extra"; promotional partnerships with Jamba Juice and jetBlue; and celebrity endorsements with Courtney Kardashian, Rafael Nadal, and more.

As the Champion of Breakout

Brands, rbb inspires companies with insights on creating customer passion to increase sales and customer loyalty. Its multicultural staff of 38 delivers award-winning creativity, media relations, strategic counsel, launch campaigns, digital media, content creation, reputation management and results/analytics.

In addition to travel & leisure, other specialty practices include consumer products/services, health, sports & entertainment, B2B and higher education. Find out how rbb can help your brand break out by visiting [www.rbbpr.com](http://www.rbbpr.com) or call rbb president Lisa Ross at 305/448-7457.

## REDPOINT MARKETING PR, INC.

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**Victoria Feldman de Falco,**  
Principal  
**Christina Miranda,** Principal

Specializing in travel, hospitality, 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



**Mummies of the World: The Exhibition**, currently on view in Buffalo, showcases new galleries exploring the study of mummies linked to discoveries in modern medicine, including "MUMAB" (pictured). Created in 1994, MUMAB answers many mysteries concerning the techniques of ancient mummification. Rogers & Cowan executes all media and event coordination for the nationally traveling exhibition, which has toured 9 cities and viewed by over 1 million people.

include the Saint Lucia Tourist Board, MSC 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; Morey's Piers and Beachfront Waterparks; The Dylan Hotel, Amsterdam; Collette; Montauk Blue Hotel; Water's Edge Resort & Spa, CT; and Essex Resort & Spa, VT.

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**

Rogers & Cowan offers significant 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 cul-

tural 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 and outreach, special events and social media strategies. The agency's work has included building awareness for hotels and resorts through celebrity seeding programs, introducing new travel services in key markets through influencer events, 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 and exhibits, among others.

Current / past clients include Mummies the Exhibition, USA Pro Cycling Challenge, *LA Times* Food & Wine Festival, *LA Times* Travel Show, Madame Tussaud's Hollywood and Las Vegas, Bodies the Exhibition, Titanic the Artifact Exhibition, Etihad Airlines, American Airlines, Canadian Tourism Commission,



Travel Alberta, Royal Caribbean, InterContinental Hotels Group, Miami Boutique Hotels, *How to Train Your Dragon*, Fuerza Bruta, Yo Gabba Gabba Live!, The Seaport and the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame.

## SPRING O'BRIEN

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New York, NY 10010  
212/620-7100  
info@spring-obrien.com

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

Spring O'Brien is an award-winning, full-service marketing communications agency specializing in travel and hospitality PR for over three 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, websites, associations, and credit card companies.

What sets us apart is our ability to make a Visible Difference for clients, uniquely achieving a competitive edge with integrated solutions, developing customized public relations, social media and branding campaigns, as well as digital marketing and travel trade programs. We consistently achieve high visibility broadcast, 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. Spring O'Brien offers the flexibility and hands-on approach and nimble, fast turnaround of a smaller agency with the specialist resources and expertise to achieve big results.

The agency has created an Asia Division to handle the China National Tourist Office, regional tourist boards and in-country travel related clients.

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)

## TJM COMMUNICATIONS

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

**Treva J. Marshall**, *President*

TJM Communications is an award-winning boutique lifestyle public relations firm specializing in travel, food, wine and the arts.

Since 2001, the agency has serviced international and domestic clients from its Orlando, Florida location and is a proud recipient of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing International (HSMIA) Silver Adrian Award for Public Relations. As a boutique agency, we focus on delivering personalized service with an emphasis on innovation, creativity and strategy.

Comprised of a team of seasoned communications professionals, we are especially proud of the diverse nature of our company, with staff members representing origins from around the globe.

TJM Communications has been called upon to service clients in Spain, South Africa, Canada and throughout the United States. We have represented domestic and international destinations, hotels and major tourism entities. Our travel practice currently includes clients such as: Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort, Westgate River Ranch Resort, along with other noted hotels, resorts and tourist attractions.

Find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TJMCommunicationsInc](http://www.facebook.com/TJMCommunicationsInc).

## TURNER PR

A wholly owned, independent subsidiary of Fahlgren Mortine

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Denver, CO 80202  
303/333-1402

**Christine Turner**, *Founder & President*  
**Mariana DiMartino**, *Senior VP*  
**Angela Berardino**, *Vice President, Travel and Digital*

Turner PR is a creative



Spring O'Brien was first to launch a Digital Detox campaign, encouraging consumers to unplug and escape their everyday technological dependencies in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, garnering the destination +50 million media impressions in the first year of the North America campaign.

agency specializing in media relations, brand collaborations, influencer programming, social media and digital communications, representing some of the world's best hotels, resorts, destinations and brands. Our two specialty divisions are travel, tourism & real estate and active lifestyle, outdoor & fashion brands. We represent all of the places you'd like to go, and the items you'd pack for your adventures.

We have two U.S. offices in New York and Denver to best service our worldwide clients based in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe, Caribbean and

South America. Founded in 1997, we live and breathe our clients' cultures and deliver meaningful results from our deep industry relationships with journalists and influencers.

Our dedicated 360 approach to delivering integrated social media, digital and PR campaigns continues to deliver bottom-line results for our clients through powerful media exposure, influencer followings and consumer engagement. We are a relationship agency, acting as in-house support for our clients, and we are proud of our culture — we work hard, we get results and we give back to our communities.



Christine Turner and Turner PR's Colorado team celebrates a new office space earlier this year, in Denver's hot LoDo neighborhood.



