

# O'Dwyer's

Communications & New Media

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THE TRAVEL & TOURISM ISSUE

July 2015

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# What's real when everything claims to be "authentic?"

**T**hough conservative pundits have attempted Olympian feats of logic to compare the two, the gender transition of Caitlyn Jenner and race-swapping antics of activist Rachel Dolezal have very little in common. One reason both stories have gained so much traction in the national conversation, however, is they underscore the towering gravity our culture now places on the perceived identity of the individual.

Marketing and PR professionals in recent years have been inculcated with the notion that "authenticity" is the *sine qua non* for today's savvy young consumer, that our coveted Millennial demographic seeks experiences over products, cultures over destinations, something learned over something bought. Authenticity, we are told, offers access: to uncovered relics, those unearthed artifacts we yearn for in our cultural anthropology. It promises a rare commodity in today's world: a genuine experience in a prefab, grocery-aisle landscape.

But a commodity it is, and when brands attempt to offer an authentic experience by manufacturing myth into product, the results often fall short. Corporate chain restaurants now routinely market products using a hilarious argot of "artisanal," "handmade," and "curated." Other times authenticity offers a subscription to the past, a pathological nostalgia for a bygone era, in everything from Hollywood's cottage industry of film remakes, to the ongoing reintroduction of "classic" designs on soda cans and snack wrappers. Authenticity is the typewriter, the vinyl record, the film reel. We take cellphone photos with filters to make them look like the Polaroids of yesteryear. It seems the more digital we've become, the more we thirst for the analogue culture we willingly replaced.

Authenticity comes at a high premium today, it seems, because many of us appear to be suffering from a collective deficit of personal identity. We've convinced ourselves that genuine experiences were something that happened only in the past. Concurrently, our youngest generation of adults was raised in a 24-hour, multisource, multichannel media environment offering a piebald of voices and perspectives and worldviews and experiences. The results, for some, are deep-seeded feelings of inadequacy, which, more often than not, reveals itself in abject narcissism. We might be the only culture in the world that feels we have a right to be happy. We want to be special, and most of us, I'm sorry to say, simply aren't.

This is where the allure of the authentic can become problematic, when it expresses itself in a fetishization of otherness. Here in New York, it's common for young people to bemoan missing out on the city's gritty pre-Giuliani era, because they see crime and decay as signifiers of an authentic urban experience. Some are so hopelessly warped by this worldview that when a man was recently beaten to death on Williamsburg's long-gentrified Bedford Avenue, a young area gallery owner opined to the press that it was "nice to see a bit of old Brooklyn." We impugn movie-set clichés onto reality. We have a false nostalgia for an era we never experienced.

Other times, our hunt for authenticity becomes even more nefarious, and manifests itself in tokenizing or downright cultural appropriation. Rachel Dolezal's self-labeled "transracial" identity is one example of this obsession taken too far. It's also a byproduct of privilege: Dolezal has been allowed the luxury of being white when it serves her interests, black when it gives her a sense of belonging. In this sense, the most ironic aspect of our search for authenticity is that it can resemble less a celebration of cultures and more a colonialist overtaking. White faces become the new symbol of minority struggle.

Dolezal has an excuse for this, however, and it's become a popular deflection point in identity politics for those suffering from existential feelings of inadequacy: Dolezal claims she's black simply because she "identifies" with black culture. The emotions of the individual have become sacrosanct; we treat what ails us subjectively as though it should be quantified on par with physical suffering. University students, learning to develop the critical thinking skills needed for adult life, regularly opt out of class reading assignments under the guise of content they find "triggering." Referring to someone with the incorrect pronoun, according to some academics, now constitutes an act of "violence." We've established a cultural climate in which every notion has to be validated, everyone gets a participation trophy. The result? Meaning, like identities, are fluid. We've regaled ourselves with the notion that if we feel a certain way, it's all the proof we need to know we are that thing.

If you're looking for something "real," you can find it anywhere. Our quest for authenticity in the marketplace will always be an act of self-delusion, because we disauthenticate the experience the moment we become its tourist. As it turns out, we don't trade products for experiences after all. We just turn experiences into product. **○**

— Jon Gingerich

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# Amid content need, trade groups boost paid digital

Trade associations have increased the use of paid digital content, as well as photo and video platforms like Instagram and YouTube, in their communications efforts, according to a study by Kellen.

By Greg Hazley

**T**rade associations have increased the use of paid digital content, as well as photo and video platforms like Instagram and YouTube in their communications efforts, according to the Kellen study, which polled 439 trade organizations.

Google ads, sponsored posts on Facebook and Twitter are the preferred paid media among trade groups as more than one-third of U.S. associations (37%, up from 32%) said they are now using such tactics.

Key goals for paid content are to promote organizational content (58% in the U.S.) or attract people to events (67%), although efforts to recruit members via social media have struggled with 38% calling such outreach for new members ineffective and 45% saying it has been effective.

Kellen also found increased adoption of Instagram (29%, up from 19% a year earlier) and YouTube (73%, up from 64%), with the adoption levels higher in the U.S. than Europe. While LinkedIn use was steady at

around 88%, Pinterest registered an increase from 21% to 24%

Facebook and Twitter remain the top social media tools, reportedly used by 93% and 91%, respectively, slight increases over a year earlier. After a series of high-profile gaffes among corporations, Twitter is now perceived to carry the greatest threat, among social platforms, according to 22% of respondents, edging blogs (20%), and Facebook (19%). LinkedIn is seen as the safest

platform, cited by only 8% as a “high risk” outlet.

Kellen reported that only 17% of trade organizations have a dedicated social media manager, and said social media has increasingly fallen under the guidance of communications managers (48%, up from 41%). And while social and digital tools rise among trade groups, measurement has lagged. Kellen reported an increase in measurement was attributed to “vanity metrics” (likes, followers) rather than more quality data like comment analysis and social listening research from an independent company, the latter of which actually decreased from 2014. ○

## Investors now rely more on social info

Seventy-seven percent of investors said they’ve investigated an issue based on information gleaned from social media sources, according to a recent survey.

By Greg Hazley

**B**logs, particularly in the U.S., are the preferred choice of digital or social media for investment research, fol-

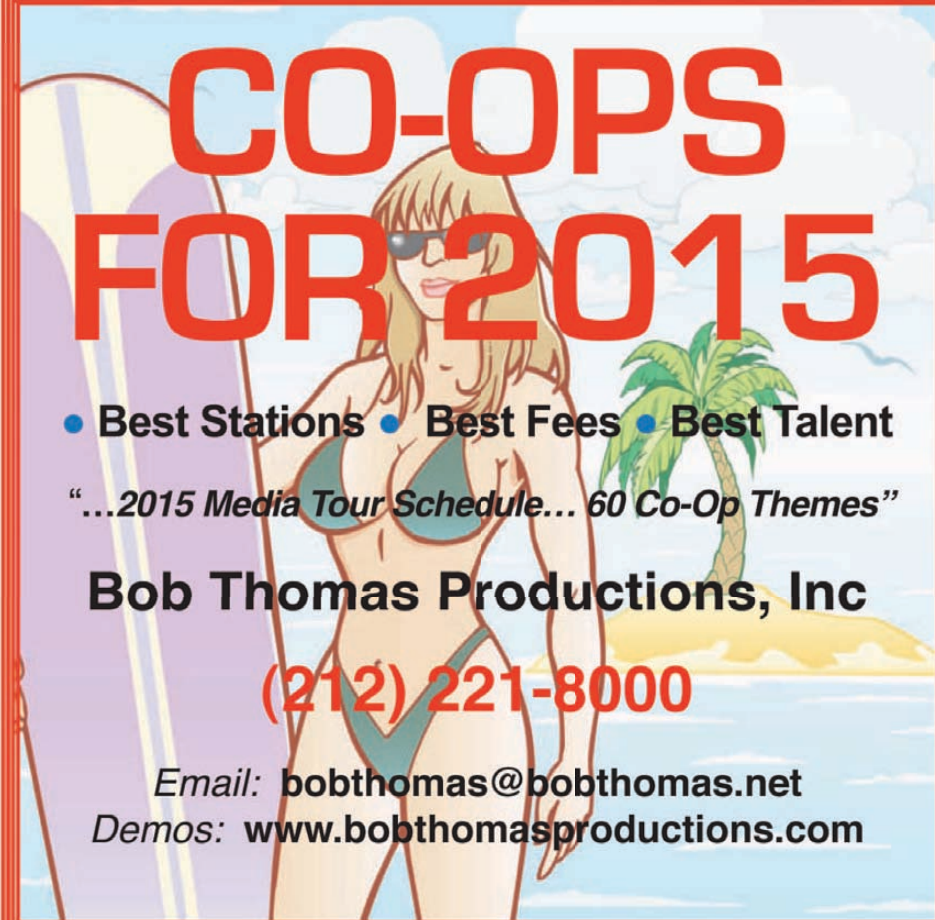
lowed by online sharing of investor presentations, microblogs (Twitter, StockTwits) and social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn, according to the survey, conducted by Brunswick Global Investor.

Forty-one percent reported that they “launched the construction” of an investment decision based on information seen on social or digital media, with 29% reporting the information came from blogs, up two percent over 2014. Asian investors appear more willing to pursue social leads, as 58% constructed an investment move from info gathered from a social/digital source. In Europe that rate was only 38%, while Americans were even more hesitant, at 36%.

Brunswick Insight queried 622 buy-side investors and sell-side analysts for the report, which found 64% believe digital media’s role will likely increase further in their investment decisions.

While sources like blogs and social networks have risen in importance over the past six years of Brunswick surveys, the importance of message boards has declined from 39% in 2009, to only 23%. During the period, those citing blogs as sources rose from 47% to 59%, and social networks jumped from 11% to 26%.

Despite the rise of investment information sourced from digital, investors overwhelmingly still rely on information direct from companies as their “most influential” source. ○



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# Tourism, development meet to promote destinations

It was once rare that destination marketing organizations and economic development organizations would engage in anything aside from polite conversation. Recent research confirming the value of “place branding,” however, indicates those tides of ambivalence are changing into a sea of campaign and collaboration among DMOs and EDOs joining forces from the city level to a national scale.

By Karyl Leigh Barnes

According to a recent study by Oxford Economics, “Destination Promotion: An Engine of Economic Development,” DMOs and EDOs that align their destination branding efforts are deriving considerable benefit from branding centrally, successfully attracting visitors, talent and investment alike.

It’s not hard to see why. The hospitality and tourism sectors are outperforming all other traded export sectors, and have been doing so since 1998, “represent[ing] a valuable locally-produced export for many regional economies.” As a result, in regions across the country and around the world, tourism exposes thousands of potential investors and skilled talent to locations they may have not otherwise considered as a place to live or do business.

The study found that tourism promotion is a catalyst for raising a destination’s profile; building transportation networks and connecting to new markets; targeting investment attraction through conventions and tradeshows; and raising quality of life, which is invaluable in attracting skilled talent.

## Quality of life: attracting visitors, talent

Tourism public relations initiatives strive to bring a place to life, showcasing a destination’s distinctive lifestyle offerings, from arts and culture to the great outdoors, family attractions and world-class cuisine. As it turns out, these quality of life factors are also essential for attracting a skilled workforce. In order to retain and expand business and industry, it’s essential to entice talent — and top talent seeks livable communities with a wealth of amenities. This makes DMOs, which have been telling lifestyle stories for decades to entice travelers, the perfect partner for EDOs looking for this expertise in order to define their lifestyle amenities.

Source Cincinnati is a business attraction group comprising 13 organizations, including the Cincinnati CVB, the chamber of

commerce and the area’s regional economic development organization. Initial research showed Cincinnati didn’t have a distinct reputation, so Source Cincinnati was established to undertake a national campaign to create a sense of place. Local businesses are keen on attracting highly skilled talent, so telling lifestyle stories that focus on what makes the city distinctive is crucial for this 15-county area.

ble Here.” DMO colleagues meet bi-monthly with the mayor’s office, the Louisville economic development office and many other stakeholders such as ball parks, universities and community development officials to determine how they’ll tell the city’s stories.

Targeting potential visitors, Karyl Leigh Barnes, employee talent and economic development projects, Louisville’s possibility campaign promotes accessibility, openness, friendliness and affordability.

McKinney, Texas, is home to domestic and international manufacturing employers, and growing lifestyle coverage has been critical in grabbing attention from executives, potential employees, and business and leisure travelers. The McKinney Conventions and Visitors Bureau, Main Street community organization, economic development corporation, and chamber of commerce work cohesively under the branding concept “McKinney: Unique by Nature” — and this unified branding campaign has made this city of 150,000 residents among the fastest growing in the U.S.

Conventions and trade shows

Successful media relations campaigns targeting consumers have led to further integration in the business-to-business sector.

Competition among destinations for convention business has never been more fierce, and savvy DMOs and EDOs have found great success in joining forces. Collectively, they are pursuing conferences that are strategic for exposing potential investors and talent to their city, giving EDOs the opportunity to establish connections with key decision makers.



A growing number of destinations are pooling economic development and marketing resources to promote tourism and business growth. Top row (L to R): Louisville, KY; Raleigh, NC. Bottom row: Sydney, AU; Cincinnati, OH.

Louisville skyline photo by Rich Hoyer.

Houston’s branding efforts began with a narrow focus on economic development and job creation but has grown into a major image campaign that dives deeply into quality of life messaging. This synergistic effort includes partners such as the Greater Houston Partnership, City of Houston, Greater Houston Chamber of Commerce, Houston First Convention and Visitors Bureau, and regional economic development allies. “Houston First” and “Houston: The City with No Limits” are showing early successes as this fourth largest U.S. city strives to lift Houston’s quality of life image.

The Louisville Convention and Visitors Bureau has been actively promoting tourism to travelers in an effort to recruit top talent to fuel business growth under the banner brand concept “Louisville: It’s Possi-



Karyl Leigh Barnes



Raleigh, North Carolina, was leading the country in nearly every measure of economic success, including rankings that are key for recruiting skilled workers. To leverage this position, Greater Raleigh CVB and the Raleigh Convention Center teamed up with Wake County/City of Raleigh Economic Development to market the destination for conventions that would introduce potential skilled workers in the areas of Life Sciences and Biotechnology (third-largest biotechnology cluster in the U.S.) and CleanTech (world's top 10 CleanTech clusters) to the community. Pursuing what they dubbed "the cerebral trail," conventions such as the Southeast Alternative Fuels Conference, International Conference on Ecology & Transportation and the CED Life Science Conference were wooed, thus introducing several hundred targeted individuals to Raleigh's business community.

In the wake of a major company closing, Salinas, California, needed to showcase its assets, including its world-renowned agricultural industry, to the world. Leveraging its strengths in agriculture technology, the City of Salinas partnered with several organizations including the Monterey County CVB to position Salinas as the perfect location for an ag-tech focused summit. The concept proved to be a major win when *Forbes* agreed to create "Forbes Reinventing America: The AgTech Summit." This confer-

ence will gather 400 of the top leaders and companies at the intersection of technology and agriculture in Salinas this July, helping the city achieve its economic development goals.

Scottish Development International sought to position Scotland as the premiere destination for quality seafood products. The organization teamed up with VisitScotland to boost awareness, increase exposure and ultimately drive exports. While SDI's proactive media relations campaign boosted awareness and a B2B campaign introduced potential North American seafood buyers to Scotland's capabilities at the Boston Seafood Show, VisitScotland pursued the International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade conference. By winning the conference, VisitScotland has secured a commitment to 1,320 bed nights and an economic impact of nearly \$1 million, and the strategic approach to its pursuit will further bring strategic influencers directly to Scotland to witness its seafood production capabilities.

Business Events Sydney has taken partnering with the state government's economic development arm to a whole new level, actually ensuring that a commitment to business events was part of the city's strategy for economic development as showcased in "Progressing the NSW Economic Development Framework." Through the development and successful roll-out of a business events am-

bassador program, which includes leaders who represent the New South Wales government's priority sectors, Business Events Sydney has secured \$22 million in expenditure by confirming such conferences as The World Conference of Dental Traumatology (1,000 delegates), the 12th Congress of the International Society for Organ Donation and Procurement (400 delegates) and the International Bar Association 2017 (4,000 delegates).

This cooperative approach has become so successful that a recent analysis in Skift indicated that several leading international convention bureaus are actually leaning away from tourism-driven marketing strategies, instead working with EDOs and private sector partners to focus on industry expertise.

Oxford Economics reports that "visitor activity is both a consequence of other economic activity (correlation) as well as an important predictive factor (causation) in wider economic development." So what are the key takeaways for a destination looking to raise its profile among visitors and investors? With either audience, communicating an authentic sense of place is paramount — and ultimately, collaboration is key. DMO/EDO partnerships are the first step to long-term success.

*Karyl Leigh Barnes is the Managing Partner of the Tourism Practice at Development Counsellors International. ○*



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# Inspiring the Millennial travel experience

We've heard it before: Millennials value experiences over all, and nowhere is this more apparent than in how they travel. "Vacations" were what their "tourists" parents did. The new generation of travelers demand connections to their destination's unique culture, their people and their way of life in authentic, meaningful ways.

By Christine Turner and Jeff Maldonado

As PR and digital professionals, we've witnessed the seismic shift in consumer engagement and the expectations of that engagement. This has been largely driven by technology that has evolved more in the past 10 years than in recent history. Today's young travelers have been on the front lines of these changes, earlier adopters that are changing the travel landscape by embracing everything from DIY planning and booking to the "Uberization" economy. Their loyalty is up for grabs, and they've proven adept at filtering the noise to hone their perfect travel experience, fancy amenities be damned. They also share — a lot — and as digital natives, demand on-the-go connectivity to document their experiences throughout the course of their journeys.

