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THE TRAVEL ISSUE

Why domestic vacations will dominate in 2017

How Hispanics have become a top market for hoteliers

Tips for travel trade show PR

How kids are shaping travel, vacation destinations

Creative staff shortage hits PR industry



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AWARDS



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Crisis manager wanted for Brand USA

Donald Trump has greatly diminished Brand USA and it's going to take one genius of a crisis manager to restore luster to the country's image overseas. That's a takeaway from Pew Research Center's study released June 26 about the perception of the U.S.

Pew polled 40,000 people living in 37 countries. The survey found that Trump and his policies are "broadly unpopular around the globe." Just 22 percent of overall respondents have confidence that Trump would do the right thing in international affairs. That figure compares to the 64 percent who expressed confidence in Barack Obama. More than half of the respondents in 26 of the nations polled consider Trump dangerous.

The Trump brand is downright toxic in key ally nations such as Germany. Only 11 percent of Germans are confident that Trump will do the right thing, compared to an 86 percent score for Obama.

Pew also found that America's image fell most in places where confidence in Trump tanked the most. Less than half (49 percent) of those polled hold a favorable view of the U.S. That's down from 64 percent under Obama.

Trump's policies, such as building a wall along the US-Mexico border, withdrawing from the Paris Accord/trade deals and restrictions on travel from some Muslim-majority countries, are universally jeered.

The scoreboard for Trump's characteristics were abysmal: arrogant (75 percent), intolerant (65 percent), dangerous (62 percent), strong leader (55 percent), charismatic (39 percent), well qualified to be president (26 percent) and caring about ordinary people (23 percent).

The views of America's once vaunted "soft power" have also slipped, according to Pew. Forty-six percent of respondents now "dislike" vs. "like" "American ideas about democracy." Fifty-four percent consider it "bad" vs. "good" that "American ideas are spreading here."

But here's the survey's real bombshell: Canadians don't like us anymore. For the first time since Pew's begun polling, The Great White North's favorability ratings toward its southern neighbor fell below 50 percent. Only 43 percent of Canadians now have a positive image of the U.S.

Thanks, Donald. In the immortal words of George W. Bush, "You've done a heckuva job."

Democrats need to retool PR shop

The Democrats, the one party that can repair the U.S.'s declining reputation, once again crawled home with tails between their legs following demoralizing losses in June's House races in Georgia and South Carolina. It's time for the Democrats to retool their communications shop.

The defeat of 30-year-old wunderkind Jon Ossoff by a healthy four-point margin especially hurt the credibility of the Democratic PR effort. But what was the party thinking? How could a 30-year-old documentary filmmaker who lives outside Georgia's Sixth District take a conservative seat that was held since the 1970s by Republican stalwarts such as Newt Gingrich and now Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price?

To the Democrats, it just didn't matter. Progressives, still smarting over Donald Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton, "nationalized" the suburban Atlanta race, opening the floodgates for progressives to jump in. That simply doesn't work. More than \$25 million poured into Ossoff's campaign coffers, much from the Hollywood celebrity crowd of Jane Fonda, Chelsea Handler, Sam Waterston, Mark Ruffalo, Samuel L. Jackson, Alyssa Milano and the bunch.

The Republicans, meanwhile, played their cards close to the vest, selecting veteran politico Karen Handel to take on Ossoff. You've got to hand it to the Grand Old Party. It knows how to win.

While his progressive allies urged Ossoff to attack Trump, the candidate was in a losing position. Since the President has many supporters in the Sixth District, Ossoff saw little benefit in bashing the President. That drew the ire of the progressive crowd, which began to paint Ossoff as a "centrist," a fate worse than death for many on the professional left.

MoveOn.org criticized Ossoff for missing an opportunity to attack proposed cuts in health-care, especially in the district once represented by Price. Ossoff, instead, opted to appeal to Republican moderates in the District, stressing his plans to keep a lid on the nation's spending. There just weren't enough of those moderates to put him over the top.

Democrats now are claiming a Pyrrhic Victory, patting themselves on the back for running such a competitive race. That's a loser mentality. As David Axelrod pointed out in June, there are no prizes for second place. The Democrats oversold their chances in Georgia, while their candidate in South Carolina, Archie Parnell, came closer to defeating his opponent than Ossoff did. Parnell flew well under the radar of national Democrats.