**Nestor Lara-Baeza, Weill President Geoffrey Weill, and Ann-Rebecca Laschever accept HSMIA Awards in February.**

## WEBER SHANDWICK

909 3rd Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
www.webershandwick.com

**Alice Diaz, Executive Vice President, Travel**

The Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle practice is the leading specialist in travel and tourism public relations. If you watch “GMA,” “Jimmy Kimmel,” read *USA Today*, *TIME*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Popular Mechanics* or the *Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue*, you’ve probably seen our work on behalf of many of the world’s most respected brands. If interesting content has found you while you were reading about your lifestyle passions — food, wine, fitness — you’ve probably seen our work as well.

At Weber Shandwick, we have built a culture of “tomorrowists,” a collaborative group of colleagues who are energized by creating award-winning, pride-earning, success-driven work for our clients and leading the industry in bold new directions. To complement our deep travel and tourism expertise, the agency has invested in a diverse range of talent such

as creative directors, more than 600 digital and social media specialists, digital and video production experts, and other specialists.

Our Travel & Lifestyle practice operates like a boutique agency with all the attention and accountability that might imply, but also gives us the resources to continue to evolve our approach to marketing communications for travel clients in a vastly changed media marketplace. We work hard to not just know our clients, but to partner with them in creating strategic programs that deliver against business goals. We inspire. We incite. We shape ideas to move travel and lifestyle companies and organizations forward. We get people thinking and acting in new ways so they connect with and advocate for your brand.

## WEILL

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

During its 19 years in busi-



**Aruba takes over Super Bowl as the title sponsor of the top celebrity gift lounge, flocked by celebrities including Terrell Owens, Deion Sanders, Peter Facinelli and Tom Arnold. Aruba is a Zimmerman client.**

ness, Geoffrey Weill Associates, a New York-based boutique company specializing in upscale travel, tourism and cultural clients, has developed a reputation for creativity, originality, and honesty. WEILL is constantly pursuing ways to showcase its clients in new and interesting ways, including through television, blogging press trips and elaborate fashion and catalog shoots at its properties that highlight the luxury travel angle.

WEILL also integrates food and wine, showcasing its properties with celebrity and Michelin-starred chefs, promoting recipes and cookbooks from its clients and featuring the world-class wines produced at Castiglione del Bosco, Tuscany; Duntun Hot Springs, Colorado; and Bouchard Finlayson, Red Carnation’s vineyard in South Africa.

The company prides itself on the longevity of both its staff and clients, with some clients being with the company for 8, 12, and 17 years, and staff members with an average stay of 10 years.

WEILL continues to expand its luxury portfolio. Its newest clients include Hotel Regina Isabella on the Italian island of Ischia; the legendary Hotel d’Angleterre in Copenhagen; The High Line Hotel in New York City, and The Milestone in London — WEILL’s second in the Red Carnation Collection. In June 2014, WEILL signed on the iconic One & Only hotel group.

## THE ZIMMERMAN AGENCY

1821 Miccosukee Commons  
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www.zimmerman.com

**Carrie Zimmerman, President**

The Zimmerman Agency blends bold basics and endless energy with strategic creativity to capture revenue-driving results. Ranked by *O’Dwyer’s* as one of the largest two hospitality public relations firms in the United States, the agency maintains its leadership position with a platform combining its public relations division with its robust 40-person in-house digital/social discipline.

Global hospitality clients include everything from Hard Rock Hotels & Casino (nine countries) to Club Med (seven countries), award-winning resorts like Little Palm Island in the Florida Keys, Waikoloa in Hawaii and Casa de Campo in the Dominican Republic, as well as destinations like North Carolina’s Southern Outer Banks and the country of Aruba.

Its newly-energized consumer brand division touts national brands including Party City, Pilot Pens, Cooper Tire, Firehouse Subs, Homes.com, Nature’s Own® and TPC.

The Zimmerman Agency WOW! platform of planning has proven to be a magnet for some of America’s most iconic brands, in and out of the world of hospitality. ●



# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TOP TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Edelman</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>\$20,530,219</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Zimmerman Agency</b>	<b>Tallahassee</b>	<b>8,589,200</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Finn Partners</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>6,274,591</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Lou Hammond &amp; Associates</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>6,069,296</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Turner PR (Fahlgren Mortine)</b>	<b>Columbus</b>	<b>4,531,168</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Development Counsellors Int'l</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>4,392,417</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>APCO Worldwide</b>	<b>Wash., D.C</b>	<b>3,494,418</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Nancy J. Friedman PR</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>3,332,806</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>J Public Relations</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>2,432,570</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Zeno Group</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>2,407,133</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>MWW</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>2,250,000</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>French   West   Vaughan</b>	<b>Raleigh, NC</b>	<b>2,117,000</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>Allison+Partners</b>	<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>2,000,000</b>
<b>14.</b>	<b>Jackson Spalding</b>	<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>1,464,355</b>
<b>15.</b>	<b>5W Public Relations</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>1,400,000</b>
<b>16.</b>	<b>rbb Public Relations</b>	<b>Miami</b>	<b>1,027,000</b>
<b>17.</b>	<b>Coyne PR</b>	<b>Parsippany, NJ</b>	<b>833,000</b>
<b>18.</b>	<b>BLAZE</b>	<b>Santa Monica</b>	<b>795,351</b>
<b>19.</b>	<b>PadillaCRT</b>	<b>Minneapolis</b>	<b>650,486</b>
<b>20.</b>	<b>Maxwell PR + Engagement</b>	<b>Portland. OR</b>	<b>426,643</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>LANE</b>	<b>Portland, OR</b>	<b>353,788</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>Seigenthaler Public Relations</b>	<b>Nashville</b>	<b>281,637</b>
<b>23.</b>	<b>McNeely Pigott &amp; Fox PR</b>	<b>Nashville</b>	<b>259,053</b>
<b>24.</b>	<b>LEVICK</b>	<b>Wash., D.C.</b>	<b>216,464</b>
<b>25.</b>	<b>Linhart Public Relations</b>	<b>Denver</b>	<b>150,975</b>
<b>26.</b>	<b>Formula PR</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>134,614</b>
<b>27.</b>	<b>Bridge Global Strategies</b>	<b>New York</b>	<b>130,483</b>
<b>28.</b>	<b>Schneider Associates</b>	<b>Boston</b>	<b>122,500</b>
<b>29.</b>	<b>The Buzz Agency</b>	<b>Delray Beach, FL</b>	<b>109,114</b>
<b>30.</b>	<b>Gregory FCA</b>	<b>Ardmore, PA</b>	<b>95,000</b>
<b>31.</b>	<b>Standing Partnership</b>	<b>St. Louis</b>	<b>85,051</b>
<b>32.</b>	<b>Landis Communications</b>	<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>75,000</b>
<b>33.</b>	<b>Hope-Beckham</b>	<b>Atlanta</b>	<b>42,040</b>