Too often, we get caught up in telling only our clients' stories. In our roles as storytellers, however, we have an obligation to help travellers tell their stories — ideally, of course, through the lenses of the brands we represent. Here are three principles to help you and your clients get organized when considering how best to reach Millennial travelers.

## Focus on the "can't get anywhere else"

Every destination and property has its something that sets it apart from the rest — a flavor, a sound, or a distinct energy. Millennial travelers are attuned to these differences and actively seek them out. These emotional cues provide the foundation for travel storytelling and ultimately the desire for even richer, deeper experiences.

It's imperative that travel brands find a way to tie themselves to this notion of uniqueness that carefully, creatively and authentically defines their role in bringing those somethings to life. Resist the urge to be iterative in your storytelling — no one wants a travel brochure. Rather set the stage for something more along the lines of a "choose your own adventure" book that highlights the distinctive storylines from which a traveler can choose. One way to accomplish this is by tapping local experts as ambassadors. Viceroy Snowmass created an innovative "Ski with the Chef" experience that paired guests with the resort chef (a Snowmass local) for a skiing and

snowboarding tour of the mountain and an après-ski culinary course.

## Embrace a culture of sharing

Catit, a restaurant in Tel Aviv, Israel, by Carmel Winery, offers a program called "Foodography" that pairs its high-end cuisine with photo-friendly plating — the plates are specially designed with built-in smartphone stands, while some even spin to set up spinning, 360-degree motion graphics. This is a fantastic example of a brand experimenting with the power of sharing and leveraging the habits of Millennials in a wholly creative way — quality-controlled, user-generated content.

Experience and sharing used to be separate stages of the travel lifecycle. Now they're intertwined. It's important to remember that real-time sharing by Millennial travelers will undoubtedly happen, with or without a brand's input or direction. They want their family and friends to see the story they're crafting as it's happening. Today, FOMO (a.k.a. fear of missing out) drives motivation to share as much as it inspires individuals to do something — it's the new WOM (word-of-mouth) in today's digital age, and one of the most effective forms of bottom-up marketing. At Four Seasons Resort Whistler, we created a wilderness wellness experience that took "spa day" outside to a nearby remote hot springs for a day of massage, yoga and relaxation, providing guests with beautiful scenery and a uniquely shareable experience.

## Value the whole journey

Just as Millennial travelers are invested in their journeys from beginning to end, so too should travel brands understand the importance of being there for them every step of the way. This means executing dynamic storytelling along with utilitarian support to make their experiences as tailored as possible.

It also means a new approach to online and social media engagement, one that allows you to appropriately scale your efforts to ensure you're meeting these travellers at all relevant touch-points. From itinerary planning and recommendations to post-travel engagement and updates, communicators are in a prime position to deliver on the promise of their travel brands,

and create longstanding relationships with a consumer segment whose influence is growing by leaps and bounds. Here are some tips on how to do that:

## Nurture your client's distinct voice

Find the right voice that reflects your brand's cultural proposition and serves to define who you want to be known as. Consider a voice-mapping exercise that highlights your brand personified: its character or persona; the tone it uses to communicate; the distinct language it uses to set itself apart; and its purpose within the larger conversation.

## Test and learn

Don't be afraid to test organic and paid content and engagement opportunities across multiple channels but ultimately settle on those from which you're seeing the highest return — and ditch the rest (for now). True optimization is about scaling smart and maximizing your resources to hone your activity in the right places.

## Listen and adapt

As you map your Millennial strategy, make a concerted effort to mine and listen for stories they're already telling, where they're being told throughout the social web, and how they're being shared with one another. Gociety took these principles to a new level by launching a social network specifically for outdoor enthusiasts, empowering conversation, online connectivity and offline experiences and gaining valuable insights into their consumer along the way. Social listening is a gold mine for how you can carve out your own chapters and contribute to the stories that are sure to inspire a generation of travelers.

Christine Turner is Founder and President of Turner Public Relations, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fahlgren Mortine. Jeff Maldonado is Turner PR's Vice President of Digital Communications. ○



Christine Turner



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# Rules of engagement: planning a successful press trip

Press trips remain enormously popular for the media and are a great way to win client coverage. However, plenty of things can go wrong. Itineraries should be conducive to coverage, but an overly packed schedule that herds journalists won't allow them the needed time to write. Ironing out details and managing client and journalist expectations before the trip begins is paramount, and establishing protocols for journalists, as well as an orientation upon arrival, is key for success.

By Elizabeth Maxim

Press trips are a great way to give journalists an immersive experience, secure compelling coverage, and strengthen relationships with your media contacts. They can also be an absolute blast and a PR home run, generating hundreds of millions of impressions for your client.

They can also be a logistical nightmare, and a bad experience can leave everyone frustrated and disappointed. But there's no reason your press trip shouldn't be a smashing success, as long as you plan ahead and follow some simple guidelines.

I'm writing this fresh off of Gumball 3000, a 3,000 mile motor rally that spans across multiple countries and continents in just 10 days. Our client was sponsoring the event with two 1969 z/28 Camaros, and we invited over 20 journalists to cover the event.

Our goals were clear: get written and visual coverage of the event including our client's name, messaging, and branding as much as possible. What we didn't anticipate was how absolutely chaotic the rally would actually be, although considering that it consisted of over 240 people in total, I guess we shouldn't have been surprised. However, thanks to months of careful planning beforehand, a lot of hands-on attention throughout, and thorough follow-up afterwards, we ended the event with a very satisfied client, engaged journalists and unforgettable memories.

So what are the basic rules for a great press trip?

## Manage expectations prior to the trip

This applies to both your client and the journalists. Make sure you fully understand the client's main objective before you even begin pitching media. You need to articulate this objective to the media from the moment you invite them on the trip. Don't be afraid to have a "wish list" of asks for the journalist; you need to be clear about the direction, content and type of coverage you are looking for from the start.

On the same token, it's important to understand what each journalist is hoping to get out of the trip, as it will likely vary from person to person.

Carrie Borzillo, a writer for *Men's Health*

and other publications, stresses, "Talk to the writers in advance of the event to find out their specific needs for coverage, interviews, and photos. [Figure out who you] need to coordinate with to make those needs happen — such as other publicists for the event and the individual celebrity publicists."

Gumball was full of celebrities, from Deadmau5 to Tommy Lee to Dolph Lundgren. It wasn't always easy to set up interviews with some of the more private celebrities, but it was important that we coordinated with the event PR team and celebrities to the best of our ability before the event, so that our media contacts could get access to the people they needed for their story.

## Carefully plan the itinerary

As Jeffrey Gomez, Editor-in-Chief of *The Snob* magazine explains, "An itinerary is always first priority for me. I want to know who, what, when, where and how BEFORE I leave my house. The details matter."

## Don't plan every second

All of the journalists I've spoken to have echoed one sentiment across the board: make sure to give the journalists some free time on the trip to decompress, relax and, most importantly, write! After all, no matter how much fun they are having with the activities planned, at the end of the day they are there to get content and coverage. If you are herding them around from place to place all day and night, then you're not giving them time to actually write and share content, which is the reason that you invited them on the trip.

Group dinners are good for team bonding, but mandatory meals together every single day can make journalists feel trapped. On this note, as Borzillo reminded me, "The journalists' agenda is more important than the organizers' [agenda]. If you have to skip a dinner to take a writer to an interview opportunity, do it." Yes, the itinerary is there for a reason, and although you wouldn't want a journalist to completely disregard the itinerary for the entire trip, you need to give them the tools and time to get the story they need.

## Two words: free Wi-Fi

Another thing that is absolutely critical

for journalists is internet access in the hotels each night. Nicolas Stecher, an editor for publications including *AskMen* and *Nylon* told me, "I don't think it's professional to have journalists pay for internet at their hotels. The web is obviously critical for us to get our assignments done. [Paying for internet at every hotel] can get expensive when you're freelance and on your own dime."

It may seem like a no-brainer, but be sure to touch base with your client and each hotel beforehand to make sure that internet expenses are covered for the journalists' rooms.

## Communication is key

When you're coordinating a large group of journalists in a foreign country (or unfamiliar city), it's imperative to have an efficient system of communication established between the journalists, the PR team, and the client.

Let's take Gumball 3000 as an example. Coordinating a team of more than 40 people, driving hundreds of miles each day and arriving in a new country every night, all on unfamiliar roads with signs in unfamiliar languages, could potentially be a recipe for disaster. We were lucky enough to be working with a fantastic event team who gave every member of our group a smart phone installed with a group chat app and a customized app with maps and an updated itinerary each day. We also set up a buddy system, so that everyone was accountable for at least one other person. No one got left behind, and everyone was aware of the schedule from day to day, which drastically minimized the stress for everyone involved.

## Don't forget to have fun

Press trips should be fun, engaging, and natural. If they feel too staged, the journalists will pick up on it and it will be reflected in their final articles. Have fun with the press trip and the media will, too.

Elizabeth Maxim is Senior Account Executive at Marketing Maven. ○



Elizabeth Maxim





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# New frontiers: the rising market of solo travel

A growing trend of travelers exploring the world on their own has eclipsed the boundaries of age, gender, and background.

By Adrienne Jordan

Reasons for the surge in solo travel are multifaceted. For one, the percentage of American adults who have never been married is at a historic high; in 2012, one in five adults 25 and older had never been married, according to the Pew Research Center, a vast difference from one in 10 adults in 1960. According to the Travel Industry Association, thirty million single American women now travel at least once a year, and the travel industry is addressing this rise in women's solo travel by creating tailored programs and packages. For example, some hotels have women-only floors (especially popular in Middle East destinations), group travel retreats where women can meet like-minded travelers, and tour companies with guides that serve as a source of information for single travelers.

"Since half of American adults are single, solo travel is up," said Florence Quinn, CEO of Quinn PR. "More people are getting married later, divorcing and living longer. A man or woman who outlives a spouse may take up solo travel. There is more acceptance in our culture for people to be out and about alone."

Baby boomers are another demographic experiencing a sharp rise in solo travel. A December 2014 AARP survey found 37% of Baby Boomers had taken a solo trip or explored solo travel, and 81% said they planned to travel solo again in the next year.

Survey participants identified challenges with traveling solo, like finding activities, coordinating transportation, creating an itinerary and finding the best time to travel. However, companies are creating itineraries that eliminate the need to plan day-to-day activities. River cruise company Emerald Waterways is popular with seniors, with the average age on many of their cruises being over 55. Their Tulip Cruise itinerary includes all meals on board, daily day tours in Holland and the Netherlands, and a staff to assist with handling everything from air-port transfers to dietary restrictions.

"When traveling solo, I'm outside my comfort zone and naturally ask more ques-

tions," said consumer traveler, Josh Nathan. "They yield a richer understanding of each destination, its people, as well as myself. I have yet to find a store or catalog that offers anything close."



The travel industry is addressing the growing number of Americans that now travel alone.

Photos: VBT Bicycling and Walking Vacations.

## Travel companies, hotels meet demand

Many travel companies and tour operators are creating itineraries specifically for the solo traveler. The most prominent example is the reduction and elimination of travel supplements, which penalize people traveling without a companion. Solos Holidays & Vacations was formed in the UK in 1982, offering a dedicated tour leader that caters to the single traveler. The company recently launched Solos Vacations in North America to meet the demands of this worldwide trend. At Bill Peach Journeys, a tour company based in Australia, there are trips designed for the "Single Traveler" to destinations like Southern Africa, Alaska, and Norway. Their supplement-free journeys have dinners and experiences to allow for friend-making opportunities.

Adventure tour company Trafalgar has seen a demand for solo travel double over the past five years, and their guided vacations allow people to be accompanied by a travel director who serves as a personal local expert. Trafalgar's new 50-100% discount on the single supplements for 2015 trips was so successful that the discount sold

out within the first few months. Shop Gotham, New York City's premiere shopping tour company has been around since 2001, attracts women who choose to travel solo to the city. Reset Retreat is an exclusive women's wellness and adventure retreat to Belize and caters to solo travelers.

A recent Reset Retreat participant remarked, "To have perfect strangers meet for the first time and by the end of seven days build relationships so strong, it is as if we have all known each other for years."

Tour companies are not the only industry now marketing to the solo traveler. Hotels are jumping on the bandwagon as well, by creating packages and deals for people traveling alone.

"The trend of solo travel we are experiencing is mostly women with dogs," said Sheila Oranch of Coppertoppe Inn & Retreat Center in Hebron, New Hampshire.

Jekyll Island Club Hotel in Georgia has a Solo Traveler Package, which includes breakfast each morning, a ticket to the Georgia Sea Turtle Center, Victorian Tea and bicycle rentals for one day.

"Wellness is now mainstream in the travel industry, and women are combining a wellness trip with a solo travel experience, like surf camps or destination spa," said Sarah Evans, Partner J Public Relations and Seventh & Wit. "Some women check in for weeks at a time to places like Vana Retreats in the Himalayas of India or the Ranch at Live Oak in Malibu. L'Auberge in Sedona sojourn package has yoga, hiking, meditation which attracts many solo travelers. Women's only floors are also popping up more frequently."

## Changing solo travel perceptions

Some common apprehensions about solo travel remain, which have inhibited its growth. These include safety, lack of companionship, and an inability to plan their own itinerary.

Susan Eckert, Founder of Adventure-Women, a travel company that specializes in trips for groups of women traveling solo, said, "You need not go it alone just to enjoy the benefits of traveling on your own. Traveling with a group of individuals with the same goal can be just as adventuresome while providing you with a sense of safety,

— Continued on next page



direction and even a few friends along the way.”

More than 70% of AdventureWomen travelers return for a second trip with many coming back 20 or more times. They cite the reasons for traveling solo with a group as: getting away without friends and family, escaping the pressures of the world, and being totally and completely themselves.

Eckert has coined these types of solo excursions as “free to be me” travel. In 2015, AdventureWomen will be leading groups of solo women on over 15 trips, including horseback riding through Ireland, glamping in the footsteps of Lewis & Clark in Montana and an Alaska bear viewing safari.

Groups can secure better rates and discounts than single travelers — especially with airfare — which attracts solo travelers to join in on tours. This benefits women who are traveling to places where cultural expectations may be different, such as to Middle Eastern destinations. Traveling with a group improves safety and also allows a hands-off approach of planning and executing an itinerary.

Michael Sherman, Life Coach and Relationship Expert, has addressed some of these apprehensions of solo travel in his book, *The Zen of Solo Travel: A Journey from Anxiety to Enlightenment*. Sherman conducts in-person and online seminars, “Solo Travel Therapy,” which is aimed at giving people a sense of self-discovery, inner wisdom, and a feeling of aliveness. The goal is to help people take all kinds of solo trips from a trip to a foreign land or a simple drive into the nature for the day. Sherman’s Facebook page, Solo Travel Therapy, is filled with motivational weekly posts on his enlightening experiences traveling alone.

“The best thing about doing this, about taking a pocket of time to leave everything in your life behind and set forth into motion to ‘another world’ are the amazing serendipities and accidental rendezvous that happen as you engage with the powerful emotional energy of solo travel,” said Sherman.

#### **Bloggers work the solo travel beat**

Solo bloggers and travel writers are finding a viable niche in editorial on traveling alone to capitalize on this growing trend.

“Solo travel is one of most luxurious gifts you can give yourself,” said Jessica Smith, writer-photographer at TheIntrepidAmazon.com. “In that glorious time you spend traveling alone, you can discover aspects of yourself you never knew existed, you can make new friends, you can ‘try on’ new behaviors and attitudes, you can take risks, and in the process you will grow in ways that will astonish you. Try it once and you’ll

be hooked forever.”

Another advocate of exploring the world alone is solo travel blogger Elizabeth Avery, who has traveled to every state and more than 60 countries, including solo trips to every major continent except Antarctica.

“I launched [www.SoloTrekker4U.com](http://www.SoloTrekker4U.com) as a free website in Dec 2012. Our purpose is to connect single travelers with well-priced 4-5 star travel,” said Avery.

Travel writer Janice Holly Booth describes herself as an “avid solo adventure traveler,” and has written a book for National Geographic, *Only Pack What You Can Carry*.

“Solitude helps us get quiet so we can move to the second essential, introspection,” said Booth. “Introspection gets us closer to ourselves so we can figure out where we’ve been, where we are, and where we want to go. This allows us to take risks, to push ourselves to place where we’re uncomfortable, and in doing so we become more courageous. And in commitment, we commit to building these four essentials into our lives for our whole lives (whether we’re travelling or not), and to commit also to never living a life less than what we want for ourselves.”

Mei Fong Chu, blogger at [www.meimichu.com](http://www.meimichu.com), recently wrote about her experience traveling alone in Asia. She titled

her post, “Is Sri Lanka Safe for The Single Woman Traveller?” Her conclusions stated “A single woman does garner a lot of attention from local men, whether curious, sleazy, opportunistic or plain money-minded. Although traveling in groups does keep the men at bay, it is fine for a lone girl to quench her wanderlust, as long as she is equipped with a keen sense of alertness, a hint of skepticism, and conservative dressing. I find avoiding eye contact and not responding a good way to make men leave you alone as they are often just trying their luck ... do your homework and always know the details of places of interest and hotels — learn the address, the opening hours, the ticket price and such.”