If the Democrats want to take back the House, they have to put aside their obsession with Trump. The Democratic Party needs candidates who are far from the star power of Hollywood, and it needs qualified people who are respected in the communities in which they're running for office. ○

—Kevin McCauley



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PR industry facing creative staff shortage

Hiring managers working in the marketing industry now face challenges hiring professionals to fill key creative positions.

By Jon Gingerich

Nearly half of hiring managers working at advertising and marketing agencies — 45 percent — expressed difficulty recruiting professionals to fill vacancies across various creative positions, according to a recent employment outlook study by staffing and recruiting agency The Creative Group.

To overcome these challenges, 45 percent said they're now more willing than they were three years ago to expand their search geographically, looking outside their city — or even their state — in order to acquire the talent their agency needs.

Jobs in media services, customer experience and account services are among the most challenging roles to fill, according to the Creative Group survey.

Advertising agencies staffing 100 or more employees appear especially beleaguered by this dearth of talent, with 67 percent of hiring managers stationed at these companies reporting difficulty finding the right person

for the job.

A relative lull in hiring also appears to have hit the ad and marketing industries. Only nine percent said they plan to add creative talent to their existing teams throughout the rest of the year, compared to 12 percent last year. About two-thirds — 64 percent — said they plan to maintain the same staffing roster they currently have and fill only vacated positions, a year-over-year decline of three percent. Finally, 21 percent said they've now enacted a hiring freeze and are not filling any vacated positions or creating new ones, an uptick of one percent from the year prior.

For the companies that are hiring, executives surveyed said the industry jobs in the highest demand include positions in account services (at 24 percent), followed by mobile design/development and marketing research jobs, both at 21 percent. Public relations roles were highlighted by 20 percent, as were jobs involving social media. Tasks

in the least demand among advertising and marketing executives include media services, copywriting, content marketing and creative/art direction.

The Creative Group also discovered that executives working in the advertising and marketing industries widely oppose the practice of open salary policies at their place of employment, a growing trend in the workforce for the last several years in which everyone within a company knows what everyone else is earning.

Proponents of this practice say that sharing employee compensation details squashes rumors and instills a culture of trust and transparency in the workplace, which can produce a more equitable, ethical work environment and may also help eliminate wage discrimination against women and minority employees.

The disadvantages of such a practice are what one might expect: for employees, the prospect of comparing paychecks is uncomfortable; moreover, such a policy may also reveal a company's disparate salary structure, which can lead to lower employee retention and may also hurt staff morale.

Professionals working in the advertising and marketing industries appear to agree with the latter sentiment. More than half of respondents — 61 percent — in the Creative Group study said they believe an open salary policy would have a negative effect on employee confidence.

Many ad and marketing executives see the potential benefits of an open salary policy, however: according to the survey, 18 percent said they think such a concept could boost staff productivity, and others — 17 percent — said these policies may help improve staff recruitment and retention. Others also believe it could instill trust and help close an existing wage gap. Still, more than a quarter of ad and marketing executives — 27 percent — also said they believe the potential consequences outweigh any benefits these policies might have.

The study shows that currently, the open salary concept is also not a practice widely adopted by the communications industry. A clear majority of advertising and marketing executives surveyed — 82 percent — said their company does not presently have a pay transparency policy in place.

The Creative Group study, which was conducted by research firm SSRS, polled more than 400 executives nationally, including approximately 200 marketing executives from companies with 100 or more employees and 200 advertising executives from agencies with 20 or more employees. ○

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Americans question motives behind CSR

Consumers are divided on whether companies that develop corporate social responsibility programs do so because they believe it's the right thing to do, or if they're interested only in boosting stakeholder value.

By Jon Gingerich

Do companies in the private sector engage in CSR initiatives because they're legitimately compelled to do what's right, or are they simply offering public relations platitudes in a bid to elevate brand awareness?

According to the latest annual Harris Poll Reputation Quotient study, which tracks the perception of the 100 most visible companies in the U.S. by asking consumers to rank their reputations across a half-dozen key attributes, 45 percent of consumers said they believe companies embark on CSR initiatives because they believe it's a role they should play as leaders in their communities. Conversely, a similar amount — 40 percent — said they believe companies develop CSR initiatives only to bolster their public image and establish social value for stakeholders.