# Obama's real Bergdahl problem: tone deaf PR

By Fraser Seitel

**P**resident Obama is in hot water for his prisoner swap to secure the freedom of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl from the Taliban.

What Obama did — working to free an imprisoned American soldier — was the right thing. What was wrong was the PR surrounding Bergdahl's release.

In fact, what has been wrong with the Obama administration almost from the start is its amateurish, tone-deaf PR. Indeed, it may prove to be an Achilles' heel in ensuring the legacy of a mediocre presidency. Time and again — from health-care to IRS, from Benghazi to the VA scandal — the Obama team has failed to assess accurately the fallout resulting from inferior PR. The Bergdahl case is the latest stunning example.



**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*.

In the first place, as *The New York Times*' often head-scratching columnist David Brooks correctly concluded, "President Obama did the right thing." Bergdahl, whatever his motives, was an American soldier and somebody's son. In respect of his service and sacrifice, Bergdahl's country — and its citizens — owed him and his parents their best efforts to free him from captivity. Period.

That Obama, in the face of obvious, imminent criticism — in light of both Bergdahl's checkered service experience and the five terrorists for whom he was traded — still had the courage to make the deal is a credit to him and to the ideals for which the Presidency should stand.

So, despite the self-righteous sniping of the McCain-inspired Monday Morning Quarterbacks, the President did the right thing in ensuring the soldier's freedom.

What he didn't get right was the announcement of Bergdahl's release. The PR handling of the Bergdahl announcement was but the latest indication of the Obama team's naiveté at best, stupidity at worst, in terms of basic PR. Here were their most egregious screw-ups in Bergdahl's release.

## Poor planning

We still don't know if Bergdahl was a

deserter, an anti-American, or a jihadist. But the Obama team certainly did know that Bergdahl was a kook, with a free-spirit background and a questionable history as a soldier. They knew about the instances of his going AWOL, including his disappearance in Afghanistan (why he was automatically promoted — twice! — in captivity, despite his military record, is another good question).

The point is the Obama Administration knew, in advance, that Bergdahl was a controversial character, who would clearly attract detractors when his record became public knowledge. In addition, there were the five real nasty jihadists being released in exchange. Certainly, their release would also provoke instant outrage.

PR 101, therefore, called for reviewing the "worst case scenario" and realizing that what was called for, in light of all these potential land mines, was a low-key announcement, preferably via written statement from the White House, to be backstopped by a ready standby plan to defend the decision.

Instead, the Obama PR brain trust organized a high profile, unprecedented Saturday morning Rose Garden media extravaganza, with the President in the spotlight to bask in the glow of his bold and courageous action.

## Disastrous photo op

Our 21st century, dumbed-down society is dominated by pictures. It shouldn't be like that, but it is. When we see the disheveled mug shot or the scowling face, we draw hard and lasting conclusions. A picture is worth a thousand tweets.

And so when Bergdahl's father, Bob, showed up at the White House, looking like a member of ZZ Top, it didn't take an Edward Bernays to realize that daddy's long beard would dominate the coverage. The always subtle Bill O'Reilly thundered that he "looked like a Muslim."

Predictably, what followed for the Sawtooth, Idaho mountain man /UPS driver was a rigorous scrutiny of his own history, past actions and statements. Equally predictably, what the truth-seekers found was that since his son's capture, the senior Bergdahl had immersed himself in Islam, had made a three-minute video for the Pakistani government, and had thanked the Taliban for taking care of his son.

What was most predictable from this flood of incriminating information about the elder Bergdahl was that it would immediately launch a national backlash against the release of his son.

## Inappropriate rhetoric

As any first-year PR student knows, everything at a press conference needs to be scripted — the speeches, the staging, the answers to questions; everything must be rehearsed. That way, you can keep the surprises to a minimum. And if there's anything a PR professional finds abhorrent, it's "surprises."

Nonetheless, the Obama team presumably had no time for rehearsals. The Bergdahls, in D.C. to attend rallies for their son, were notified late and whisked to the White House to share spontaneously in the good news. And so at the Rose Garden soiree, when the hirsute Bergdahl approached the podium, he chose the phrase, "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate," to welcome back his son. Nothing surprising about that.