Tour operators, hotels, river cruises, and other sectors of the travel industry are responding to the growing worldwide population of solo travelers. Group discounts, elimination of single supplements, solo packages, and women-only hotel floors are some of the way the industry is shifting towards accepting the growth of both women solo travelers and baby boomers looking to vacation alone. A recent solo traveler ardently stated, “Some of my best friends were acquired while traveling solo. They may be halfway around the globe, but they are forever in my heart.” ○

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# IPW Orlando breaks attendance, industry records

The U.S. Travel Association's signature IPW event was held this year at Orlando's Orange County Convention Center. The 47th annual event, the travel industry's premier international marketplace and trade show, took in record numbers, with 6,500 delegates from 73 countries — including 1,300 domestic and international travel buyers — as well as 500 media professionals worldwide.

By Carla Marie Rupp and Jason Rupp

IPW (formerly called International Pow Wow) is the largest single generator of travel to the U.S. Travel journalists scheduled appointments with attractions, publicists, hotel representatives and destination representatives in both emerging and mature markets. Suppliers and buyers, tour operators, agents, and wholesalers were able to meet, discover new brand opportunities and develop new connections. It's projected that IPW Orlando 2015 will bring in 8.8 million international visitors to the United States, \$4.7 billion in direct bookings to the U.S. over the next three years, and \$28 billion in total spending, according to independent firm Rockport Analytics.

U.S. Travel announced that IPW's immediate projected economic impact for Orlando is \$11.6 million.

The amount of business in this one-stop travel shop was staggering. Nearly 100,000 business meetings, which were pre-scheduled online by participants, took place during the first three days between travel buyers, and U.S. travel reps — a record for IPW.

Since IPW was last held in Orlando, in 2010, industry figures point to significant growth in the number of buyers of United States travel from key international markets, including the United Kingdom (40%), Brazil (30%), Mexico (66%), Germany (17%) and Japan (10%). This year, the Chinese delegation was the largest ever, at 109%. Overall, total delegation at IPW increased 27% compared to when the Orlando event was held years ago.

## Travel PR makes a splash

Public relations played an important role in pitches made to travel journalists during personal meetings on a massive and colorful convention exhibition floor, at social functions and at marketplace events. Hundreds of stories come out each year about the conference host city, as well as the U.S. destinations represented, all due to the myriad networking connections made at IPW.

Communications professionals from around the world were given the opportunity to meet in person, and for once, in the same time zone.

"Finally putting the names from a computer screen to the faces of people with

personalities makes the process of forming lasting relationships immensely easier," said publicist Rachel Peace, Account Executive for Imagine Communications in New York. "I was able to share Broadway and New York City with individuals I could normally only dream of meeting ... there are editors, journalists and bloggers interested in the news I'd like to share ... As a PR professional, it's simply a matter of reaching the right people, in the right place, at the right time."

Media activities included a press brunch, sightseeing tours, luncheon talks, and memorable performances. Pre-trips and post trips were available for the media, delegates and publicists.

The brand new I-Drive 360 entertainment and dining complex, featuring the Orlando

To celebrate its first global campaign, "Orlando — the Never Ending Story," Visit Orlando announced it would launch a worldwide consumer campaign in search of the millions of stories its visitors have to share about the theme park capital of the world.

"Visit Orlando is reaching out to the storyteller in all of us. We want to showcase our visitors and the lifetime of memories made at our destination," said Aguel.

Aguel announced that unforgettable guest experiences will be collected through the website [www.OrlandoStories.com](http://www.OrlandoStories.com). Visitors are being encouraged to use #MyOrlandoStory when sharing posts, photos and videos on social media platforms.

"These images so wonderfully capture the diversity of our global visitors and the unique experiences that can only be found in Orlando. It's fitting to unite our guests through their connection with Orlando, a destination that was literally built on storytelling."

Following the press brunch and program, journalists were taken on chartered day tours around Orlando and the vicinity.

Sightseeing tours were carefully planned to interest journalists to write about things such as Florida's Winter Park, downtown Orlando's trendy spots, skyscrapers, sports, recreation activities, Lake Apopka, the Kennedy Space Center, Legoland Florida, an Orlando food tour, a shopping tour and behind the scenes activities at the famed theme parks, such as SeaWorld Orlando, Walt Disney World Resort and Universal Orlando Resort.

A luxury tour brought international journalists to such properties as the Four Seasons Orlando Resort at Walt Disney World Resort, Waldorf Astoria Orlando, Ritz-Carlton Orlando, as well as the Grande Lakes.

"After a year of careful planning and detailed execution, it's satisfying to see that Orlando's hosting of IPW was a record-setting success," said Mark Jaronski, Vice President of Communications for Visit Orlando. "Our destination was presented fabulously on the trade show floor, in sightseeing tours that stretched out across



Photos courtesy of Visit Orlando.

Eye, was the setting for the annual Sunday press brunch, hosted by Visit Orlando, the official tourism branch of Central Florida. Travel reporters and photographers from as far away as South Korea, Japan, Peru, Turkey, Australia, Portugal and Italy could try the varied cuisines of tropical Florida. While they were wine and dined, the press were briefed about what they would experience during the week and new developments in Orlando.

## Orlando goes big on branding

Visit Orlando President and CEO George Aguel told the media at a press brunch that Visit Orlando was "turning the page in unveiling a never-before-seen series of emotionally based, editorial-styled brand photographs and video that elicit the unique emotions that visitors experience in Orlando."

— Continued on next page



Central Florida and at unforgettable events hosted by our theme parks. All of this aligned beautifully with Visit Orlando's unveiling of new brand creative that elicits the unique emotions that visitors experience in Orlando and our announcement of a global search for the millions of stories our visitors have to share."

Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs and Visit Orlando CEO George Aguel announced that Orlando welcomed 62 million visitors in 2014, a record.

#### Events aplenty

Travel professionals, from attractions, destinations, hotels, amusement parks, museums, restaurants, spas, adventure operations, as well as tour operators, travel agents, travel buyers and international media all assembled to do business, network and socialize, performing a vital role in increasing the numbers of international visitors to the United States. At IPW, buyers and sellers are able to conduct business that would otherwise be generated only through an exhaustive number of around-the-world trips. Publicists and journalists exchange meaningful, productive, personal contacts and conversations, and are encouraged to post travel stories throughout the year on TravMedia, so that public relations officials can see journalist's work. TravMedia, the travel industry's global media network, actively makes available online press releases to IPW journalists and had a welcome presence in the well-equipped press room.

Visit Orlando was also on hand to assist journalists with hospitality and information — like their very own concierge to the city. IPW media staff gave assistance to journalists, answered questions, and aided with press conferences. A reverse marketplace, where journalists sit at tables and are visited by publicists and destinations looking for writers to report on their attractions, was also available. Nearly 200 exhibitors and publicists signed up for the valuable and useful Monday Media Marketplace, arranged by state.

PR came in many doses, large and small, at every opportunity. Destinations, such as Visit San Luis Obispo County, California, put together wine tasting events at their booths on the exhibition floor, with the invitations coming from their public relations firms. The reception featured Central Coast California wines from Paso Robles and Edna Valley.

"I've got a hidden gem travel destination client with no international PR budget so IPW Orlando was an extraordinary oppor-

tunity for them. More than 500 journalists attend IPW each year from 40 countries, so it's a cost-effective way to raise your PR profile globally in one stop. We were able to personally connect with nearly 50 journalists at the show, from outlets we'd have never had such access to on our own," said Jeanne Sullivan Billeci, representing Visit San Luis Obispo County, and owner of Sullivan Says PR.

Large-scale activities for all delegates included extravagant and well-thought-out social events for the cast of thousands. Opening night took place at Disney World's Magic Kingdom. SeaWorld Orlando hosted



special shows on their night.

The closing party was at Universal Orlando, where delegates laughed and enjoyed characters like Scooby-Doo & Shaggy, SpongeBob Squarepants, and Shrek. Paul Robert Miranda, CEO of Grupo Travel News made his way through Egyptian look-alikes and posed for a photo for Inbound Report's online publication. Angie Zok, Brand USA's marketing executive posed with the classic Curious George and the Man with the Yellow Hat.

One night was designated as a unique party night, since numerous destination and attractions made their own parties, geared toward their desired segments of the conference population. Several of these gatherings included New York City & Company, Fort Myers, Sanibel events, Minnesota (at the Hard Rock Hotel, with a Prince impersonator), Fort Worth, TX,

and Starwood Hotels.

San Francisco Travel hosted its annual fun networking party, which included dancing, bands, wines, and performances.

A special event for Canadian delegates was held at the Rosen Plaza Hotel at Club 39, with the reception on behalf of Discover America, planned with the help of publicist Dianne Murphy of DPR, who invited select media to attend.

CityPASS sponsored a jam-packed media marketplace reception, just before the grand SeaWorld party. Mike Gallagher and Mike Morey, Co-founders and Co-chairmen of CityPASS, and Megan Morey, the company's CEO, praised journalists and their contributions to the travel industry. At the reception, Travel Writing Award Competition winners were again announced. Four travel journalists captured top honors.

The U.S. Travel Association, which coordinates the annual prestigious awards, received 200 contest entries from more than 40 countries. The winners this year, who all received a \$1,000 cash prize and award certificates, were from Brazil, Sweden, United States, and United Kingdom.

Like always, a variety of press conferences were a big part of the week for the media. Brand USA President and CEO Christopher Thompson revealed the company's plans and cited China and India as markets for growth potential. Caroline Beteta, President and CEO of Visit California, answered numerous questions from reporters on what's going on in California. Ernest Wooden Jr., President and CEO of the Los Angeles CVB, also addressed the international media. Universal Studios Hollywood announced the 2016 arrival

in Southern California of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, with publicist Crystal Williams, Manager, International Publicity, sending out personal invitations to generate more buzz. The New York City press conference included a report and Q-and-A with Fred Dixon, president and CEO of New York City & Company. He focused on "The New New York City."

NYC & Company and Broadway Inbound sponsored a hugely popular luncheon with 150 Broadway entertainers from the shows "On the Town," "Matilda," "Book of Mormon," "Aladdin," "Lion King," and "Fiddler on the Roof," emceed by David Hyde Pierce of "Frasier" fame.

Future host city for IPW will be New Orleans, and the event will be held June 18-22, 2016.

*Carla Marie Rupp and Jason Rupp are freelance journalists and travel writers. ○*

# Media intelligence is key for travel and tourism

**Travelers rely more on technology now than ever, and as we move deeper into the 21st century, that reliance will only grow, affecting how we search for value, convenience, discovery, and experience.**

By Mark Thabit

**T**he technological aspects of travel don't fall solely under communicators' purview, but understanding customer expectations and how they rely on technology and content is firmly in PR's wheelhouse. After all, the PR professional plays a role in each part of the customer lifecycle from discovery to loyalty.

The following proprietary insights from Cision's Global Insights team came from thousands of news and social media conversations about technology and the travel experience. Though the insights relate specifically to travel and tourism, PR professionals in all industries can use the best practices associated with the information to better their communication in the near- and long-terms.

## Exceed Wi-Fi expectations

Many in business swear by the adage, "Under-promise and over-deliver." To do that, you first need to know what your audience truly wants.

As a whole, travelers expect to have easy and fast Internet access for their mobile devices. Just because travelers leave home doesn't mean they want to leave their technological creature comforts behind.

Wi-Fi availability in a hotel room has become as expected as a bed. However, our data show travelers feel that connection speeds offered often don't adequately meet their needs.

As this is a major pain point among leisure and business travelers, hotels and airlines should explore technologies that speed up connections. It just might be the differentiator that drives a customer away from a competitor.

In today's world, people turn to social to express frustration or joy about even the smallest parts of their day. For brands, the ability to draw insights from social (and traditional and digital) media gives them a crystal ball.

Almost every airline and hotel has Wi-Fi, but did they know that what they provided didn't meet expectations? Probably not since it's an ongoing problem.

Every industry has "weak Wi-Fi," an issue that if remedied would separate one brand from the rest. It's time for communicators to seize, share and act on that data, or else their competitors will.

## Context dictates platform

On average, travelers have 3.2 travel apps and rely on 2.2 of them. This is helpful information, but it doesn't paint the whole story. Communicators need to know how people use mobile apps.

Our data indicates mobile users rely on travel apps more while traveling than for booking because comparison shopping plays a big role in the consideration phase.

That insight should shape mobile app content strategies. To appeal to the on-the-move traveler, provide easy access to boarding passes, reservations and dining and entertainment options in the destination city. Itching for more sales? Consider the Progressive Insurance model and allow customers to compare prices in app.

How else do travelers use their apps? Though not the preferred method for booking travel well in advance, mobile apps are where time-crunched users turn to find a way to or a place to stay at their final destination.

Apps like Hotel Tonight and Booking Now capitalize on this by offering low-priced, last-minute options for lodging. Branded hotel apps would likely drive app usage by providing similar opportunities. But just because the traveler has to make plans quickly doesn't mean they will sacrifice research. Provide the same information available on your company website in a mobile-friendly format.

Communication professionals should strive to understand how their target audiences use the platforms on which they serve content and conversion opportunities.

That's not an idea exclusive to apps. It should help shape what content you create for Facebook versus Instagram, your nurture goals for mobile audiences versus desktop and a million other possibilities.

When you customize your platforms to create experiences that cater to the context of your audience, you will better nurture prospects and instill loyalty with the people you reach.

## Starwood's social skills shine

Innovation that provides solutions to a population's hassles will always be front page, shareable news.

Starwood Hotels & Resorts made waves when they created a solution to everyday

traveler pains using media intelligence and insights.

Last November, Starwood announced it would become the hospitality industry's first company to turn guests' smartphones into room keys through the power of a Bluetooth-enabled lock.

More than a novelty, Starwood developed the technology to satisfy a large segment of its audience: travel-weary business people looking to more easily navigate the hotel experience.

Technology doesn't deserve all the credit for the buzz Starwood produced. The communication team strategically spaced out its communication to create two spikes of news.

The first came on November 3, the date of their first press release announcing the updated app. Four days later, another press release provided information about how the system worked and created a smaller bump after the initial news faded.

Starwood also relied on its social channels to amplify the most enthusiastic pieces of coverage and deliver promotional and general information across its website and social channels. Its YouTube channel, for example, had its own keyless entry playlist that grabbed nearly 200,000 total views.

About a month later, to spike interest again, Starwood used influencer marketing, having Apple Co-Founder Steve Wozniak star in a video in which he shows how to use keyless entry that garnered 45,000 views.

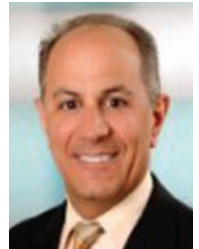
Each social channel provided a link back to the Starwood website where more information and downloads were available.

## Moving forward

Satiating technological desires to aid audiences' discovery, browsing or shopping experiences goes beyond the travel and tourism industry. Communicators too often play catch-up with consumers' evolving habits even though they have access to real-time information about their audience's biggest wants, needs and desires.

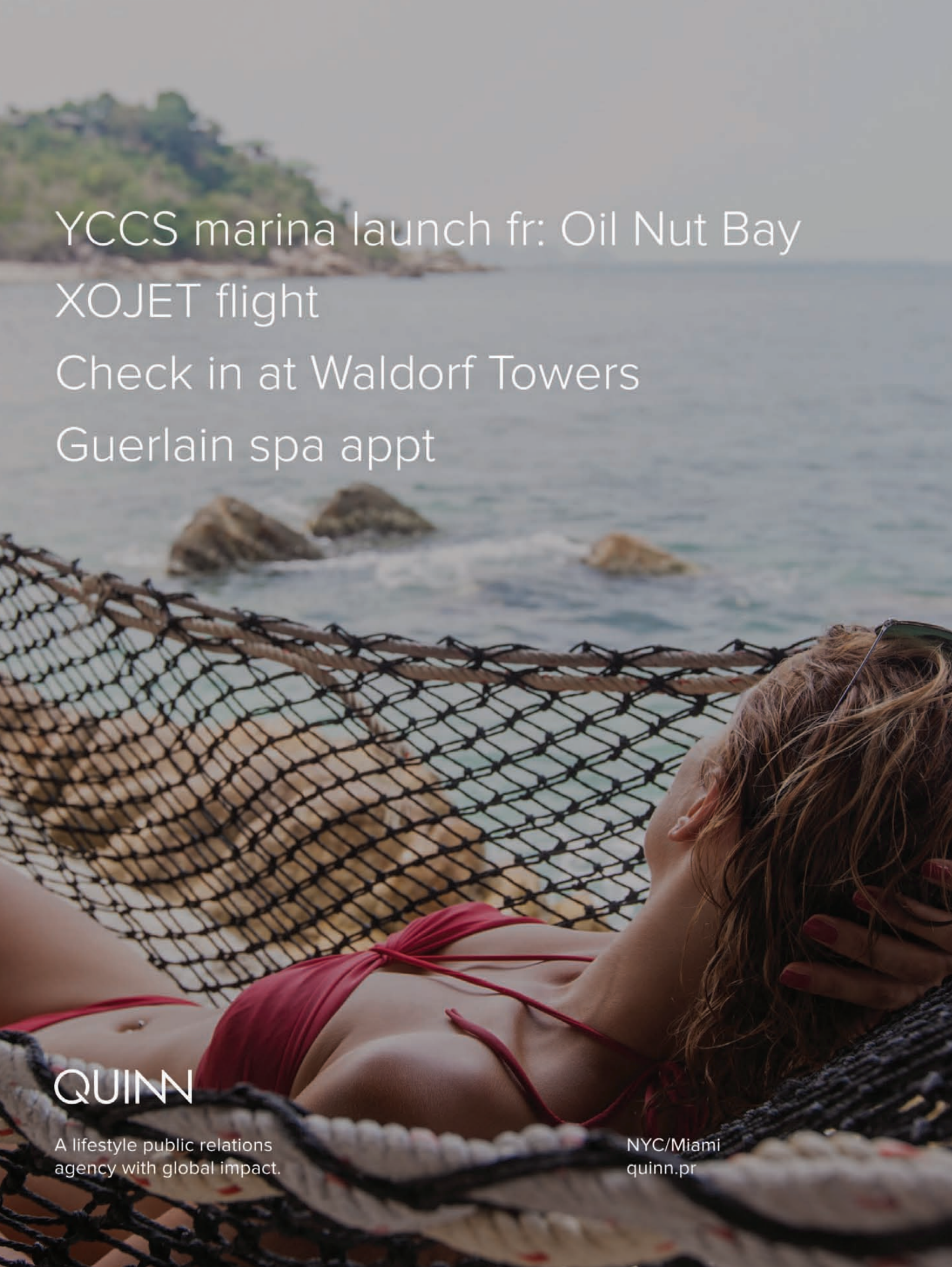
Using media intelligence to identify consumer pain points provides brands in any industry an opportunity to differentiate themselves from competitors. And as Starwood shows, the key to success requires being first and clearly communicating that advantage to audiences.