Out of the 100 companies measured by consumers for corporate reputation, only eight achieved an "excellent" CSR ratings this year, suggesting that most Americans feel the majority U.S. companies have a long way to go when it comes to excelling at corporate social responsibility initiatives. On the other hand, that paltry figure actually places more companies under the "excellent" social responsibility umbrella than any other time in the poll's 18-year history (by

comparison, only four companies received "excellent" social responsibility ratings in 2016; seven years ago, no companies earned this designation).

East Coast supermarket chain Wegmans topped the Harris Poll RQ list this year in terms of earning consumers' highest social responsibility ranking, the second time the NY-based grocer has earned a top spot in the survey. Southeastern supermarket chain Publix Super Markets, Inc. took second place, the third consecutive year that employee-owned grocer has landed a top spot on the list. Amazon took third place, the second consecutive year the Internet's largest retailer has landed on the list, after it achieved the highest Harris Poll rating ever last year, followed by electric car maker Tesla Motors. Fifth place went to military-oriented bank USAA. Filling out the top-ten list for top social responsibility this year were Lowe's, UPS, L.L. Bean, Walt Disney Company and Whole Foods Market.

By comparison, bottoming out the list was Wells Fargo, falling 19 points — the survey's largest drop — to number-99, the result of its disastrous 2016 fraud deposit and credit card accounts scandal (Wells Fargo last year accounted for the largest reputation drop in Harris Poll history). Wells Fargo is now beat

only by agricultural technology giant Monsanto — number 100 — when it comes to terrible reputation. Bank of America, Samsung, Procter & Gamble Co. and Goldman Sachs also saw their reputations plummet this year, declining -8.4, -6.8, -6.1 and -5.8 points, respectively.

The survey also found that Millennials are the generation significantly more likely to attempt to influence family and friends, either in person or online, regarding a company's perceptions, with more than half — 51 percent, more than double the percent of Baby Boomers — admitting they've participated in conversations of this nature with others.

Baby Boomers, on the other hand, appear most concerned about the amount of personal information companies retain about their customers (82 percent, compared to only 69 percent of Millennials).

Harris' research found that consumers believe respectful treatment of employees and customers, as well as a commitment to ethics, are the most important undertakings a company can make when it comes to shaping corporate reputation. Providing affordable and accessible products and services, as well as safe working conditions, also ranked high on the list. ○

PR firms report lower profit, staff pay

PR agencies reported lower average operating profit and staff pay in 2016 compared to recent years past, according to Gould+Partners' 2017 Best Practices Benchmarking Report.

By Jon Gingerich

The average profitability of PR agencies slipped in 2016, with firms now reporting lower average profit than recent years past, according to an annual survey conducted by New York-based merger and acquisition consultancy Gould+Partners.

Average PR agency operating profit was 15.2 percent of net revenues in 2016, according to the 2017 Best Practices Benchmarking Report, which analyzes the factors affecting agency profitability and profiles agency growth by size, region and specialty. This year's findings reveal a dip from 2015's average PR agency operating profit of 15.3 percent, 2014's 16.2 percent and 2013's 15.8 percent.

Average staff pay was also down: revenue per employee was \$184,069 in 2016, a dip from \$185,624 the year prior.

The findings boded more optimistically for larger agencies: PR firms boasting net revenues of more than \$25 million reported an average operating profit of 18 percent in 2016; firms accounting for between \$10 and \$25 million in revenues achieved profitability of 17.4 percent; firms in the \$3-10 million range netted 14.6 percent.

By comparison, firms earning under \$3 million in revenue netted only 14.3 percent in average operating profit, according to the survey.

Perhaps just as troubling: while total overhead and operating expenses averaged 25.9 percent for all firms surveyed — more or less consistent with previous years' findings — they were highest for firms earning under the \$3 million mark, suggesting that the tightest cost management is occurring at the firms achieving the most. For firms

earning under \$3 million, overhead and operating expenses averaged 27.9 percent, compared to 26.1 percent for firms earning between \$3-10 million, 25.4 percent for firms earning between \$10-25 million and 24.8 percent for firms earning more than \$25 million.