But what was surprising is that he chose to say it in Pashtu, also known as Afghani, because he felt his son might have difficulty after five years in captivity of understanding English. Accordingly, Bergdahl looked into the cameras and intoned the phrase, "bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim," which turns out to be a major pillar of Islam, featured prominently in the Koran.

It's a wonder how anyone with the least bit of PR-consciousness could have permitted such a statement at such an event.

## Out-of-control agenda

In any PR opportunity or crisis, the key is to control the agenda. Leaks of negative information must be anticipated and preempted, either with clear advance statements or strong responses. In the Bergdahl case — where all the negatives were apparently well known in advance — the White House corkscrewed itself into the no-win position of being immediately on defense.

Why wasn't Congress contacted?

Why did we have to free those five particularly bad dudes?

Why did we choose to liberate this American captive and not others?

And so here we are. The questions and defensiveness continues, with the President alternately apologizing and then standing by the decision and then back-tracking, as the agenda slips further from the White House's grasp. Traditionally, Presidents have used the White House PR bully pulpit, in tight situations, to convert skeptics to converts. In the Obama Administration — as the botched Bergdahl liberation demonstrates — the considerable White House PR apparatus has too often been used to convert lemonade into lemons. ●



# Report card on PR agency profitability

By Richard Goldstein

**B**ack in 2013 I wrote a series of columns on managing for prosperity in 2014 and beyond. In fact I wrote about this topic in 2012 for 2013. So how did the PR agency world do? GouldPartners published its 2014 Best Practicing Report which gives insight into the profitability of the PR agency business.

## Bottom line profitability

As many of you know who follow my



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

column, it seems to me the agency standard benchmark for bottom line profitability is 20% of pre-tax adjusted profit (profit with “excess” compensation and perks subtracted that may be taken by agency principles). 20% will keep you working hard but not make you rich. The goal should really be 33%

but 25% would be a good start.

So how did the agency business do? Without getting into regions or type of PR, 115 agencies that reported their results by size had an average profitability in 2013 of 15.8%. The highest percentage by size reported was the \$10 million to \$25 million range of 18.6%. The region of the country reporting the highest percentage was the Southeast at 18.5% (Note that 11 Canadian firms reporting reported average profitability of 20%). I would have expected higher across the board.

## The Medicine for Low Profitability

Frankly, there are many prescriptions being sold for high profitability. Do they work? I guess they do if you feel that less than 20% profitability is the goal.

Al Croft, way back in the year 2000, put forth one of his “medicines” to higher profitability. He said “Pay Attention To The Basics.”

Al’s view was then, and it is my view today, that low profitability (Dismal Results as he put it) are usually caused by management not paying attention to one or more or all of some very basic economic facts:

- Hourly rates are too low;
- Staff utilization rates that are below

industry standards;

- Inaccurate or no time keeping;
- No records of individual client profitability; or
- Over-servicing clients which can usually be pinned on either improper budgeting or good intentions leading to more time invested in the client’s behalf than he or she is paying for. And which, in turn, leads to one of the most profit-pruning actions of all — write-offs.

All of these factors are inexorably roped together in determining the health of your bottom line. Putting it differently: if you ignore or mishandle just one of the above factors, it will show in an unhappy way on your P&L statement.

## Discipline

There is also another personal factor that impacts on how well you avoid the above profit traps. It is called “discipline.” It is easy to avoid paying attention to the economic fortunes of your business by convincing yourself that you are too busy taking care of your clients. Chances are, the real reason your operating profit is terrible is because you spend more time being an account executive than a business manager. You just do not have the discipline to focus on what is really wrong with your profits.

## Examples of poor business discipline

A very large agency was making about four percent on a lot of income because the chairman had carried a legacy of disdain for time-keeping and other business management functions from his time at an international firm. However, reality set in after a few years of high growth and low profits. The agency recruited a big time CFO; spent a bundle on a very good accounting and time-keeping software package; imposed time-keeping and budgeting discipline on its staff; and will be in double digit profits on track for much better numbers in future years.

The partners of a small but growing firm claimed they were entrepreneurs, not good business managers. They used that as an excuse to let employees pretty much dictate how much business was being run. Result: single digit profits and employee complaints about low salaries and weak benefits. Wake-up time: a new web-based time keeping system is on line, account managers have been given responsibility for both client service and profit. They were also given all the agency data they need to manage their accounts in line with the economic fac-

tors listed above. Their bonuses were based on their ability to meet profit goals. The COO of an East Coast firm wants to install a disciplined approach to profit generation. He would also like to speak to clients he is convinced are not carrying their weight. He does not really know how to go about this because the firm does not track staff time or individual client profitability. He is also held back because of “internal political issues;” i.e., the CEO/owner won’t make a move to adjust how much clients pay for fear of upsetting them.

It is perfectly okay if you are satisfied with single digit profits or below 20% profitability. It is perfectly okay if you do not mind working as hard as you can and taking home as little as you do. It is perfectly okay if you have high staff turnover because you cannot afford to match competitive salaries or provide good benefits. It is perfectly okay if you want to hand clients a lot of staff time they do not pay for. They will love you for it — and continue dumping on you.

## More next month, but first ...

First, there is an overemphasis on revenue per staff. Personally, I ignore this because I do not know the employee makeup or what they earn. Revenue per professional account personnel is a much better indicator. The trend was slightly up according to Gould. Last year the average for all firms reporting was \$209,945. Firms with Net Revenues in excess of \$25 Million averaged \$210,539. Firms in D.C. averaged \$240,638. ●

## PR news briefs

### ICR aids Everyday Health in WebMD suit

Everyday Health, the publicly traded digital health media company, is relying on ICR for its PR and IR defense as it faces a trademark infringement and false advertising suit from rival WebMD.