Mark Thabit is CMO of Cision. ○



Mark Thabit



A woman with long, wavy brown hair is lying in a black rope hammock. She is wearing a red halter-neck bikini top. Her head is tilted back, and she has sunglasses perched on her head. The background shows a calm ocean with some rocks in the water and a green, hilly coastline in the distance under a clear sky.

YCCS marina launch fr: Oil Nut Bay  
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# Mastering the art of the desk-side meeting

Securing one-on-one meetings between clients and media emerges as a crafty new tool in the travel PR professional's toolbox

By Lou Hammond

In the past, holding big events in a major city was a surefire way to boost media engagement and awareness for a destination and hospitality client. Best case scenario: increased press coverage in multiple outlets with one deft and well-executed stroke.

But the tide seems to be shifting. Event invitations seem to garner fewer acceptances, last-minute cancellations are on the rise, and even worse, so are no-shows. It's understandable. Attending an event requires a serious time commitment for editors and broadcast producers. With today's leaner, meaner mastheads, the editor's or producer's time is more precious than ever. In addition to an event that may last hours, media have to account for travel time to and from the venue — and all for something that will most likely not result in exclusive coverage since they're there with all their peers from competing outlets.

## Close encounters

Rather than asking editors and producers to come to you en masse to attend an event, why not go to them? Suddenly, you're able to shift your strategy from the shotgun approach to the finely focused aim.

Big events still have their place, especially for major reveals or launches. But we're increasingly finding that taking a client representative for a quiet, brief, intimate desk-side meeting with an editor or producer has a greatly increased chance to secure major coverage.

Such personal encounters create multiple advantages. First, the level of intimacy leads to a heightened sense of confidentiality and collaboration. It allows the sort of one-on-one rapport that is just not possible in a large setting with scores of people, regardless if you — or your client — are a networking ninja. Each party has the other's undivided attention, allowing the client and you to hear the producer or editor's needs and respond, which allows the client and PR pro to craft specific, finely honed pitches to meet those needs.

A desk-side meeting creates a sense of relationship-forging that, while it may not pay immediate dividends (although often it does), creates greater long-term opportunities. It lays the foundation for sending targeted pitches to the editor, who will remember you and your client.

Many media professionals — editors and writers especially — tend by nature to be introverts. Get them in a large setting, and they tend to get distracted by the stress of

“working the crowd.” But they thrive in intimate settings and their natural curiosity makes them energized about learning other people's stories. When you meet with them one-on-one in their office (or, alternately, a coffee shop) you're on the editor's turf, which gives them a sense of security and control that allows them to relax and hone in on what your client is saying.



**A desk-side with an editor at Peter Greenberg landed Virginia a four-minute segment on “CBS This Morning.”**

You might be a great communicator, but no matter how effective you are, nobody tells your client's story better than your client. Putting your client in a position to gain the editor or producer's exclusive, undivided attention offers a serious advantage. An added benefit: it allows you to hear your

client tell their story in a different setting, which may help you learn amazing new facets.

## True tales from the desk-side

Below are some real-life examples of recent desk-sides arranged by Lou Hammond & Associates for its clients and the positive results they garnered.

An associate once arranged a desk-side for Providence, Rhode Island with a beauty editor at *Marie Claire*. During the meeting, the client learned about an opportunity for *Marie Claire*'s “What I Love About Me Beauty Roadshow” and was able to pitch specific photo shoot locations around the city. *Marie Claire* went to Providence the following weekend, connected with a local blogger, and published the piece in their April issue.



Lou Hammond

During a desk-side, LH&A introduced New Hampshire to a travel editor at *Parents*. During the meeting, the client pitched offerings in the state's White Mountains region. The editor responded that she was filing a story that day on family holiday getaways. This chance discovery prompted the editor to include Santa's Village in Jefferson, New Hampshire in the December print issue, as well as in an online roundup.

LH&A scheduled a desk-side between Virginia Tourism and an editor for “Travel Detective” Peter Greenberg. Later that week, another editor with Greenberg, who had learned about the meeting from her colleague, called the LH&A associate to say that “CBS This Morning” was scheduled to record a segment on affordable summer driving destinations hosted by Greenberg. She thought that Richmond would be a perfect fit for the piece. LH&A provided additional information on the destination which ran on the segment a day later.

In summary, desk-sides solidify your reputation in the eyes of your client and create opportunities for you to shine. It replaces the abstract concept of PR with a demonstration of how you conduct your business on their behalf. They'll gain an enhanced appreciation for what you do to serve their community. Best of all, it betters the odds of landing coverage for your client, and every client likes to see themselves in print or on the air.

*Lou Hammond is Founder and Chairman of Lou Hammond & Associates. ○*



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# How to build a successful travel PR firm

From a cramped, shared workplace to a quadruple-wide designer office; from a single employee to a staff of 28 professionals; from a lone hotel client to a roster of more than 60 in travel, lifestyle and wellness worldwide. The story of one travel firm's growth reveals a need to be malleable and to evolve constantly, all while maintaining its boutique roots in an "agency" world.

By Jennifer Hawkins

Hawkins International was launched 14 years ago in a room the size of a closet that overlooked Fifth Avenue on the edge of Chelsea. When the room got too crowded, we'd settle onto the carpet in the hall outside.

However, the roots of the firm go back a year earlier during an exploratory adventure I took in Burma — now Myanmar — inspired by the novel *Burmese Days* by George Orwell.

Stemming from my childhood, when my father took me out of school to traverse Europe for six weeks, I've always been passionate about travel, and have set toe in 45 countries across six continents over the years. On this particular occasion, while traveling the Irrawaddy River "on the road to Mandalay," it dawned on me that I was literally blazing new trails in a country without any tourism infrastructure.

Travel, I realized, is about more than sightseeing. It's about putting food on people's tables — tour operators, guides, boat crews, local artisans, ticket takers, chefs, waiters, flight attendants ... to name a few. All at once, I was inspired to find ways to promote what they do and draw travelers their way.

Of particular fascination were hotels and resorts. Beyond the top-line Wikipedia definition of "an establishment that provides lodging paid on a short-term basis," hotels are a small, magical world unto themselves. Hotels may offer retail, dining, wellness, housekeeping, hot showers, mints on pillows, swimming pools and pampering spas. There may be art on the walls, designer furniture, bustling business centers, and staff from many countries and cultures. Hotels can be centers of calm or crackling with energy, but each has a personality of its own. And when something heavy goes down outside — war, disease, natural disasters, you name it — they keep operating for the security and comfort of their guests.

I was enchanted with hotels and vowed to understand the industry of hotels, and get word out on what welcomes behind their doors.

I launched Hawkins International during a tough time, with the trauma of 9/11 still

ringing around the globe and the difficult recession that followed putting a crimp on corporate and vacation travel budgets. I shared this small space with another boutique agency and we shared our first employee. The firm grew organically, one step after another, with my Rolodex — remember those? — of contacts from my previous PR position with Orient-Express Hotels as its foundation.

My first hire was a writer who wrote like a journalist because he was one; the better to create a unique voice for press releases that told our clients' stories and stood out from the "XYZ Hotel today announced ..." crowd. The emphasis on storytelling has been a constant throughout our history and continues with our new HIPR Content Studio with a mission to mine and leverage each client's unique assets to create compelling editorial that adds value to their brands and reaches their key audiences in fresh and creative ways.

My second hire was a vivacious and driven PR pro with sales-and-marketing background, experience generating media coverage and, it turns out, a passion for getting ventures like Hawkins International off the ground. Like myself, she was fascinated with hotels and wanted to understand our clients, not just promote them. Together, we realized Hawkins International functions best as an extension of client marketing teams and in concert with in-house or local PR agencies.

Even today, it seems like internal meetings at our agency are more about client growth strategies than rounding up new business. Those very first two employees are still with the agency.

We positioned Hawkins International as a "boutique" outfit in a sea of sizable travel PR firms, able to maneuver independently while providing personal attention, proven strategies, and real relationships to promote brands. As much as we've grown, that independent boutique philosophy still leads us today. We've taken an entrepreneurial path to grow the company. So much so, in fact, that we are honored to have landed a spot on the *Inc.* 5,000 List in 2014.

Remember the state of social media just

after the turn of the millennium? Of course not — it didn't exist yet. The progress of Hawkins International followed lockstep with the post-bust digital boom. We've embraced cutting-edge communications as they have unfolded. Our Social Media Division, Digital Team and dedicated Trend-Spotting specialists employ social media and influencer marketing for the benefit of our clients and our firm.

Even still, we continue to integrate traditional communications into client services to assure we reach journalists, tastemakers and stakeholders via whatever media they tap.

Hawkins International has also made a specialty of launching clients off the ground. Our self-generated Launch Pad strategy has introduced 25 new builds, renovated properties, and repositioned hotels and cruise ships to the North American Media market in the past three years alone. As the growth of travel continues — there are a whole lot of curious Millennials out there and they don't seem to like sitting around — we are strategically positioned to use our Launch Pad much more in the years ahead.

The above wouldn't amount to much without the incredible talent behind Hawkins International. We staff real influencers and experts in luxury travel, wellness and lifestyles, and we make a point to work with people who are true wanderlusters. Ours is an entrepreneurial atmosphere that has a lot of independent, hard-working, hard traveling professionals who appreciate the magic of a weekend getaway or a month-long safari. There may be only one Irrawaddy, but the world is full of destinations, hotels and other delights just waiting to be experienced.

I am always impressed at the number of people in our office whose inspiration for what they do so well mirrors my own.

Jennifer Hawkins is President of Hawkins International PR. ●



Jennifer Hawkins



# Why people buy travel brands, not commodities

PR has always been about storytelling, and perhaps nowhere is this notion more apparent than in the hospitality industry. One PR agency head recently spoke with the communications leader for a brand of international, full-service hotels, regarding the best ways to set goals and measure PR results for travel brands, as well as the importance of the guest experience.

**F**lorence Quinn, President of Quinn PR, recently spoke with Robert Allegrini, Vice President of Communications, The Americas, for Hilton Worldwide, regarding the current and future travel PR landscape.

**FQ:** Let's get right to it: What are the best ways to measure PR results in the hospitality industry?

**RA:** Despite the plethora of methods used to measure PR results, the best way is to set PR goals and expectations that are meaningful to the business, then support them with branding, marketing and sales. If the goals are to gather email addresses and trigger direct bookings, then these are the only measurements that matter.

**FQ:** I totally get that. For one travel client, our PR goals are to generate a certain number of new email addresses and direct bookings, because this is what the client determined was important.

Where do the following fall in the context of an overall PR plan: social media, partnerships, events, traditional media, banded content and native advertising?

**RA:** These are all tools. When to use each of them is contingent on the nature of the particular PR plan and its intended audience. Suffice to say that there are more tools at our disposal to disseminate a message now than ever before.

**FQ:** That's for sure. I like to apply filters. The brand, including its price point, is the first filter. The second filter is the target audience — where are they online, what do they read, where do they shop, what other brands do they like, what kind of events do they attend? These filters, coupled with the budget, will dictate the communications platforms.

How important is the strength of the

travel brand to achieve PR goals? How does one measure it?

**RA:** I think it is the other way around. Effective PR helps build strong brands; it propels them into recognizable names. There are numerous ways to measure brand strength, but I think the most meaningful is to determine the level of the brand's recognition and memorability as well as its distinctiveness and its preference among customers.



Quinn represents 12 of Hilton's top hotels around the world, producing award-winning work, including The HSMIA Best of Show for Waldorf Astoria and Towers of the Waldorf Astoria New York.



The media swarms around a vignette Quinn created in homage to Waldorf Astoria's rooftop bees. The bees were so special they arrived via town car and were escorted up a red carpet.

**FQ:** I'm glad to hear to you say that. People buy brands, not commodities. There is much talk about storytelling. How important is this to PR? How does one tell a story in the world of travel PR?

**RA:** PR has always been about storytelling. We craft compelling stories then communicate them through the channels we have touched upon.

In social media, you can have your customers tell your story with great authenticity so long as you are creative in your approach.

**FQ:** Another cool area we are dabbling in is to merge PR storytelling with sales techniques. Where is media today and where is it going?

**RA:** The media is paradoxically both more fragmented, with a plethora of bloggers and online outlets, and more consolidated by the collapse of traditional print outlets and, to a certain extent, by the reduction of broadcast resources.

Media is moving toward using third-party content, such as videos produced by the companies it is covering. This practice has become more acceptable, and video has become a more central component in storytelling.

**FQ:** I also like the rise of new media. Today brands, including human brands, are the media.

**FQ:** How do you think about PR in terms of the guest experience at hotels?

**RA:** There is a virtuous circle of PR around the guest experience.

Once the guests are at the hotel, they tell the story through social media. Their visual and verbal accounts of their experiences then compel others to partake in the same experiences and to perpetuate the cycle. ○



Florence Quinn



Robert Allegrini

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



To help bring South Africa's rich culture and musical heritage to NYC, Coyne and South African Tourism hosted a free mobile concert in Times Square headlined by South Africa's most renowned musical icons, timed to the start of Carnegie Hall's Music & Arts of South Africa festival.

## ALPAYTAC MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS/ PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Huma Gruaz**, *President/CEO*  
**Garrett Ryan**, *Executive Director of Digital/Social Media*

Alpaytac Marketing Communications/Public Relations is a multi-faceted, award-winning firm with an outstanding track record in the travel and tourism industries.

Founded in 2004 under the leadership of multilingual Huma Gruaz — a praised PR, marketing and branding expert named one of *PR News*' Top Women in PR in 2014 and winner of the 2012 PR Daily

Lifetime Achievement Award—Alpaytac's travel industry practice has included major airlines and international hotel chains. The agency has strategically helped build and maintain strong brand presence and generated unparalleled nationwide media coverage in major publications and on national television shows.

In three years of working with Turkish Airlines, Alpaytac's branding efforts, media outreach, PR support and event management increased the airline's brand visibility, contributing to the expansion of their U.S. network to seven gateways and additional destinations. Alpaytac executed the most successful U.S. PR campaign in the airline's history, generating more than 1.3 billion media impressions and receiving six industry recognitions, including the 2014 Bulldog Digital/Social PR Awards for Excellence in Online Communica-

tions Silver Award Winner, 2013 Bulldog Media Relations Awards for Excellence in Media and Publicity Campaigns Bronze Level Winner, and 2013 *PR News* Platinum Awards Finalist.

Alpaytac has worked with many prestigious global brands including Turkish Airlines; British Airways' OpenSkies; Avantair; JetEdge; The Four Seasons in Istanbul; Kempinski Hotel in Bodrum, Turkey; Hotel Le Bristol; Le Meurice Ritz Paris; Plaza Athenee; Hotel de Crillon; and Park Hyatt in Paris.

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

Alpaytac is headquartered in Chicago with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. It is also the leading U.S. agency for ECCO, one of the world's largest networks of independent PR agencies providing marketing communication services to Alpaytac clients in 40 countries around the globe.

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**Matt Kovacs**, *President*

BLAZE is the trusted partner of choice for lifestyle challenger brands hungry for a real piece of the marketshare. BLAZE has been retained by a growing number of savvy clients who want integrated PR, influencer and social media strategies - and flawless execution. BLAZE senior level professionals play a hands-on, day-to-day role with clients. With more than two decades of relationships and a solid team founded in strategic approaches, BLAZE is adroit in advancing client objectives and nimble to the quick-changing pace of media technologies.

Clients include: Adventure City, AmaWaterways, Great Mall, Marriott Hotels, Ontario Mills, Outlets at Orange, Schwabinger Tor, and Sofitel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills.

## CAROLYN IZZO INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS

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**Carolyn Izzo-Feldman**, *Pres. & Chief Strategist*

**Patricia Fahie**, *Executive VP*  
**Kate Wark**, *Senior Vice President*

CIIC is a full-service public relations, social media and marketing firm specializing in creating dynamic campaigns for the travel, hospitality, food & beverage and lifestyle industries. CIIC's work is not only strategic, creative and results-driven, but award winning as well. CIIC's work has been honored with a Media Relations Award by PR Daily as well as HSMIAI (Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International) Adrian Awards across Gold, Silver and Bronze categories.