Firms in the under \$3 million bracket also averaged the highest turnover — 27.7 percent — of firms in any other group in 2016, compared to an overall turnover rate of 22.1 percent.

"What clearly stands out, consistent with our other studies, is that bigger is better," Gould+Partners Managing Partner Rick Gould told *O'Dwyer's*. "As PR firms grow and improve their infrastructure, their labor costs will be relatively reduced and profitability will increase."

Firms specializing in healthcare, tech, consumer, financial/investor relations and sports/entertainment ranked highest in 2016; firms focusing on digital, travel, public affairs and real estate bottom out this year's survey. ○

A brave new world for travel PR

Exploiting new opportunities from influencer marketing to social strategies and sponsored content.

By Laura Davidson

Over the last five years, the travel industry has been roiled by a perfect storm. On one hand, travel changed from something you did to something you are. It became a lifestyle choice, an announcement of who you want to be, just like a luxury watch or car. It was a seismic shift that shook the travel landscape, altering it in meaningful ways. The media began covering travel the way it covered fashion, with stories about celebrity getaways, enriching experiential activities and bragging-rights destinations.

On the other hand, travelers began consuming media in new ways, mostly on their social networks. This perfect storm, the collision of two climactic forces, changed the face of travel PR, blowing away its established conventions and forcing it to adopt a constant stream of new technologies. Constant change is the new normal. It's a Darwinian world in which only the fast adapters will survive.

Today's successful PR agencies look nothing like they used to even five years ago. We have moved from feeding facts to telling stories. Long gone is our tight focus on print magazines and newspaper travel

sections. Now our strategy meetings are all about high-tech and new wave, loud with talk about multiplatform, integrated opportunities that create dialogue with our clients' brands. Our campaigns are rigidly timed roll-outs that pluck from an ever-expanding arsenal of social strategies, influencer marketing, custom content, digital/broadcast, brand partnerships, and yes, there is a place still for those traditional media strategies on which our industry is based.

Let's take a look at two areas that are on the forefront of our PR world: social media influencers and sponsored content:

Social media/influencer marketing

The greatest change in the way we tell our clients' stories is the everywhere-you-look, everywhere-you-go availability of social media and the influencers who drive it. Over the last five years, social media has gone from something ungainly, ungovernable and unquantifiable to an indispensable powerhouse, delivering impressive results in an almost immediate timeframe (do you

remember those days when we placed winter stories in July?).

Our agency has a dedicated social media manager and team. For our larger PR programs, we partner with a specialized social media agency (Gather & Grow) that extends our reach still further. Working with influencers is a priority, with new names popping up in unexpected places like daffodils in the spring. In the same way that we evaluate the suitability of a magazine's readership, so we vet influencers to ensure they and their followers are the right fit for our client's brand image.

While most people on the outside think



Laura Davidson Public Relations produced extensive digital content during one of Sydney's largest events, Vivid Sydney.

that social media has made our work easier (more outlets, right?), we have found the contrary is true. Yes, the PR machine is driven by the same old engines — time, effort and legwork — but, if it's precisely calibrated and intelligently steered, the rewards can be truly extraordinary.

With the right influencer partnerships our agency has increased the target audience for its clients by as much as 100 percent. Since many of our influencers are ambassadors, not just for travel, but also for clothing, jewelry and other like-minded lifestyle products, we mine their demographics as well. To expand the customer base of our Watch Hill Inn client in Rhode Island, we partnered with a brand ambassador for Anthropologie, the distinctive clothing and accessories retailer with over 200 stores worldwide. As a result, Watch Hill Inn's Instagram following grew by nearly 40 percent, yielding more than 8,000 likes and 143+ comments over the course of five days. Many of the comments from the posts

reflected inspirational trips to the Watch Hill Inn, followed by several direct messages leading to actual bookings.

Sponsored content

The shifting travel landscape has also led PR companies into the blurred world of sponsored content (a.k.a. native advertising). At the end of the day consumers want quality content that helps build a relationship with a brand. Successful PR drives that kind of authentic content creation and storytelling. Our agency frequently uses this strategy on behalf of our destination clients.