WebMD Health Corp. filed the suit on June 19 in federal court in New York, seeking a permanent injunction and claiming EH uses the WebMD trademark on web pages, search advertising to “deceive and mislead consumers” into believing they are visiting WebMD properties.

EH contends the claims are without merit and related to “only a small portion of the company’s search engine marketing efforts” and a “very immaterial” part of its traffic and revenue.

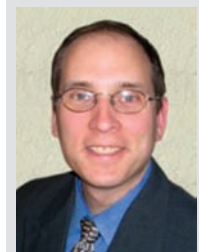
ICR managing Directors Denise Garcia and Bo Park are advising and providing media and investor relations services for EH. The firm was hired to handle EH’s \$100 million IPO in March.

# Renegotiating paid PR editing on Wikipedia

By Gregory Kohs

It's been a momentous month on Wikipedia, for those following the endless battle over encyclopedia content that is generated by public relations professionals.

Essentially, this is a content war that engages three combatants: (1) experienced Wikipedia editors who have limited or no real-world credentials and therefore hide behind pseudonyms, (2) noteworthy and accomplished individuals and corporations who have limited or no experience editing Wikipedia, and (3) paid PR consultants



Gregory Kohs is Founder of MyWikiBiz.

and employees whose Wikipedia-editing talent can range from pristine to sloppy.

Lording over it all from a distance, and collecting his five-figure speaking fees from whoever will pay them, is Wikipedia Co-Founder Jimmy Wales.

In June, a consortium of 11 PR firms announced they'll cease directly editing Wikipedia articles about their clients. Then, the Wikimedia Foundation imposed a new policy that forces editors paid for their Wikipedia work to disclose their employer and clientele. But first, a little background on this brewing storm.

## Banned from speaking or showing up

I'm the founder of the first service that offers Wikipedia content management in exchange for payment. I launched MyWikiBiz in July 2006. By October of that year, Wikipedia head Jimmy Wales pronounced that being paid to edit Wikipedia was "unethical," even though Wikipedia still endorses a "Reward Board" where cash is traded for editing.

When chapters of the Wikimedia movement decided to hold a WikiConference USA at the New York Law School, I registered to attend. I even offered to deliver a presentation about my experiences with paid editing on Wikipedia. Not only was my talk rejected, eighteen hours before the conference began I received an e-mail from a New York lawyer telling me that I was forbidden to attend the conference as an observer. No formal reason has ever been given for this censorship, yet the conference was advertised as "open" and welcoming even to those with a "skeptical"

point of view.

Whether this constituted a controversy or not was debated for the next couple of weeks on Wikipedia, where thousands of words were typed, many protesting how I had been banned without any cause communicated to me. *O'Dwyer's* covered that fiasco on its website.

## Hypocrisy at the New York Law School?

One British scholar of medieval philosophy was so offended by WikiConference USA's opaquely discriminatory attendance policy, he wrote a letter to the head of New York Law School, Anthony Crowell.

Crowell responded within hours, saying: "...this conference was organized by an independent organization ... we had no control or supervision in setting or implementing the decision making policies and processes regarding acceptances and rejections for participation. We also had no power over those individuals who did."

But the WikiConference USA's Conference Director, Jennifer Baek, is a Legal Fellow at the New York Law School, where she received her Juris Doctor in 2013. And when you try to find out more about Anthony Crowell, you might arrive on his biography on Wikipedia. It was authored by Wikipedia editor "Ajuncos." Andrea Juncos is the Communications Director of New York Law School. Ajuncos has edited Wikipedia frequently about New York Law School and about Carole Post, the law school's Chief Strategy Officer.

So, the New York Law School hasn't been abiding by Wikipedia's guidelines against editing where one has a topical conflict of interest.

## PR firms release preemptive bomb

On Tuesday, June 10, with considerable fanfare several large PR firms issued a joint statement, promising that they will "act in accordance with Wikipedia's policies and guidelines, particularly those related to conflict of interest" and "abide by the Wikimedia Foundation's Terms of Service."

Essentially this means that the firms (which included Ogilvy, FleishmanHillard, Burson-Marsteller, Ketchum, Porter Novelli, and Edelman) will shun editing the Wikipedia pages about their clients and only engage other Wikipedia editors on the "Talk" pages of articles, in hopes that one of those pseudonymous "neutral" editors will come along and make the requested changes to article pages.

Given the notoriously slow and often dis-

missive approach that embedded Wikipedians take to assisting PR firms, this new PR pledge bodes a lot of pain and suffering for clients who will just have to sit through long periods of inaccurate information, incomplete data, and even outright defamation residing on their Wikipedia article pages.

## Wikimedia Foundation ratchets up rules

On June 16, the Wikimedia Foundation imposed a new Terms of Use on all writers of Wikipedia and its sister projects. Editors who receive payment for helping to grow Wikipedia must "... disclose your employer, client, and affiliation with respect to any contribution for which you receive, or expect to receive, compensation."

Many have already disobeyed this new rule. For example, a gigantic edit was made to the Wikipedia article about the Association of State Green Parties, by Wikipedia user "Mfeinstein." It's possible that this is Mike Feinstein, Founding Editor of Green Pages. Mfeinstein has issued no disclosure statement, and he's been editing with this apparent conflict of interest on Wikipedia since June 2007.

A new article about Logan LaHive, the CEO of the Belly loyalty program, was created in June by Wikipedia user "AlexandraHuber." Alexandra Huber is the PRmanager at Belly.