Headquartered in New York, CIIC has affiliate offices in Los Angeles, San Diego, Mexico City and Miami, and is an exclusive member of latamPR and Tribe Global. Additionally, CIIC is certified as a women's business enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

Our clients include: Coney Island Brewery Company (NYC); Grindhouse Denim (NYC); Hotel El Ganzo (Cabo San Lucas, Mexico); Kimberly Hotel, The (NYC); Los Cabos International Film Festival; Los Cabos Tourism Board (Mexico); McGettigan's Bar & Restaurant (NYC); Mexico Grand Hotels (Los Cabos, Mexico); Solmar Hotels & Resorts (Los Cabos, Mexico); The Food & Shops at LaGuardia Airport (NYC); Tobin + Parnes Design (NYC).

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The Carolyn Izzo team (L to R): Carolyn Izzo-Feldman, President & Chief Strategist; Patricia Fahie, Executive Vice President; and Kate Wark, Senior Vice President.



**John Gogarty**, Executive VP  
**Jennifer Kamienski**, Senior VP  
**Lauren Mackiel Gory**, VP

Coyne's travel group has managed and executed world-class events, brand-building campaigns, social media programs and media relations for some of the travel industry's most prominent brands and destinations.

With clients spanning from Disney Parks & Resorts and Motel 6 to South Africa and The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, the travel team has developed ideas and campaigns that are out of this world — literally — including sending Buzz Lightyear to “infinity and beyond” with NASA.

Our in-depth working knowledge of the travel media puts our team in sync and in touch with the industry and your target audience daily. Coyne regularly places stories in national, local and trade publications for clients within the travel space. The key to our success — and yours — is that we garner coverage for our clients in both expected and unexpected places. From editor desksides to ground-breaking promotions, Coyne has the experience to make your brand stand out in a crowded travel marketplace.

## CURRENT

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Current is an agency that lives up to its name. To us, being Current means constantly thinking of new ways to connect brands with their consumers by uncovering real insights that inspire purpose-driven programs and deliver measurable results. With expertise in content strategy, public relations and social, we help clients engage their target audiences through a strategic blend of media, influencer and advocate initiatives.

Our team of passionate globe-trotters is tuned into trends, tapped into research and in the know about what makes headlines in the travel space. From celebrating Miami's Centennial on the Today Show to launching Club Med CREACTIVE by Cirque du Soleil, we pilot award-winning work for a variety of travel brands, including airlines, cruise lines, hotels and destinations.

Founded in 2006, the Current team collaborates coast to coast, with offices in New York, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Talk to Current to learn more!

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**Cathleen Decker**, President  
**Stacy Royal**, Managing Director

The Decker/Royal Agency is an integrated communications workshop, merging the best of traditional PR tactics with today's evolving platforms to create programs with a singular purpose: measurable results. Founded and wholly owned by industry veterans, Cathleen Decker and Stacy Royal, the company specializes in travel, hospitality, destination management, and the relentless pursuit of the things that make life a grand adventure.

We are an agency committed to keeping our clients in the conversation wherever it may live — online, in print or on-air and from social media to native advertising to digital content. We create rich programming that is designed to complement and enhance clients' overall marketing objectives. Publicity stunts may have their place, but the best PR efforts are part of a thoughtful, deliberate strategy that considers the long view and produces impactful results that move the needle forward.

Since its launch in 2014, The Decker/Royal Agency has cultivated a number of tourism, hospitality and lifestyle accounts, including one of the most successful brands in the travel industry: Sandals Resorts International.

## DQMPR

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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, meetings and incentives and the cruise



**Decker/Royal re-launched Sandals Ochi Beach Resort in spring 2015, hosting more than 40 media to celebrate the reimagining of one of the brand's original properties and aligning it with the luxury design introduced at its resorts in Grenada and Barbados.**

industry on behalf of clients.

DQMPR's excellence in public relations has been recognized by Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International with 16 Gold Adrian Awards as well as the Society of American Travel Writers with two gold and one silver award for work with Extraordinary Jour-

neys Africa, Finnair and Tourism Quebec. The agency was most recently honored with HSMIA's Platinum award for its work in bringing ABC's Ocean Mysteries Saturday morning program to the Saint Lawrence in Quebec — the first time

— Continued on page 28



**DQMPR at the HSMIA awards (from left to right): Stephanie D'Adamo, Mia Salazar, Yves Gentil and Chelsea Slavin. This year, the agency took home a Platinum Award for their work with Destination Quebec.**





Members of the Fahlgren Mortine tourism team in Jackson Hole, Wyo.

## DQMPR

Continued from page 27

the show filmed in a river. DQMPR received the platinum award previously, as well as an Emmy nomination, for its work with the Today Show and bringing WNYW Fox 5's Toni On! to Quebec for segments in Mount Tremblant and Quebec City during the city's 400th anniversary.

Current clients include the CroisiEurope, Extraordinary Journeys Africa, Finnair, Geringer Global Travel, Perillo Tours, Tourism New Zealand, St. Barth Properties, JourneYou and Zicasso Handcrafted Travel.

## EVINS COMMUNICATIONS

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**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, Groupe Floirat, Hotels & Resorts of Halekulani, Inspitato, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Rosewood Hotel & Resorts, The Knickerbocker, The Lanesborough, Uniworld River Cruises, 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 ULTRA Luxury Exchange (ULTRA), an invitation-only conference engaging the world's elite travel professionals.

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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 25 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 2015, Fahlgren Mortine was recognized with a PRSA Bronze Anvil for media relations and a U.S. Travel Association Award on behalf of the Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine also has locations in West Virginia, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Kentucky, New York and South Carolina. Travel industry client experience includes Office of TourismOhio; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; TravelNevada; Wyoming Office of Tourism; 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/LIFESTYLE GROUP

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**Gail L. Moaney**, Director & 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 have been proven by our successful long term partnerships with 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 communications, 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 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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**David Gwyn**, President / Principal  
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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 87 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts among its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, 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 exten-



sive destination marketing experience, specializing in lifestyle and leisure marketing and public relations. Current travel and tourism industry clients include the Dude Ranchers' Association, Concord Hospitality Enterprise Company, Trailways Transportation System, Greater Raleigh CVB, Wilmington and Beaches CVB (N.C.), Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach, and Tweetsie Railroad — North Carolina's Oldest Theme Park.

The agency 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.; and America's Historic Triangle, located in Williamsburg, Va.

In addition, FWV's fully integrated creative and digital team provides award-winning advertising, graphic design, and digital and social media services for a wide range of local, national and international clients.

## GRAHAM & ASSOCIATES, INC.

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Fax: 415/986-7216  
PR@graham-associates.com  
www.graham-associates.com

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 hallmark and emerging companies and properties, including Cavallo Point, Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Islands Resort, Post Ranch Inn, El Capitan Canyon, Evergreen Lodge, The Scarlet Huntington Hotel, Wyndham Worldwide, and more.

Graham is recognized in the

industry with more than 85 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.

## HAWKINS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

119 West 23rd St., Suite 600  
New York, NY 10011  
212/255-6541  
www.hawkpr.com

**Jennifer Hawkins, Founder & President**

Hawkins International Public Relations represents many of the world's most prestigious travel and hospitality brands. From luxury hotel companies, independent resorts, cruise lines, tour operators, spas and lifestyle brands, Hawkins delivers solid results that reflect the agency's passion for travel and global events. Extensive and strong relationships with both traditional and social media are among our greatest assets. Serving as a vital extension of our clients' marketing efforts, Hawkins is renowned for comprehensive media strategies and the ability to tap into social networks, form key partnerships, develop crisis plans, and engage with key influencers and taste makers.

Listed among *Inc.* Magazine's prestigious 2015 *Inc.* 5000, and linked with a network of like-minded agency partners all over the world, Hawkins works with more than 60 clients operating on every continent, developing and implementing strategic PR campaigns to generate results in top local, regional and national media outlets. In addition to working with iconic travel and lifestyle brands, the agency has used its trademarked Launch Pad™ strategy to introduce 25 new and repositioned global brands to the North American media market in the past three years alone. The firm's growing Digital Division creates tailored social media campaigns across all channels, including content development, platform management, influencer campaigns, contests, SEO, webinars, and more.

## HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

1011 East Las Olas Blvd.  
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954/716-7614  
www.hemsworthcommunications.com

**Samantha Jacobs, Founder & CEO**  
**Michael Jacobs, COO**

Launched in mid-2014 by travel and tourism veteran Samantha Jacobs, Hemsworth Communications has attracted the attention of international brands and top PR talent. We believe in doing things differently, we take pride in our relationships, and we work tirelessly to help our clients be successful.

The travel and tourism industry is changing. So is PR. It's time for a fresh approach. Our rapidly expanding team is passionate about finding original ways to leverage our insights and media connections, breaking through the clutter and exceeding expectations. At the end of the day, while we love fresh ideas, flashy media coverage, and awards as much as the next, we care most about how our efforts impact the client's bottom line.

Clients include AmaWaterways, Driftwood Hospitality, Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort, Wyoming's Star Valley Lodge, WorldCruise.cn, Sonesta Coconut Grove and Sonesta Fort Lauderdale, among others.

## J PUBLIC RELATIONS

530 7th Ave., Suite 1108  
New York, NY 10018  
www.jpublicrelations.com  
info@jpublicrelations.com

**Sarah Evans, Partner**

Celebrating 10 years in business, J Public Relations (JPR) is a bi-coastal force with offices in New York, Los Angeles, San Diego and Arizona. The agency is one of the most respected brands in the competitive PR industry and has elevated the art of brand positioning and messaging through development of creative programming for global brands. JPR continues to develop and manage highly successful media relations, digital and influencer campaigns. JPR's client roster includes many of the world's most highly esteemed hospitality brands, luxury boutique properties, restaurants, spas and consumer lifestyle brands.

The agency has grown more than

80% over the past two years consistently 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 was ranked in 2014 among the *New York Observer's* PR Power 50 List.

## K. SUTHERLAND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Laguna Beach + Reno  
KSutherlandPR.com  
949/328-4895

K. Sutherland PR is a boutique public relations agency that specializes in the travel and tourism industry. The global destinations, resorts, and travel brands the agency represents have been featured in some of the most well-known media outlets around the world including placements in *Travel + Leisure*, *Huffington Post*, *Yahoo!*, *CNN*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fox News*, *MSNBC*, *Men's Journal* and many more.

The team at K. Sutherland PR executes innovative, personalized and targeted campaigns comprising of both traditional and new media avenues. From international luxury resorts, unique travel destinations, boutique hotels and spas, to travel accessories and world cruise lines, K. Sutherland PR creatively and strategically helps clients achieve positive publicity in a variety of media outlets.

Everyone within the agency has a deep appreciation and love for travel. The agency's team is multilingual and works with travel clients from around the world. Learn more at KSutherlandPR.com.

## KTCPR

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

KTCpr is a 25-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 devel-

Continued on page 30



**LDPR sent NBC Today Show anchor Savannah Guthrie and her mother down to Sydney, Australia, for a split-live show from The Sydney Opera House on May 4. It was the perfect Mother's Day segment, showcasing LDPR client Sydney/New South Wales to 67 million viewers, and resulted in a broadcast/online reach of 156 million.**

## KTCPR

— Continued from page 29

oped 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 HSMIAI 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 rela-

tionships with the media. KTCpr’s expertise covers media relations, the launch of new hotels and resorts, marketing consultation, crisis communication, events, the creation of promotions, 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, including Apple Vacations, the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association, the St. Maarten Tourist Bureau and Spice Island Beach Resort in Grenada, among others.

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 major consumer newspapers, magazines and online media outlets such as Frommers.com and the Huffington Post. Recent promotional placements include Ellen, Dr. Oz, “Wheel of

Fortune” and Steve Harvey.

For more info, call 516-594-4100, email [info@KTCpr.com](mailto:info@KTCpr.com) or visit [www.KTCpr.com](http://www.KTCpr.com).

## LANE

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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’ audiences 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

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[www.twitter.com/ldpr](http://www.twitter.com/ldpr)  
[www.instagram.com/ldprtravel](http://www.instagram.com/ldprtravel)

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

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

LDPR’s unique culture is 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; Aman Resorts; Rocco Forte Hotels; VisitScotland; Sydney/Destination New South Wales, Australia; Kittitian Hill, St. Kitts; Curtain Bluff, Antigua; Waterfall Resorts, Alaska; The Resort at Paws Up, Montana; The Thinking Traveller Luxury Villas, Italy and Greece; The Gleneagles Hotel, Scotland; Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento, Italy; Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas; Residence Inn by Marriott; The Mayflower, DC; The Ocean House, Watch Hill, Rhode Island; The Press Hotel, Portland, Maine; The Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott Grande Lakes Orlando; Marriott Marquis Washington, DC; Millennium Hotels & Resorts, among others.

## LOU HAMMOND & ASSOCIATES

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**Lou Hammond, Founder/Chairman**  
**Stephen Hammond, CEO**  
**Terrence Gallagher, President, NY**  
**Gina Stouffer, Pres., Charleston**

Entering its third decade 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 (HSMIAI)



**Richard S. Kahn, president of KTCpr, 2014 recipient of the HSMIAI Winthrop W. Grice Lifetime Achievement Award for public relations excellence.**

— Continued on page 32



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**Gloria Bohan**  
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**Nick Lananna**  
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**TV personality, Ty Pennington, traveled with Marketing Maven's Lindsey Carnett on a Norwegian press tour.**

## LOU HAMMOND

Continued from page 30

has honored the agency with more of its prestigious Adrian Awards over the past 17 years than any other entrant. Last year was no exception with 20 accolades, including a Platinum award for Premier Rail Collection and nine Gold designations for Providence, Santa Fe, Sonoma County, Thailand, Virginia and famed Le Bristol Paris.

More Americans are on the move than ever before, particularly to destinations in the Southeast. In 2014, clients including the state of Virginia, Collier County, Fla., Panama City Beach, Fla., and Paducah, Ky., experienced record-breaking years in bed tax revenue. The agency's expansion to Charleston, South Carolina, has met with outstanding success. With a flourishing client portfolio, the full-service office has grown to 15 team members after opening with just three people two years ago.

LH&A recognizes that markets and media are rapidly changing. Our agency's digital enterprise, Hammond Digital+ (HD+), is tasked with keeping a steady eye on the future to discern what's new and meaningful in the digital arena — and to help brands achieve their goals in any space. Embracing the future of public relations, HD+ is a go-to resource for custom, multi-platform programs that optimize messaging in the digital world. HD+ reviews each client's unique digital footprint and develops, executes and monitors high-impact strategies for influential press mentions, viral campaigns and buzz-worthy digital experiences that capture the media's atten-

tion, drive consumer interaction and increase revenue.

HD+ recently launched a trends-focused newsletter called Digital Plus, focused on keeping LH&A clients abreast of the evolving landscape. Expanding its client roster, HD+ has partnered with leading brands to improve their presence by conducting digital media audits and launching complete takeovers of social channels in addition to ongoing consulting. Projects have included social media contests, trade show event strategy, thought leader positioning and Twitter chat participation.

## MAKOVSKY

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twitter.com/makovsky

**Ken Makovsky, President & CEO**

Headquartered in New York, with an owned office in Washington, D.C., Makovsky is a leading global independent integrated communications consultancy, building businesses and reputations with ideas that cross the boundaries of traditional, digital, social and experiential media.

Makovsky has specialties in Health, Financial & Professional Services, Technology and Energy & Sustainability. Our services include public relations, digital branding, social media, crisis communications, change management and investor relations.

In 2014, Makovsky won 39 company and campaign awards including the Bulldog Stars of PR Awards

for "Agency Professional of the Year," and the American Business Award for "Marketing Campaign of the Year" for health services and insurance. The firm has also been recognized for its "Overall Web Design" by the American Business Awards, "PR Firm of the Year" by *PR News* Elite Awards, "Healthcare Agency of the Year" by *The Holmes Report*, and was ranked as one of the "Top Places to Work in PR" by *PR News*. The firm also won a PRSA Bronze Anvil, three PRSA Big Apple Awards, the Financial Communications Society Portfolio Award for client campaigns and multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze Stevies.

Makovsky is also the founder of IPREX, the second largest worldwide corporation of independent agencies in more than 30 countries and 40 US cities.

## MARKETING MAVEN

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Los Angeles Headquarters  
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**Lindsey Carnett, CEO & President**  
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**Natalie Rucker, VP of Business Development**  
natalie@marketingmavenpr.com  
**John Krisiukenas, Managing Dir., NY**  
johnk@marketingmavenpr.com

From traditional earned media to new forms of social engagement, Marketing Maven drives brand conversations with multigenerational, millennial and multicultural targets. From a global luxury automotive rally to a Norwegian design tour, the bicoastal team at Marketing Maven knows how to deliver on a diverse range of travel and hospitality PR and social media campaigns. We specialize in maintaining a company's brand message through revenue-generating communications strategies.

Is Spanish language media important to your target demographic? We have a bilingual and bicultural Hispanic marketing department with a real-time pulse on cultural trends and connections to increase brand awareness and drive bookings from U.S. Hispanics.

Marketing Maven is 8(a) certified by the U.S. Small Business Administration as a minority owned business. Other certifications include Women's Business Enter-

prise (WBE) by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council, WOSB status with the government and DBE, CUCP and CPUC certification through the State of California.

## MISSY FARREN & ASSOCIATES (MFA)

30 Irving Place, 3rd Floor  
New York, NY 10003  
212/528-1691  
www.mfalt.com

**Missy Farren, Founder & CEO**  
**Agatha Capacchione, Senior VP**  
**Samantha Lacher, Director**

Mfa provides the customer service of a mid-sized agency with the results of a large team through a powerful combination of client service; attention to detail; dynamic, 360-degree campaigns that integrated earned, shared, owned and paid channels; and significant press exposure. Our passion for travel drives professional success and relationships in various niches, including: culinary, Caribbean, adventure, ski/snow, family, romance, arts/culture, wellness/spa, culture, wine/spirits and fitness/sports.

The agency specializes in strategic media relations; social media strategy and management; omni-channel campaign execution; 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: Alpine Meadows; 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; Disney Food & Beverage; element 47 restaurant; 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; National Trust for Historic Preservation; The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New York; Roadtrips Inc.; Royal Plantation Collection; Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort; Ski Utah; The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg; Squaw Valley; Steamboat; Trapp Family Lodge; Twin Farms; Whistler Blackcomb; and more.





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**Roughing it:** Nancy J. Friedman Public Relations and media are all smiles after a successful “Women vs. Wild” shooting lesson at Sea Island Resort’s new Broadfield Sporting Club & Lodge. The ladies enjoyed a wide range of experiences for novices and seasoned outdoor enthusiasts, as well as a delicious dinner of fried bobwhite quail with honey.

## MMGY GLOBAL

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www.mmgysglobal.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 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 and Madrid, and an international partner network, Travel 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 relations, corporate and brand positioning, partnership marketing, promotions, event marketing, influencer engagement and crisis communications. MMGY is the author of the widely acclaimed Portrait of American Travelers® annual research study and Travel-horizons™, a quarterly survey of Americans’ travel intentions.

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

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

## MWWPR

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**Kari Ramsey**, *Group Vice President*

MWWPR’s Travel & Tourism practice can take you anywhere you want to go. We believe in pushing PR beyond the boundaries of expected thinking, and draw from vast talent and experience at the intersection of strategy, communications and creative to continually exceed client objectives.

We develop strategic award-winning campaigns powered by insights, technology and social media to drive patronage and connect clients with their key stakeholders. As a leading global independent communications agency, we’ve worked with both established and emerging brands within the travel industry, ranging from hotels and destinations to airlines and travel publishers. Our team of top hospitality industry strategists, planners, media specialists and producers has years of deep-rooted experience in travel and tourism.

At MWWPR, we believe you need to be relevant to Matter More™ to the people who matter most. Our strategic process begins with understanding client business

objectives and priorities, mapping the influencers that have the greatest impact on your brand and developing measurable programs that drive business outcomes. Every client program begins with insights based on proprietary research to shape a point of view and determine what Matters Most to a brand’s key audiences.

MWWPR has been recognized with top industry awards for client work and thought leadership, including “PR Agency of the Year,” “Best Places to Work,” and “Campaign of the Year.”

## NANCY J. FRIEDMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS, INC.

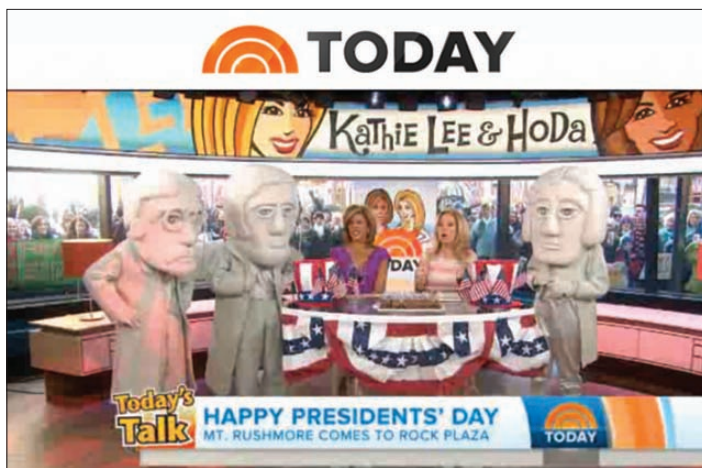
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**Nancy J. Friedman**, *President*

An industry thought leader, creative pioneer, and award-winning strategist, Nancy Friedman continues to set the benchmark for public relations done right for hotels, luxury brands, and destinations. In New York City alone, Nancy and her team have launched more than 60 hotels. From her early ascent to the head of PR for Ian Schrager & Steve Rubell, to her current post steering one of the industry’s most talented PR teams, Nancy’s rare combination of grace and tenacity have led to countless industry firsts. Today, she is the “go-to” PR counsel to some of the most innovative leaders in hospitality and the tour de force behind Hotel Week NYC™ and Hotel Week LA™.

We love what we do and are fervently committed to our clients’ success. That we proudly list that we are “media junkies” on our resume tells you a bit about how we operate. We have met face-to-face with more than 200 journalists and collaborated with digital influencers on successful client campaigns.

Our team’s consistency and expert strategy has yielded incredible results, from eight awards recognizing stellar client achievements at the 2015 HSMAI Awards, to being invited to speak alongside the travel and hospitality’s top tier thought leaders at the Skift Global Forum 2015 in Brooklyn, New York.



**MMGY Global works with the South Dakota Department of Tourism to implement a comprehensive public relations and social media campaign showcasing the state’s attractions and tourism offerings. Pictured here are South Dakota’s Mount Rushmore Mascots celebrating President’s Day with Kathie Lee and Hoda on the Today Show.**



## OGILVY PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Jennifer Risi**, *Managing Director, Ogilvy Media Influence*

Nation branding and tourism is part of Ogilvy PR's DNA. Our rich history dates back over 50 years with our founder David Ogilvy's first successful nation branding campaign for Puerto Rico as a "sun and beach" destination, following years of political upheaval on the island.

Ogilvy PR builds country brands through effective storytelling across tourism, investment and exports, while managing complex issues. Our approach emphasizes collaboration and unity across our offices and practices, all the while fostering tailored and country-specific applications that contribute to a global narrative.

Our global network includes experts across strategic media relations, influencer communications, social media and content creation, generating connections, inspiring travelers, driving investment and crafting narratives that make a strong impact and drive results for destinations all over the world.

Ogilvy PR has successfully elevated brand for clients; ProColombia, Brand USA, Brazil, Tourism Fiji, Tourism New South Wales, Hilton Hotels, Tourism Australia, Guinness Storehouse and British Airways.

## PEPPERCOMM

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**Ted Birkhahn**, Partner & President  
**Ann Barlow**, Partner & President, West Coast  
**Janine Gordon**, President, Luxury & Lifestyle  
**Maggie O'Neill**, Partner & Managing Director

Services include Branding & Positioning, Creative Services, Public Relations, Crisis Preparedness and Management, Research & Insights, Audience Experience, Experiential Marketing & Events, Social Media & Digital Strategy, Licensing and Internal Communications.

Peppercomm is an independent-

ly owned 20-year-old integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York with offices in San Francisco, Boulder and London, and with 110 employees. Together, we develop insights that serve as our compass and catalyst, allowing us to push boundaries and effectively tell your brand story.

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.

## QUINN

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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. With offices in New York and Miami and affiliates worldwide, we serve clients in Travel, Real Estate, Spa, Food/Wine/Spirits, Retail, Architecture/Art/Design and Experiences.

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 Hilton, Waldorf Astoria, Marriott, Starwood, W, Aloft, AKA, Guerlain Spa, EL AL Israel Airlines, Del Frisco's and XOJET choose Quinn.



**To build awareness and capture email addresses among women 55+ for VBT Bicycling and Walking Vacations, Quinn partnered with Talbots. VBT appeared in Talbots' catalog to 4.9 million customers, in its emails to 2.5 million and in all 495 stores as well as on Talbots' social media platforms. In addition to building brand awareness, VBT captured 4,700 new email addresses.**

## RBB PUBLIC RELATIONS

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www.rbbpr.com

**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, recognized for its fresh communication insights and strategic thinking. As the Champion of Breakout Brands

rbb's travel & leisure practice develops campaigns that spark new conversations, inspire action and deliver meaningful results. Whether a client's goal is gaining more market share or business leads, driving bookings or engagement, enhanced reputation or all of the above, rbb will get there faster and smarter.

In travel, the agency's deep experience runs across all segments from global hotel chains, boutique resorts and destinations to airlines, cruise lines and online travel agencies. The rbb difference is our customized, integrated approach. Our teams leverage the right mix

— Continued on page 36



**rbb Public Relations wins two HSMIA Platinum Adrian Award for its campaigns for Homewood Suites and Hilton Worldwide. From left to right: Jennifer Hughes, Director, Public Relations, Extended Stay Brands, Hilton Worldwide; Lisa Ross, President and Partner, rbb Public Relations.**

## RBB

Continued from page 35

of communication channels, activations, influencer and celebrity engagement, content and social media strategies and partnerships to effectively deliver measurable outcomes.

This year, rbb's work with client AMResorts earned the *Holmes Report's* Gold SABRE Award for the "Choose Your Own Escape" campaign, an innovative influencer program that drove a 10 percent increase in resort bookings.

Our consistent success is why companies like the Hampton by Hilton, Virgin Cruises, and Homewood Suites by Hilton choose rbb Public Relations.

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

## RELEVANCE NEW YORK

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Relevance New York is one of the nation's top public relation and brand-building firms specializing in real estate, hospitality and luxury goods. The New York City-based agency develops award-winning and strategic campaigns for some of the most sought after brands in the world by focusing on building bespoke brand experiences that extends to every touch point.

From proactive public relations to memorable brand experiences with measurable impact, Relevance New York knows how to deliver tangible results that align with business growth goals. The firm's creative and forward-thinking approach has garnered press coverage in a variety of top-tier media both domestically and internationally, with coverage spanning five continents. The agency is comprised of proactive and passionate professionals including a leadership team with more than 70 years of collective experience.

Led by Suzanne Rosnowski, who was named one of the "Top 15 To Watch" by *PR News*, Relevance

New York continually delivers top-tier media results thanks to its strong press relationships, strategic counsel and deep level of knowledge. Its principles know what it takes to become and stay relevant in today's fast-paced digital world. The firm stays a step ahead of the competition by completing the brand experience with additional services including custom video content through RelevanceTV and event planning through RelevanceEvents.

Relevance New York promotes a culture of excellence and results.

Select Clients Include: Bluestar Jets, Greystone, OPPENHEIM Architecture + Design, Tamarkin Co., Concierge Auctions, Victor Group, Brack Capital Real Estate, Prodigy Network, [aptsandlofts.com](http://aptsandlofts.com), FEN-DI Chateau Residences, 111 West 57th Street — JDS Development Group/Property Markets Group, Barn & Vine — Continental Pine-wood Development Partners, 111 Murray Street — Fisher Brothers/Witkoff/New Valley, Robert A.M. Stern's 20 East End Avenue, Mark Zeff's Black Barn, The Charles — Bluerock Real Estate/Victor Group, 500 W21 — Sherwood Equities, and more.

## SPRING O'BRIEN

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New York, NY 10010  
212/620-7100  
[info@spring-obrien.com](mailto: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



**Spring O'Brien's SVP Lauren Kaufman (left) and journalist Karen Loftus (center) joined ITC Hotels executives (Bindu Panicker, General Manager - Corporate Communications, Nataliya Saxena, Public Relations Manager, Gautam Anand, VP Operations Planning & Pre-Opening Services) and Dr. Navina Jafa of Indian Cultural Heritage Research in previewing ITC Grand Bharat, India's first all-suite retreat in Gurgaon, before its May launch.**

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.

## 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 (HSMAI) 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

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303/333-1402

111 W. Illinois St.  
Chicago, IL 60654

**Christine Turner**, President  
**Mariana DiMartino**, Senior VP  
**Angela Berardino**, Chief Strategy & Integration Officer

As a full service public relations, social media, content and digital communications agency specializing in travel and lifestyle brands, we represent the world's best hotels, resorts, destinations, fashion,

Continued on page 38



# ORDER THE ONLY PRINTED DIRECTORY OF PR FIRMS!

O'Dwyer's is the #1 source for researching public relations firms and outside PR counsel. We've been connecting clients and PR firms for 45 years through our directory of PR firms.

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- ✓ *Articles on how to hire and use a PR firm by industry experts Jack O'Dwyer and Fraser Seitel.*
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*"O'Dwyer's Directory of PR firms is the finest source of information on PR firms."*

- Howard Rubenstein, President  
Rubenstein Associates

*"The O'Dwyer Directory is an excellent tool when searching for outside PR counsel."*

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

- Robert L. Dilenschneider  
The Dilenschneider Group

*"A phenomenal job-seeking aid."*

- Marie Raperto  
Cantor Integrated Marketing Search

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

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





**Turner PR's New York team volunteered for the Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger in Brooklyn.**

## TURNER PR

— Continued from page 36

active and modern outdoor brands. Founded in 1997, our tenured teams in New York, Chicago and Denver have unmatched industry experience and continually deliver innovative and integrated marketing communications strategies, helping brands connect and engage in a smarter, more relevant manner.

From the most coveted beach, snow and urban destinations to luxury culinary, wine and travel experiences to sought-after apparel, fitness and accessory brands, our clients include all of the places you'd like to travel, and what you'd pack for those journeys. At Turner, we live the lifestyles we represent and pride ourselves on our authentic voice and longstanding relationships with clients, media and influencers. We also care. Relentlessly.

## WEBER SHANDWICK

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

**Alice Diaz, Executive VP**  
adiaz@webershandwick.com

The Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle practice is the leading specialist in travel and tourism public relations. Our practice operates like a boutique shop, with the attention and accountability that might imply, inside one of the most creative global communications agencies in the world.

Weber Shandwick has moved beyond the classic boundaries of dis-

cipline and geography to help clients out-perform their competitors. We deliver unconventional thinking and constantly break through traditional service lines to integrate social, digital, content, publishing, advertising, PR, corporate reputation and public affairs into solutions that drive business results.

We know that the traveler's purchase journey is often a long one; it begins months before the plane departs or the ship sails and wanders a unique path to purchase. Our mission is to create programs that target proto-travelers and deliver inspiration to them early and often. Digital media platforms open new opportunities for us to influence these consumers through innovative storytelling and content strategy that reaches them in a highly fragmented media marketplace. We've proven the success of content creation and know how to create the right mix of paid, owned and earned programs.

We inspire. We incite. We shape ideas to move travel and lifestyle businesses forward with smart programs that reach consumers where they are today — on smartphones and tablets — with content that is relevant to their lifestyle. And above all, we are committed to be "engaging, always."

## WEILL

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**Geoffrey Weill accepts PR Lifetime Achievement Award at this year's HSMIA Gala.**

During its 20 years in business, Geoffrey Weill Associates, a New York-based boutique firm specializing in authentic, upscale travel experiences and tourism, has developed a reputation for candidness, creativity, and originality. Weill specializes in family-owned properties with a vested interest in generational stewardship — whose star chefs are longtime supporters of local farmers and whose designers rely on local craftsman and merchants to provide the details that make their hotels unique. Weill prides itself on the longevity of its relationships with its clients as well as its staff, most of whom have been with the firm for more than ten years, and fosters an intimate atmosphere in which family hotel owners are comfortable sharing their visions of their hotels' future. Such clients include: Baur au Lac in Zurich, Angama Mara in Kenya, the Hassler Roma, Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen, Hotel Regina Isabella on the Italian island of Ischia, the zen health clinic SHA Wellness in Spain, Ashford Castle in Co. Mayo, Ireland, the Milestone Hotel in London, and Inkaterre in Peru.

It has been an exciting year for Weill clients — the Hotel d'Angleterre celebrated its 260th anniversary with a lavish gala including a guest list of royalty and dignitaries; The High Line Hotel in Manhattan continued to be the darling of fashion world shoots and opened a rustic Italian restaurant, Alta Linea, to celebrate summer; Beau-Rivage Palace and Baur au Lac in Switzerland held up splendidly in the international spotlight, demonstrating their gilded composure and ability to maintain standards without fail; and Aqua Expeditions launched the Aqua Mekong river cruise between Vietnam and Cambodia.