Finally, there was a hilarious edit in June by someone who almost certainly works for Arthur J. Gallagher & Company. User "Belle624" has never edited anything but Wikipedia's article about Arthur J. Gallagher. After the new Terms of Use went into effect, this user modified the Wikipedia page to include a section about Gallagher's "recognition & awards," including Gallagher being named one of the World's Most Ethical Companies by Ethisphere.com. The edit becomes amusing when you consider that Gallagher is listed by the Wikimedia Foundation as a donor of between \$5,000 and \$24,999 to the foundation. And according to the Wikimedia Foundation logs, employees of Arthur J. Gallagher visited the Wikimedia Foundation headquarters in October 2013 and again in December 2013.

As a matter of practice, many corporate PR folks don't have a good grasp of what constitutes acceptable Wikipedia content, and certainly most are completely unfamiliar with Wikipedia's new Terms of Use placing restrictions on PR editors.

Don't hold your breath for Jimmy Wales to admonish his top financial donors. ♦



## Cohn & Wolfe Co-Founder dies at 87

**N**orman Wolfe, Co-Founder of Cohn & Wolfe with Bob Cohn, died June 2.

The former Executive Editor of the *Orlando Sentinel* launched the consumer-oriented shop in Atlanta in 1970. He directed PA and crisis communications before selling the shop to Young & Rubicam in 1984.

Wolfe retired in 1992, but continued to counsel some key accounts.

Donna Imperato, current leader of C&W, called Wolfe a “visionary leader” who with Cohn had the “foresight and determination to imagine a public relations agency unlike any other.”



Wolfe

## IPG's Kelley to Bloomberg Media COO

**I**nterpublic's Jacki Kelley was named COO/media at Bloomberg Media in charge of business operations for TV, print, radio, mobile, digital and event platforms and creating new marketing opportunities.

Reporting to CEO Justin Smith, Kelley's focus is on driving revenue growth, spurring brand strength and creating new marketing opportunities.

She leaves the helm of IPG MediaBrands North America and as Global Clients President.

Kelley was in charge of purchasing \$36 billion in media buys for clients such as Sony, ExxonMobil and BMW.

Most recently, she helped guide the IPG team that notched Microsoft's global creative and deployment work.

Smith said Kelley's hire is a “coup for our organization and important talent milestone.” She's a “force of nature, a perfect mix of shrewd business acumen and creativity with a clear track record of success,” he said in a statement.



Kelley

Kelley held posts at Yahoo, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia and *USA Today*, where she rose from Intern to Senior VP-advertising and part of the team that put the daily in hotels throughout the US.

She starts at Bloomberg on Sept. 1.

## Edelman expands financial savvy

**E**delman has added David Ryan, a financial communications pro, to its Corporate Practice in Toronto.

As Senior VP, he will build out the firm's financial communications practice. His capital market savvy includes takeovers, proxy fights, disclosure, restructurings and going-private transactions.

Ryan has worked for Karyo Communications (Vancouver), Colour (Halifax) and Longview Communications (Toronto).

He handled CNOOC Ltd's Nexen acquisition, Accelerero Capital's bid for Allstream, Maple Leaf Food's effort to fend off West Face Capital and Placer Dome's transactions with Barrick Gold.

Scott Thompson heads Edelman's Canadian corporate practice.

## Youth marketing wiz lands at MWW

**S**heena Stephens, who helped put Razor USA scooter company on the map as PR/social media director, is now at MWW's Los Angeles office.

As VP in its consumer lifestyle marketing practice, Stephens will guide the independent firm's programs targeting youth and family segments.

Prior to a more than decade stint at Razor, Stephens was director of consumer lifestyle at Carryon Communication, handling Got Milk?, Beverly Hills Conference & Visitors Bureau and Nature Made Vitamins.

Earlier, she held PR slots Ritz-Carlton Hotel (Marina del Rey) and the Regal Biltmore Hotel (LA).

JP Schuerman, MWW's executive VP/western region GM, called Stephens



Stephens

a “media relations powerhouse who also brings great perspective and experience working with a range of top consumer brands.”

## Ogilvy snags social standout

**O**gilvy's Washington office has added Tony Silva as Executive VP/group Director for its Social Marketing practice.

He takes over for Jennifer Wayman, who was upped to Managing Director of the US social group.

Silva served at ICF International for more than a decade, rising to the Senior VP slot.

He has public diplomacy savvy gleaned from work for the State Dept.'s “US-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research,” which included input from the First Lady, foreign politicians and corporate/NGO partnerships.

Rob Mathias, North America CEO, praised Silva's skills in “sustainability communications and behavior change related to energy, environment and health augments.”

## Borges brings in Access' Young in SF

**M**ichael Young, Senior VP at Access Communications, has moved to Miami-based tech firm Max Borges Agency as an Executive VP in its new San Francisco outpost.

Young, who will split time between Miami and the Bay Area, spent nine years at Access, part of Omnicom's Ketchum, leading its enterprise tech and b2b practice and playing a key role in business development. He was a Partner in consulting group Agency Analytics for two years in Chicago after VP and SVP stints at Porter Novelli, Ketchum and Tech Image.

“I have the utmost respect for Michael's experience, leadership abilities and accomplishments, and I look forward to working with him to build our business,” said Founder and CEO Max Borges, to whom Young reports.



Young

## Koch Industries to add new D.C. communications director

**M**att Lloyd, who stepped down as Chief of Staff to Rep. Marlin Stutzman (R-IN) in May, is slated to join Koch Industries as a Washington-based Communications Director.