Weill continues to expand its luxury portfolio and find ways to showcase the strengths of its properties — eco-tourism, "leave no trace" travel experiences, magazine shoots, and television. Its newest clients include Ted Turner Expeditions, a family legacy encompassing two million acres in the USA and Argentina; and Eleven Experience, a collection of stylish adventure-focused properties in Iceland, the French Alps, Amsterdam, the Bahamas, Shelter Island, and the Colorado Rockies. ○



# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2014)	Firm	Net Fees (2014)
<b>1.</b> Edelman	New York, NY <b>\$21,629,346</b>	<b>21.</b> Current	Chicago, IL <b>867,183</b>
<b>2.</b> Zimmerman Agency	Tallahassee, FL <b>9,600,000</b>	<b>22.</b> SS PR	Northfield, IL <b>698,850</b>
<b>3.</b> Development Counsellors Int'l	New York, NY <b>9,079,895</b>	<b>23.</b> Racepoint Global	Boston, MA <b>542,100</b>
<b>4.</b> Finn Partners	New York, NY <b>6,719,632</b>	<b>24.</b> LEVICK	Washington, DC <b>531,228</b>
<b>5.</b> Lou Hammond & Associates	New York, NY <b>6,225,729</b>	<b>25.</b> LANE	Portland, OR <b>525,209</b>
<b>6.</b> Turner PR, a Fahlgren Mortine company	New York, NY <b>4,755,329</b>	<b>26.</b> Seigenthaler, part of Finn Partners	Nashville, TN <b>389,057</b>
<b>7.</b> J Public Relations	San Diego, CA <b>3,940,637</b>	<b>27.</b> Malen Yantis Public Relations	Vail, CO <b>335,820</b>
<b>8.</b> Nancy J. Friedman PR	New York, NY <b>3,542,000</b>	<b>28.</b> McNeely Pigott & Fox PR	Nashville, TN <b>297,883</b>
<b>9.</b> Hawkins Int'l, Inc.	New York, NY <b>3,199,352</b>	<b>29.</b> Sachs Media Group	Tallahassee, FL <b>282,035</b>
<b>10.</b> MWWPR	New York, NY <b>2,663,000</b>	<b>30.</b> Moore Communications Group	Tallahassee, FL <b>150,757</b>
<b>11.</b> Zeno Group	New York, NY <b>2,657,774</b>	<b>31.</b> Red Sky PR	Boise, ID <b>118,414</b>
<b>12.</b> French   West   Vaughan	Raleigh, NC <b>2,476,669</b>	<b>32.</b> North 6th Agency (N6A)	New York, NY <b>87,989</b>
<b>13.</b> Quinn	New York, NY <b>2,457,212</b>	<b>33.</b> Hodges Partnership, The	Richmond, VA <b>84,000</b>
<b>14.</b> APCO Worldwide	Washington, DC <b>2,330,990</b>	<b>34.</b> Marketing Maven PR	Camarillo, CA <b>51,985</b>
<b>15.</b> Jackson Spalding	Atlanta, GA <b>2,201,807</b>	<b>35.</b> Standing Partnership	St. Louis, MO <b>50,360</b>
<b>16.</b> rbb Public Relations	Miami, FL <b>1,646,927</b>	<b>36.</b> Schneider Associates	Boston, MA <b>28,500</b>
<b>17.</b> 5W Public Relations	Miami, FL <b>1,500,000</b>	<b>37.</b> Singer Associates, Inc.	San Francisco, CA <b>19,949</b>
<b>18.</b> Coyne PR	Parsippany, NJ <b>976,602</b>	<b>38.</b> Didit Communications, LLC	New York, NY <b>18,520</b>
<b>19.</b> PadillaCRT	Minneapolis, MN <b>895,954</b>	<b>39.</b> Maccabee	Minneapolis, MN <b>4,000</b>
<b>20.</b> Taylor	New York, NY <b>870,000</b>		

# Avoiding clichés takes writing to “the next level”

By Fraser Seitel

The most annoying thing LeBron James said at his post-game news conference after losing Game Five to the Golden State Warriors wasn't, “I feel confident ‘cuz



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

I'm the best player in the world.”

That was the most arrogant thing he said.

The most annoying thing he said was in answer to a question about playing without two injured teammates. Replied the philosopher king, “It is what it is.”

And in so answering, King James served up one of the most shop-worn clichés in the communications lexicon.

The enemy of every public relations writ-

er — particularly in this season of drafting commencement speeches — is the cliché, that tired or boring or bombastic phrase that all of us have not only heard many times before, but when we hear it, we instinctively cringe.

For a public relations speechwriter, not only are worn-out expressions like “the greatest thing since sliced bread” or “dumb as dirt” or “pleased as punch” verboten, but so, too, should be all the other mundane phrases that are displeasing to the ear.

But how does a speechwriter know when a phrase is clichéd? Well, that takes sensitive antennae, developed from experience, judgment and knowledge. Jargon, for example, might be perfectly acceptable in a certain industry forum but suicidal in a more general setting.

For that setting, with thanks to Louisiana communications consultant Yvonne Lewis Day, here is a glossary of “speech deadwood” that should be avoided by the public relations speechwriter.

## 1. Perfunctory platitudes

Prefacing statements with timid platitudes sets a speaker up for failure. “As a matter of fact,” Mark Twain is thought to

have once said, “precedes many a statement that isn't.”

Avoid such platitudes, which subtract from the meaning of your remarks. For instance:

- “I might add . . .”
- “It is interesting to note . . .”
- “It should be remembered . . .”
- “It is worthy to say . . .”
- “May I say . . .”
- “Permit me to say . . .”
- “With your kind permission . . .”
- “To be honest . . .” which implies that you haven't been up to now!

## 2. Meaningless modifiers

Also, avoid vague, modifying words that add nothing to the points you're trying to make. Speechwriters mistakenly think words like these make their speakers sound smarter. For example:

- Appreciably
- Comparatively
- Considerably
- Definitely
- Fairly
- Nearly
- Somewhat
- Suitable
- Undue
- Various

The problem with words like these is they leave the listener hanging, without knowing what to think. Much better: Tell listeners precisely, specifically, pointedly what you mean.

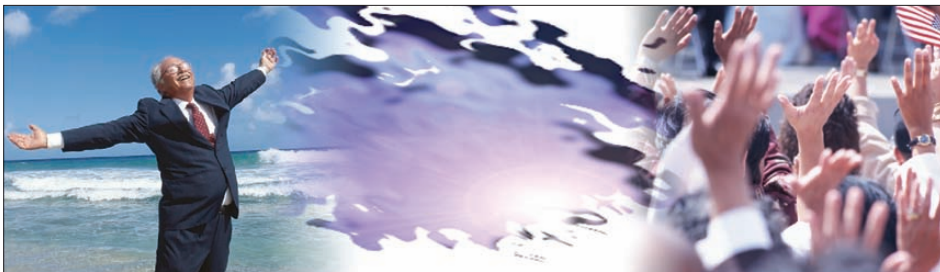
## 3. Pretentious phrases

Also, speechwriters must avoid anything that sounds legalistic or straight out of business insider jargon. Phrases like the following suggest a smugness that doesn't help sell either the sincerity of the speaker or the credibility of the speech. Specifically, avoid phrases like these:

- “At this point in time . . .”
- “Insofar . . .”
- “Inasmuch . . .”
- “Whereas . . .”
- “In point of fact . . .”
- “Bite the bullet.”
- “Outside the box.”
- “Paradigm shift.”
- “At the end of the day.”

So you see, LeBron, it really isn't “what it is,” if you truly wish to take your writing “to the next level.”

Rather, you must use direct, specific, straightforward, descriptive language to ensure your speaker is “pleased as punch” and believes you are “the best speech writer in the world.” ○



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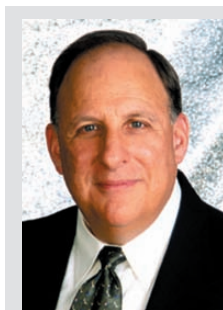
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# Earnouts in the public relations profession (part one)

By Richard Goldstein

My most recent columns have focused on selling and/or buying a PR agency. Part of the selling/buying negotiation is usually an “earnout” formula. There also has been some contro-



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

versy among merger and acquisition advisors on the necessity or use of an earnout. Accordingly, this month's column focuses on the “earnout” and how it is used in the public relations industry.

## What's an earnout?

The term earnout from Wikipedia refers to a pricing structure in mergers and acquisitions where the seller

must earn part of the purchase price based on performance of the agency following the acquisition. In an earnout, part of the purchase price is paid after closing based on the agency achieving financial goals.

Earnouts are often employed when the buyer and seller disagree about the growth and future performance of the target company. A typical earnout involving PR agencies takes place over a three to five year period after closing of the acquisition and usually involves a 30% down payment and a 70% earnout. The multiple of earnings can also be part of the earnout. By this I mean a multiple of 4.5 is used to arrive at a purchase price. The multiple, as an example, is adjusted to 5 or 5.5 if earnings above a defined target are achieved.

The terms and conditions of an earnout are largely dependent on which party will actually manage the business following closing. If the buyer will manage the agency, the seller may be concerned with mismanagement by the buyer, which causes the agency to miss targets. If the seller will manage the agency operations, the buyer may be concerned with the seller either minimizing or understating expenses or overstating revenue so as to manipulate the earnout payment. A cap on the earnout may be important in this case.

In my experience, most agency acquisitions require the seller to remain with the company post acquisition for a period of years or at least through the earnout period.

## Another view

Some advisors have the view that tradi-

tional earnout scenarios will eventually be eliminated. Will this be the case? I do not know. However, what I do know is the “fixed price” deal is not happening! By fixed price deal I mean an agency sells for \$5.0 million, there is a 30% or more down payment, and the balance is paid over three years or more.

What is a buyer really buying when it acquires another agency? Apart from the net tangible assets (the value is not in the tangible assets), most of the value in an agency sale is “goodwill.” Goodwill in my view includes client contacts, the agency reputation, professional intellectual capital (level of employee talent), market share, and the ability to generate profits above the norm. (If an agency generates 25% profitability when most of the industry is generating 15%, obviously the agency goodwill is worth more.)

## Why is the earnout necessary?

According to a column written by Nate Nead entitled “Earnouts: The Double Edged Sword for Sellers,” earnouts only benefit the seller in the event of profit upside. That is the earnout is tied to the upside of the business, particularly in the months (years) following the close of the transaction. This usually provides an incentive for the seller to work as hard as possible to maximize profitability in order to receive the earnout payment.

When a buyer acquires an agency, there is usually a learning curve during which new management is thrown into the fire if you will. This can occur at the worst possible time for a seller with an earnout agreement or can be a plus for a seller who is active in the first few years of the sale.

## The buyer-seller relationship

It is easy to see that a relationship based on profit maximization in the first three years of an acquisition may hinder the buyer — seller relationship. The buyer may be reluctant to refer business to the seller because it would mean having to pay the seller more in the short term. It could also result in the seller losing the people who made the firm attractive to the buyer in the first place. So why the earnout?

## My experience

While I am not a merger and acquisition specialist, I have acquired two CPA firms and merged these firms into a larger firm. In addition, I have been involved in three agency acquisition transactions. My two transactions allowed the principals to retire. However, a non-retirement merger can be undertaken to better utilize resources and capitalize on synergies.

First I will tell you why the earnout is not dead. The reason is there are no fixed deals as discussed above. When a buyer acquires

a seller, no matter how much due diligence has been performed, the buyer wants to feel comfortable that the representations of the seller are accurate and the seller can continue to produce the results that attracted the seller to the buyer to start with. In my view you cannot expect to keep every client obtained in the acquisition! When I acquired the two firms, I assumed that there would be a client loss of at least 20% and priced the deal accordingly using an earnout.

Also, key to the deal can be the “business” structure. The acquired firms can stand alone. By this I mean it operates exactly as it did prior to the acquisition; same office, same staff, etc. just a new ownership. The acquired firm can totally integrate with its new owners as a division of ABC Worldwide if you will. And yes, the earnout can set conditions such as new client growth, staff stability, etc. New business given to the acquired by the acquirer and vice versa can have its own financial formulas. It is in the interest of all parties to try and mutually make the venture a success. The earnout helps this process along.

More next month. ○

## PR news brief

### Edelman supports maker of ‘female Viagra’

Sprout Pharmaceuticals won FDA advisory panel recommendation of its female sex drive drug, Addyi, dubbed by media “Viagra for women.”

Edelman works the PR front for Raleigh, N.C.-based Sprout, which said the June 4, the 18-6 panel vote moves it “one step closer to bringing to market the first treatment option for the most common form of female sexual dysfunction,” hypoactive sexual desire disorder, or HSDD.

Amy Rose, Executive VP of Health Media for Edelman and a Merck alum, reps Sprout.

The drug, flibanserin, originally planned as an antidepressant by Boehringer Ingelheim and sold to Sprout in 2011, was rejected by the FDA twice in the past five years over efficacy and safety issues.

*The Wall Street Journal* said the panel nod could mark “a turning point in women's health,” where a debate rages over whether sexual dysfunction is actually a medical problem.

In giving its nod, the FDA advisory committee acknowledged “extensive publicity surrounding” the drug and treatments for female sexual dysfunction and hit as “misleading and inaccurate” accusations that the FDA is holding such drugs to more stringent approval because of gender bias at the agency.

An online campaign backed by drug makers and women's health groups called Even the Score has lobbied the FDA to approve more treatments for women's sexual health.

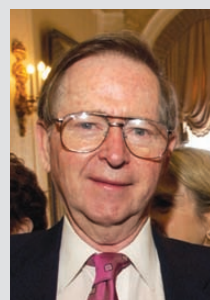
Sprout hopes to gain approval of the drug by mid-August. The FDA does not have to accept the panel's recommendation, but considers the report in its final decision.

# Page Society, PR Council ousted by new skyscraper

By Jack O'Dwyer

One Vanderbilt, a 1,501-foot office tower on Vanderbilt Ave. between 42nd and 43rd Sts., has ousted two PR groups from their offices and put a focus on escalating costs and congestion in Manhattan.

Moving from 317 Madison Ave. at 42nd are the Arthur W. Page Society, now at 230 Park Ave., suite 455, and the PR Council, now at 32 E. 31st St., ninth floor.



Jack O'Dwyer

One Vanderbilt, taller than the Empire State Building and which has been argued about for years, failing passage during the previous Bloomberg Administration, was approved May 27 by the NYC Council. Investor Andrew Penson, who owns Grand Central and the air rights above it, argued unsuccessfully that SL Green Realty should have purchased the development rights from him.

## "Needle" apartments add to congestion

One of the complaints against this building, and others that will allowed on Vanderbilt, is that they will increase overcrowding in Manhattan. More than 100 proponents and opponents showed up at a public hearing Aug. 7, 2013.

Offices and apartments generate lots of vehicular traffic, not only from the occupants but from the numerous companies and people that serve them such as limousines, domestic help, decorators, etc. Manhattan streets suffer from traffic jams more than ever.

Adding to the congestion are the numerous "needle" apartments that are springing up as described by Paul Goldberger in the May 2014 *Vanity Fair* article, "Too Rich, Too Thin, Too Tall?"

The most obvious of these is 432 Park Ave. at 56th St., which describes itself as the "tallest residential tower in the Western Hemisphere."

The 1,396-foot building sticks out like a sore thumb amid other Park Ave. buildings that are a fraction of its size.

Daily Kos, the liberal-oriented website, said 432 Park "speaks to the insatiable appetite of the world's greatly expanded billionaire class. Middle Eastern oil magnates,

Chinese billionaires, Russian oligarchs and the Latin American aristocracy all have one thing in common: more money than they know what to do with and a desperation to get as much of it out of their home countries as possible. New York real estate works very well as both a facilitator of this as well as a store of value."

Daily Kos says that tax revenues to New York City for 432 Park will be minimal because of tax breaks given to the builders and owners. Ownership of units in the buildings is often masked by a series of "shell companies," said a Feb. *New York Times* article by Louise Story and Stephanie Saul. It was headlined: "Stream of Foreign Wealth Flows to Elite New York Real Estate." Transactions are often in cash, hiding public exposure, it said.



One Vanderbilt.

## NYC PR workers face high costs

The influx of domestic as well as foreign funds into New York real estate, both for rental and owned units, drives up the prices of each and makes finding affordable living quarters for those working in New York's large PR industry a formidable problem.

Rent in a class A building can easily be \$2,500 and more monthly for as little as 500-600 sq. ft. One-bedroom condos average about \$1.5 million in price. An example of escalating prices in New York is that the 1,600 sq. ft. attached brick house in Bay

Ridge, Brooklyn, purchased by the O'Dwyer family in 1965 for \$24,500 is now valued at \$777,000. The house next to it sold last year for \$665,000. The price has risen 31 times while the Consumer Price Index has risen seven times from that period.

Students who came to New York last summer shared with us some of their experiences in finding living quarters.

One intern paid \$1,750 monthly for a 9x12-foot "box" on the Upper East Side that didn't include a bathroom (that was in the hall and shared with a dozen others on the floor).

The student said she should have looked for space in Brooklyn or Queens and advised future interns to do so. Her fears that the outer boroughs might be dangerous or that it might take too much time getting to and from work have now been brushed aside.

While the rent was "a burden," she also feels she had "wonderful experiences" in New York. She liked being close to midtown. The paid internship was not enough to pay living costs but her parents made up the difference.

## Student paid \$4,200 for 2.5 months

Another intern paid \$4,200 for two and a half months, or about \$1,680 a month. She came from Tennessee and "did not know anybody and did not have a lot of money to spend."

She did as much advance research as possible, looking for something in the "heart of the city," which was also "safe."

She used nycintern.org to find a place near Herald Square at Ave. of the Americas and 34th St. The "spacious" apartment, which she shared with two roommates, included a full kitchen, bathroom, and laundry access and was close to the subway.

The building had a 24-hour concierge, full gym with fitness classes, and private roof access. Rent was due in full at the start of the summer. She enjoyed going out to eat in Greenwich Village and Soho. Co-workers knew the city and suggested many places, she said.

Some interns found quarters at college dorms at New York University, Columbia and Fordham, among others. Rates start at around \$300 a week. A room without air conditioning was priced at \$187 weekly.

One student, unable to afford Manhattan prices, was able to board with a relative in Westchester for the summer. The only major cost was the monthly train ticket of around \$200. ○



## Gibbs serves PR for revamping McDonald's

**R**obert Gibbs, first-term Press Secretary for President Barack Obama, landed at McDonald's as executive VP and Global Chief Communications officer for the embattled fast-feeder.



Gibbs

Gibbs spent the past two years as a principal of The Incite Agency with another Obama alum, Ben LaBolt.

McDonald's CCO Bridget Coffing, a 30-year-veteran of the company, is retiring.

The Oak Brook, Ill., company announced Gibbs' hire in June along with that of Chief Marketing Officer Silvia Lagnado of Bacardi Limited and, formerly, Unilever.

The 36,000-restaurant juggernaut has struggled in recent years amid consumers' more healthful eating choices and Millennial apathy. Revenue for 2014 fell two percent to \$27.4 billion as net income plummeted 15% to \$5.6 billion in what then-CEO Don Thompson called a "challenging year for McDonald's around the world."

Gibbs and Lagnado report to President and CEO Steve Easterbrook, who took the reins in March. He said the new execs will bring "a wealth of experience and outside perspective" to the company as it tries to build "a more modern, progressive burger company."

Gibbs was Communications Director for Obama's first Senate campaign in 2004 and held that title on staff after his election and through the 2008 presidential campaign.

GolinHarris is longtime AOR for McDonald's. ○

## Herrick takes C&W U.S. President post

**D**avid Herrick, COO of independent firm MWW, has joined Cohn & Wolfe as U.S. President and Chief of its New York office.

He reports to Jim Joseph, Americas President & Chief Integrated Marketing officer.

The more than 20 year PR veteran also did marketing communications work at Bristol-Myers Squibb and led Ruder Finn's consumer technology offering in San

Francisco. He has counseled American Express, Walgreen's, eBay, Subaru and Skype.

Joseph said Herrick's expertise as communications generalist is what the WPP unit needs to help develop integrated marketing programs for clients. ○

## Ketchum's long-time PR chief exits for Ogilvy

**R**obyn Massey, who joined Ketchum's PR unit in 1999, has moved to Ogilvy PR as Global Chief Communications officer, a new position at the WPP unit.

She worked for Ketchum in New York and London, departing as VP-Corporate Communications and head of External Relations & Partnerships.

Massey will return to New York to report to Ogilvy PR CEO Stuart Smith. She'll coordinate activities with Lauren Crampsie, global Chief Marketing Officer at Ogilvy & Mather.

Prior to Ketchum, Massey was PR & Marketing Director at the World Trade Center's Windows on the World restaurant and PR Director at The Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Center. ○



Massey

## Brunswick lures media heavyweight

**L**aurie Hays, who was Senior Executive Editor at Bloomberg News, has joined Brunswick in New York.

Her role is to advise top corporate executives and deepen the corporate/crisis PR shop's ties with business leaders.

At Bloomberg, she managed more than 1,100 reporters and editors. Before joining Bloomberg in 2008, Hays was at the *Wall Street Journal* as national news editor, deputy management editor for investigative projects and technology editor.

Steve Lippin, Brunswick's U.S. senior leader and former WSJ colleague of Hays, called her "one of the most talented, well-respected journalists in the business media."



Hays

Hays, who has 30 years of experiences in financial journalism, said she has worked with Brunswick a number of times and admires its ability to help clients "strategize and manage through tough situations and transformative deals." ○

## AOL, PepsiCo vet lands at Finsbury

**P**eripatetic PR exec Peter Land moved to Finsbury in June as a Partner.

Land did a year-long stint as Senior VP of Corporate Communications for AOL from 2013-14 after three years as SVP for PepsiCo.

Finsbury CEO Michael Gross said Land brings a unique set of talents, insights and relationships to the WPP-owned firm.

He was CMO for the Breeder's Cup and Director of Marketing Communications for the NBA around a nine-year run at Edelman, where he was Managing Director of its Sports Entertainment and Consumer Business. ○



Land

## Pugh exits Zoo for PCI President position

**C**raig Pugh, who helmed the Lowry Park Zoological Society in Tampa for the past five years, is the new President of Public Communications Inc.

He was responsible for a LPZS staff of 350 and annual budget in the \$20 million range.

Earlier, Pugh served as Executive Director of the Palm Beach Zoo.

The Chicago native worked in top editing jobs at Scott Foresman Publishing and Times Mirror/Mosby Year Book before joining the Chicago Zoological Society as Associate Director-Communications.

Pugh, who gets an ownership stake, takes the title from CEO Jill Allread, who held both positions since 2010. Allread remains at the helm.

She said Pugh's "proven talents in executive management and collaborative team development strategically enhance our capacity to meet the needs of our diverse clients." ○



Pugh

## Clean Harbors grabs Capitol Hill

**C**lean Harbors Environmental Services has hired Capitol Hill Consulting Group for D.C. lobbying as it helps deal with one of the worst outbreaks of bird flu in U.S. history.

The firm of former Oklahoma Democratic Congressman Bill Brewster is working the healthcare and agricultural beats on behalf of the client's effort to mop up Iowa.

The Norwell, MA-based environmental, energy and industrial services company has U.S. Dept. of Agriculture contracts to clean up infected farms in The Hawkeye State and Minnesota.

The current avian flu outbreak infected poultry in 16 states, but has not made the jump to humans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other forms past flus have sickened people in China and Africa. The USDA has expressed concern over lax biosecurity in some infected areas.

In Iowa, the USDA has agreed to enforce compliances with the "clean and disinfect" line, according to Reuters.

CHCG's Jack Victory, aide to former Republican Majority Whip Tom DeLay, and David Stratton Edwards, staffer to Oklahoma Congressman Tom Cole, represent Clean Harbors, which lost \$7.1 million on \$742 million Q1 revenues. ○

## Podesta drives Lyft to D.C.

**P**odesta Group has signed on to represent Lyft, the San Francisco-based ride-sharing company that competes with Uber.

The firm will deal with tax and trade issues and pitch the commuter benefits connected with ride-sharing.

Izzy Klein, who was New York Sen. Chuck Schumer's Senior Communications Strategist, and Policy Advisor and staffer to now Massachusetts Sen. Ed Markey, and Randall Gerald, ex-staffer at the Republican Governors Assn. and Senate Committee for Commerce, Science & Transportation when it was headed by John McCain, work the Lyft business.

Founded in 2012 by John Zimmer and Logan Green, Lyft serves about 65 cities. Its investors include China's Alibaba, Andreessen Horowitz, Third Point, Fortress, K9 Ventures and Carl Icahn.

The firm of former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt registered Lyft as a client in September, but has not reported any activity.

Uber has stepped up its D.C. lobbying push, spending \$110,000 during the first-quarter compared to \$170,000 all last year.

Federal Square Group, The Doerr Group and Franklin Square Group work for Uber. ○

## Maryland health exchange opens PR review

**M**aryland's state-run health insurance exchange, which rebounded after a rocky start in 2013, has kicked off an agency review covering communications and marketing for the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

The Maryland Health Benefit Exchange, which weathered technology troubles in 2013 to enroll 264,000 Marylanders in the last enrollment period, released an RFP on June 5 for the PR work. The exchange notes challenges include smaller budgets than earlier periods, "continued lack of awareness and confusion among the general public," and the difficult-to-reach "Young Invincible" demographic of 18-to-34-year-olds. It wants a more "granular," political-campaign-like approach to targeting specific groups and a creative approach as federal funding for outreach diminishes.

Maryland's uninsured rate fell from 12.9% to 7.8% as of late 2014.

The review comes ahead of the fall enrollment period starting



Nov. 1, 2015 and running through January 2016. Firms must station the lead account teams within 100 miles of Baltimore. ○

## APCO, Text100 team up

**A**PCO Worldwide and Text100 have developed ATDigitalHealth, an offering that combines the independent D.C.'s firm's healthcare/public policy savvy with the Next 15 Communications unit's technology strength. The venture will tackle challenges presented by uncertain payer reimbursement, provider acceptance, lagging public policy and shifting consumer behavior.

Stig Albinus, APCO's Global Healthcare Practice Leader; Scott Friedman, APCO's Worldwide Technology Leader; and Erin Humphrey, Text100 Senior VP, will guide ATDigitalHealth. ○

## Pelletier to China's Alibaba

**E**ric Pelletier, a veteran of General Electric, White House and Capitol Hill, has joined Chinese online combine Alibaba Group as head of international government affairs.

Based in DC, Pelletier is in charge of Alibaba's government affairs activities outside of China.

During the last 10 years, Pelletier worked at GE exiting as GE Capital's Global Executive Leader for Government Affairs & Policy. He was a member of George W. Bush's Administration, handling legislative affairs for the President and Office of Management and Budget. He also served as staffer on the House Rules Committee and in the office of former Republican Congressman Gerry Solomon.

Pelletier reports to Wilkinson and General Counsel/Corporate secretary Tim Steinert. ○



Pelletier

## MSNBC's Racusen returns to White House

**R**achel Racusen is returning to the White House as a strategic PR advisor following a seven-month stint at MSNBC, where she served as VP-Communications.

Jen Psaki, White House Communications Director, said via an internal email that Racusen would handle long-term projects, coordinate with the digital team and handle relations with outside groups.

Racusen said Team Obama offered an attractive opportunity to manage PR during the fourth quarter. She said she feels lucky to have worked with the PR pros at the cable network. ○



Racusen



## APCO serves PR for Nestlé in India noodle crisis

**N**estlé has enlisted APCO Worldwide amid fallout from a nationwide recall in India of its Maggi Noodles because of lead contamination.

India food safety officials, pointing a finger squarely at Nestlé, said in June tests showed the noodles contained levels of lead above safe standards. The regulator also claimed some packets of the noodles contained monosodium glutamate, or MSG, despite claims to the contrary.

*Time* noted the noodles are “seen by many Indians as a ‘third staple’ after rice and lentils.”

Nestlé officials held a press conference June 5 and declared the Maggi Noodles “safe,” but recalled the products because “recent developments and concerns ... led to an environment of confusion for the consumer,” which, the company said, “does not provide a conducive environment to have the product in the market.”

India’s *Economic Times* reported that Nestlé was “under flak for not communicating enough with stakeholders and consumers, even as state governments started banning Maggi.”

“With the consumer in mind, we will do everything it takes, and are fully engaged with the authorities, to clarify the situation,” Nestlé CEO Paul Bulcke said. ○

## Malaysia Air flies out PR head

**F**aridah Hashim, a Hill+Knowlton Strategies and corporate PR alum, is joining embattled Malaysia Airlines as head of corporate communications.

Hashim, who is slated to join the Kuala Lumpur-based carrier on July 1, led Corporate Communications for \$6 billion Asian telecom Axiata Group Berhad. She was previously a Director and PR consultant for H+K in the UK and started out in journalism.

Malaysia Airlines, controlled by the Malay government, contin-

ues to cope with the disappearance of Flight 370 over the Indian Ocean in March 2014, a disaster that was followed in July by the Ukraine crash of Flight 17, believed to be caused by a missile strike.

Ketchum ICON and London-based Perowne Charles Communications have advised Malaysia since the Flight 370 disaster.

The airline in December named Christoph Mueller, head of Ireland’s Aer Lingus, as CEO. He announced the hire of Hashim, along with a new sales chief, noting the appointments will “provide important input towards shaping our new airline.” ○

## Mercury re-fights Okinawa

**M**ercury Public Affairs represents the Okinawa prefecture of Japan in its long-running dispute over the massive U.S. military base there.

The island, 1,000 miles south of the Japanese mainland, hosts three-quarters of the U.S. military presence in Japan. More than 70% of Okinawa residents want to the base shut, not moved.

Okinawa’s Governor Takeshi Onaga made a June 3 pitch in Washington to US officials, urging them to block the relocation of a Marine Air Corps station from a crowded area to a more remote spot on the island.

Following Onaga’s visit, the State Dept. issued a statement, saying the relocated base is the “only solution that addresses operations, political, financial and strategic concerns. Japan’s central government supports the relocation plan.”

Mercury on May 25 began work for Okinawa under an agreement that runs through February. The contract is renewable on a month-by-month basis. The firm will receive two payments totaling \$110,000 for representing Okinawa’s defense/security concerns before members of Congress.

Congressmen Vin Weber (R-Minn.) and Denny Rehberg (D-Mont.) join Adam Erel (former ambassador to Bahrain and Spokesperson for then Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condi Rice) on Mercury’s five-member Okinawa team. ○

### 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).

**McBee Strategic Consulting, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 2, 2015 for Cabinet Office**, Government of Japan (through Dentsu Inc.), Washington, D.C., to arrange meetings for a cultural exchange program for Japanese scholars with American intellectuals in the ultimate hope of strengthening the relationship between the U.S. and Japan.

**Goldin Solutions Inc.**, New York, NY, **registered June 5, 2015 for Republic of Turkey** (through Royal Atlantic LLC), Washington, D.C., for organization and media relations services in connection with an event hosted by the Ambassador of Turkey for an audience viewing and a panel discussion of the Turkish election on June 7, 2015.

### 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).

**Innovative Federal Strategies, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 12, 2015 for Arianespace, Inc.**, Washington, D.C., regarding all provisions relating to commercial space launch.

**Bridge Street Group, LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 10, 2015 for Comcast Corporation**, Washington, D.C., regarding Intellectual property policy.

**Foley & Lardner LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 11, 2015 for Hollywood Park Land Company, Inc.**, Los Angeles, CA, regarding legislative activities to secure a California Environmental Quality Act exemption to build a stadium on the former Hollywood Park Track property.

**Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered June 12, 2015 for International Myeloma Foundation**, North Hollywood, CA, regarding oral chemotherapy parity and biomedical research issues.

# PR Buyer's Guide

To be featured in the monthly Buyer's Guide,  
Contact John O'Dwyer, [john@odwyerpr.com](mailto:john@odwyerpr.com)

## 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.

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## WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT



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July 18, 2011 Vol. 44 No. 27

**NEWS CORP. CALLS IN EDELMAN**  
Embarked News Corp. has called in Edelman to handle fallout from its phone hacking scandal that has engulfed its British operation.  
The No. 1 independent PR firm is providing communications and PR counsel to News International's management and standards committee handling the internal inquiry into the hacking of a murdered 15-year-old girl's voicemail, allegations of snooping into the calls of family members of soldiers killed in Afghanistan and victims of the London terror attacks.  
Alex Bigg, Edelman's managing director for corporate affairs, and James Landie, managing director for PR, handle the account.  
They report to Will Lewis, general manager of News International, which is responsible for Rupert Murdoch's British papers.  
(More on the News Corp. crisis on page 3)

**THEME PARK OPERATORS SEEK PROPOSALS**  
The Virginia-based, global trade group for amusement park operators is on the hunt for a PR firm with an RFP open through Aug. 3.  
The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions represents the interests of 4,000 individual members from entities like zoos, theme and amusement parks, museums and aquariums.  
The Alexandria-based group, led by new CEO Chip Clary, is looking for media relations support with experience in crisis communications and the travel/tourism PR sector as it proactively engages consumers through the media and reacts to situations ranging from financial, legislative and operational issues. The IAAP wants two on-site staffers to assist its press team and one team member versed in crisis support.  
Colleen Mangone, manager of media relations, is taking pitches with in-person meetings slated for mid-August in Virginia for potential key account personnel. Work is expected to begin in early December.  
Download the RFP at [odwyerpr.com/rfp](http://odwyerpr.com/rfp).

**APCO Worldwide has recruited Collie Mackay**, former communications and partnerships director at the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, as director of its healthcare practice in Brussels. Mackay is a 20-year veteran of the healthcare scene, holding posts at Weber Shandwick, Avenalis and Organ Laboratories.

**F-H SHUFFLES MANAGEMENT DECK**  
Fishburn-Hillard named Jack Modzelewski to the newly created position of the Americas post to coordinate activity of the unit chief of regions in the U.S., Canada and Latin America.  
The founding general manager of F-H Chicago also served as COO for Europe and South Africa.  
Modzelewski was president of client relations since 2004 with responsibility for F-H's practice groups and strategic planning.  
F-H CEO Dave Sney also tapped J.J. Carter, GM/San Francisco, to the U.S. western president slot. Nancy Seliger, executive VP and former eastern president assumes global client relations duties. Bob Winslow, managing director for global technology, is now in charge of F-H's more than 30 practice groups and new product development.

**CHIME RINGS UP HEALTHCARE DEAL**  
Chime Communications has acquired healthcare specialist Reynolds-Mackenzie for an initial payment \$4M, a package of \$2.5M cash and stock.  
R-M says it generated \$2.4M in revenues last year and earned an operating profit of \$1.2M.  
It's the firm of Alison Mackenzie and Eva Reynolds. The duo counsels clients such as Pfizer, Amgen, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Roche and Medtronic. R-M will be part of Chime's OPEN Health group that was formed in January.  
The acquisition could cost Chime up to \$11M based on R-M's performance. Lord Bell's operation retains the right to pay up to a quarter of that contingent comp in newly issued shares.  
Chime is parent of Thell Pottinger.

**DISCOVERY BAY DISCOVERS MWW**  
Discovery Bay Games, the Seattle-based company that produces games, apps and accessories for Apple's iPad, has selected MWW Group as agency of record.  
DBG is developer of Duo, the first integrated device for iPad. Duo makes it possible for multi-person games such as "Smithsonian Artifact or Fiction." MWW is to position the client as the top brand of gaming "apps/entertainment" for the Apple tablet.  
Craig Olson, CEO of DBG, said it hired MWW for its "proven record of creating communications programs that directly influence the bottom line."  
DBG became part of MWW's consumer tech practice with Samsung, Nikon and Celestion, among others.

You'll get the news first in the eight-page weekly O'Dwyer letter, the "bible" of PR according to the *New York Times*--tips and stories that can lead to jobs, new accounts, media placements--sent as a PDF to your inbox every Monday afternoon.

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

O'Dwyer's magazine, now in its 28th year, examines a different area of PR each month. Issues include practice-area specific feature stories as well as profiles of PR firms with strengths in the focus area. The agency profiles constitute the ideal starting point for companies beginning their search for PR counsel.

### 2014 Editorial Calendar:

January, *PR Buyer's Guide/Crisis Comms.*  
February, *Environ. PR & Public Affairs*  
March, *Food & Beverage*  
April, *Broadcast Media Services*  
May, *PR Firm Rankings*  
June, *Multicultural/Diversity*  
July, *Travel & Tourism*  
August, *Prof. Svcs. & Financial/I*  
September, *Beauty/Fashion & Lifestyle*  
October, *Healthcare & Medical*  
November, *Technology*  
December, *Sports & Entertainment*



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