The hire — first reported by Politico — comes as Koch launches a new image campaign touting its “heartland” roots. This week the industrial conglomerate also announced a \$25 million grant to the United Negro College Fund.

Wichita, Kan.-based Koch in January hired Burson-Marsteller and Edelman veteran Steve Lombardo as Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, working out of Washington and Wichita. Another Burson alum, Robert Tappan, directs external relations for politically active company’s public sector operations in Washington.

Lloyd spent the past year as Chief Communications and Policy Advisor to Stutzman. He was previously Communications Director during a decade on the staff of Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN), who is now Governor of Indiana. He worked in the US Dept. of Agriculture press office during the Bush administration and started out on the Hill as Press Secretary to Reps. Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Rick Hill (R-MT).

Koch’s public sector business on June 9 enlisted former Oklahoma Sen. Don Nickles for lobbying on campaign finance and repeal of the wind energy production credit. ●

## Sands plays hand with Keelon in online gambling play

**S**heldon Adelson’s Las Vegas Sands Corp. has hired Keelon Group to monitor federal policy toward online gaming.

The 80-year-old billionaire and top contributor to the Republican party says he’s morally opposed to Internet gambling, a position that runs counter to the stance of Las Vegas casino owners.

During June’s annual shareholders meeting, Adelson made the business case against online betting when he told investors: “Once the employment of land-based casinos is done away with by Internet casinos, they can’t be replaced.”

Matt Keelon is a Republican operative who has worked on Congressional campaigns for Wisconsin’s Paul Ryan and South Carolina’s Jim DeMint, who now heads the Heritage Foundation.

He has appeared on “Fox and Friends,” “Rush Limbaugh Show” and “The Kudlow Report.”

Frank McCarthy, Aide to former Republican Congresswoman Sue Kennedy, joins Keelon on the Sands account. ●

## D.C. trade group for Internet companies plugs in Theran

**N**oah Theran, who directed communications for the Private Equity Growth Capital Council, has plugged into The Internet Association in Washington, D.C.,



to speak for top tech companies like Amazon, Uber, Google, Airbnb and Facebook.

TIA was set up in 2012 to handle lobbying and PR for sector in the capital. Theran heads the group’s communications “as Internet companies look to engage the public and policymakers on issues important to our industry,” said CEO Michael Beckerman.

Theran worked PR for the former Private Equity Council and picked up a Silver Anvil Award through the industry’s 2011-2 turn in the spotlight amid Bain Capital founder Mitt Romney’s presidential campaign.

He was previously with Rasky Baerlein Strategic Communications in DC.

In recent months, TIA has pushed Virginia to revoke a ban on taxi and ridesharing services Uber and Lyft, advocated for patent reform at the federal level. It handed out its first Congressional Internet Freedom Awards in February to Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA). ●

## Akin Gump flaps for Amazon’s air-package dream

**A**kin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld is working to make Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos’ dream of delivering packages by air a reality.

Amazon Prime Air is using Akin Gump for “federal advocacy with regard and testing of unmanned aerial vehicles in the US.”

The Seattle electronic commerce giant believes putting Prime Air into commercial use will take a number of years to advance technology and line up the required Federal Aviation Administration rules and regulations.

It hopes Prime Air will take off in 2015 to provide customers with package delivery in 30 minutes or less.

Greg Walden, one-time chief counsel at the FAA; Ed Pagano, ex-aide to Sen. Pat Leahy, and Michael Drobac, former legislative director for Sen. Norm Coleman, are members of AK’s Amazon crew. ●





## Turkey taps Alpaytac for PR

**T**urkey's D.C. embassy has lined up Chicago's Alpaytac for a one-year contract pegged at \$1.4 million for PR and communications services.

Huma Gruaz, Turkey's former national swimming champion, member of its national team and ex-President of Turkish American Cultural Alliance, launched the Windy City shop in 2004 after 15 years in marketing/PR.

She began a communications career at Ogilvy & Mather, where she counseled Shell Oil, Unilever, Hoover, Spice Islands and Philips Electronics.

Under the contract, Alpaytac is required to maintain a Washington office staffed by a PR-savvy Turkish speaker who understands the political dynamics between Turkey and the US. Bi-monthly meetings between the two parties are required, as well as monthly activity reports.

The Embassy must approve the dissemination of all PR information and materials released on its behalf. It acknowledges that "pre-approved information and materials released by Alpaytac on its behalf may be changed and edited at the discretion of broadcasters and publishers in a way that may render information less accurate," according to the pact.

The contract runs through May 12, 2015. Either party may ax the pact after Nov. 12 with 30-days of advance notice. ●

## KRL boosts embattled S. Sudan

**K**RL International is working Washington to boost the profile of embattled South Sudan, which has suffered six months of bloodshed during battles between forces loyal to the country's president and VP.

Riva Levinson's firm's advocacy program supports efforts to "consolidate peace, reconciliation and the development priorities" of President Salva Kir's government, according to its con-

tract. It targets the US government, donor/philanthropic communities, NGOs and media.

The one-year contract is worth fees of \$240,000.

Kir and rival politico Riek Machar met this month to negotiate a truce, but are now boycotting the talks. Thousands have been killed and 1.3 million people have been displaced since the outbreak began in December.

South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011, which makes it the world's youngest nation. ●

## Sanitas reps Afghanistan's presidential hopeful

**S**anitas International is repping Abdullah Abdullah, the leading candidate to succeed Hamid Karzai as president of Afghanistan.

The D.C. shop is backing the "free and fair" advocacy campaign designed to promote a secure and transparent election.

That fairness goal took a major hit blow following allegations of fraud raised by Abdullah. He believes voter turnout in the second round of election on June 14 was inflated in areas, where his rival Ashraf Ghani enjoys strong support.

On Jun 18, Abdullah charged Ghani and Karzai of committing "industrial scale" voter fraud. He demands an end to the count.

Abdullah, a doctor and former Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, also claims that a number of his observers were intimidated and roughed up by political opponents. He beat Ghani by a 45 to 32 percent margin in the April vote. Rival candidates withdrew from the race following that tally and endorsed Abdullah.

Pitched as Afghanistan's first democratic vote in the history, the election is key to continued western support for Afghanistan.

Karzai, who is term-limited, was scheduled to hand over power to his successor on Aug. 2. ●

### 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).

**Madison Group**, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered June 10, 2014** for Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka, for assisting the Ministry of External Affairs with creating situational awareness of current affairs in Sri Lanka.

**Prime Policy Group**, New York, NY, **registered May 25, 2014** for All Progressives Congress Party through Delano Family and Burson-Marsteller, Abuja, Nigeria, to introduce party platform and party officials to policymakers (Congress, Agency and Administration) In Washington, D.C through visits that the firm will plan and execute.

**Potomac Square Group**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 17, 2014** for Standing Together for Unity and Development, Nigeria, to enhance Nigeria's standing in the global community by arranging academic and political salons, engaging the press and interacting with public officials.

### 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).

**Squire Patton Boggs**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 21, 2014** for Lennar Ventures, LLC, Miami, FL, for issues related to home energy efficiency standards, including the use of solar panels on homes.

**Gephardt Group Government Affairs**, Washington D.C., **registered June 21, 2014** for Bayer Corporation, Pittsburgh, PA, regarding pollinator health and habitat promotion; R&D tax credit.

**Capitol Counsel LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 18, 2014** for The Chubb Corporation, Washington, D.C., regarding flood insurance, natural catastrophe insurance, terrorism risk insurance, Dodd-Frank regulation related to insurance.

## SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION



**Monument Optimization**, Washington, DC. 202/904-5763. [john@monumentoptimization.com](mailto:john@monumentoptimization.com); [www.monumentoptimization.com](http://www.monumentoptimization.com). John Stewart, President.

While we specialize in search engine marketing, we are more than just an SEO firm. We blend a variety of marketing tactics to maximize the effectiveness and return on investment of search engine campaigns.

We excel in non-traditional search marketing environments where the next steps are rarely obvious and there are not any existing models to copy or fall back on.

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**Impact Communications**, 11 Bristol Place, Wilton, CT 06897-1524. (203) 529-3047; cell: (917) 208-0720; fax: (203) 529-3048; [JRImpact@aol.com](mailto:JRImpact@aol.com). Jon Rosen, President.

**BE PREPARED! Impact Communications trains your spokespeople** to successfully communicate critical messages to your targeted audiences during print, television, and radio news interviews. Your customized workshops are issue-driven and role-play based. Videotaping/critiquing. Groups/privately. Face-to-face/telephone interviews/news conferences. Private label seminars for public relations agencies.

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## WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT



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

At Point provides the services of developing websites and managing the Internet operations of businesses, both small and large, that do not have the experience or the resources in-house to perform these functions.

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- ▶ Access Your Job Seeker Account

**Browse by Job Function**

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- Communications/PR/Marketing

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- **Anonymous resume bank** protects your confidential information. Your resume will be displayed for employers to view EXCEPT your identity and contact information.

### EMPLOYER BENEFITS

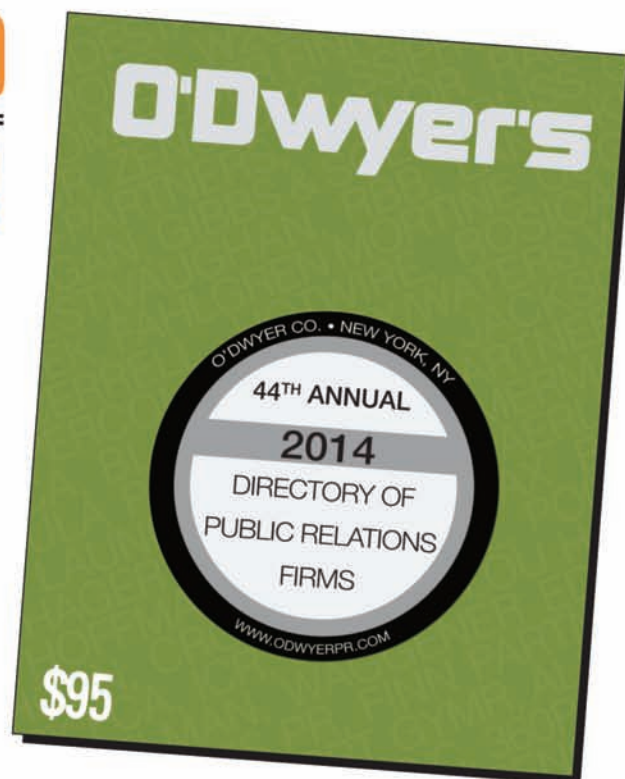
- **Access** highly-qualified, professional candidates.
- **Generate high return** on recruitment advertisement spending.
- **Access to the highly coveted passive job seeker.**
- **Easy-to-use** job posting and resume searching capabilities.
- **Access to job board networks** for broader job distribution to qualified candidates.
- **Only pay for resumes** of interested candidates.
- **Internal messaging system** automatically stores messages sent from the job seeker in the candidate's file.



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