As part of a marketing partnership between



Laura Davidson

our client, Destination New South Wales/Sydney and Qantas Airways, we proposed a range of sponsored content opportunities with regional and national media. Working with one of *Travel + Leisure's* travel influencers we produced extensive digital content during one of Sydney's largest events, Vivid Sydney. This outreach included a series of social media posts direct from the festival that reached T+L's 1.9 million Instagram followers. More recently, we partnered with LA's top morning program, KTLA Morning News, and American Airlines to send

its entertainment reporter, Sam Rubin, to report live from Vivid Sydney. This effort garnered over a dozen segments and teasers and a trip giveaway component that brought in over 77,000 entries.

The good news is that there can be stability even in a world of constant change. It seems to me, a PR veteran with over 25 years in the trenches, that a new maturity is sneaking into our business. The more successful agencies have matured; they are less reactive than they were even a few years ago, less prone to abandon the tried-and-trusted practices and run like a giddy child after the next shiny new thing. The key is the same as it has always been: recognizing that every client has a unique set of goals and requires a different mix of tools, both old and new. If you get that mix correct and remain nimble — don't stay too attached to the long-term PR plan — then the new travel world can be your oyster.

Laura Davidson is President of Laura Davidson Public Relations (LDPR). ○

A large, dark silhouette of a hand is shown holding a city skyline, likely New York City, at sunset. The hand is positioned as if it is holding the city up. The skyline features several prominent skyscrapers, including the Empire State Building, which is illuminated. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, suggesting the sun is setting. The city lights are visible, and the overall scene conveys a sense of strength and support.

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Domestic vacations dominate in 2017

A recent survey suggests a slowdown may be coming this year for the travel industry, with many U.S. travelers choosing to remain stateside during 2017 and favoring road trips over international vacations.

By Julie Freeman and Nancy Friedman

With the summer travel season in full swing, many Americans are heading off for their vacations. Despite favorable exchange rates in many parts of the globe, global instability and safety concerns may shift where Americans choose to travel and how much they'll spend on their vacations this summer and into next year.

Vacation spending down

MMGY Global's 2017–2018 Portrait of American Travelers survey revealed that for the first time since 2013, the approximately 60 million traveling households in the U.S. will spend less on leisure travel this year (between \$1 billion and \$5 billion less), a dip from its eight-year high in 2016.

U.S. travelers spent an average of \$4,833 on vacations during the previous 12 months. And, travelers reported an intention to spend less on travel than they did the year prior. The survey did find, however, that Millennial families are going to spend more and travel more than all other generational segments.

Shift to domestic vacations

In what MMGY Global is projecting to be a slowdown year for the travel industry, Americans are choosing to stay on U.S. soil and experience more of what our 50 states have to offer. The Portrait of American Travelers survey revealed that as political concerns rise, preference is shifting toward domestic rather than international destinations.

Domestic vacations now make up 85 percent of American vacations, up seven points from last year. In fact, 13.9 million more vacations were taken within the U.S. compared to outside the country in the past year.

Boomer travelers are leading the way in domestic vacationing, with 90 percent of travelers within this generation staying in the U.S. on their vacations, followed by 88 percent of Mature travelers, 85 percent of Xers and 79 percent of Millennials.

Don't overlook young families

Despite the shift toward domestic travel, there is one segment that seems unfazed by shifts in global stability. Millennial families with kids lead all other segments in intent to travel abroad, with 26 percent of these travelers suggesting that they will travel in-

ternationally in the next 12 months.

This same group also intends to increase their spend and frequency in travel this year, making them a prime opportunity market for travel brands, both within the U.S. and beyond.

Road tripping reclaims travelers' hearts

As Americans increasingly favor domestic over international vacations, road trips are back on trend, reclaiming their place as the great American pastime. In the last 12 months, 39 percent of vacations taken by American travelers were road trips, up significantly from 22 percent the year prior.

Almost half of American travelers took at least one road trip during the past 12 months, and MMGY Global predicts even more will do so next year. So, what's the appeal of road trips? The majority chose this sort of vacation because of the stops they make along the way and the ability to pack everything needed for vacation in the car.

Attractions are top vacation experience

Attractions have become a very important element of the American vacation experience. More than half of all vacations (53 percent) include at least one visit to an attraction, including museums, aquariums, theme parks and other attractions. And, 68 percent of travelers chose the majority of attractions they would visit before the vacation even began.

With young families driving travel intent and spend, one might believe that theme parks and amusement parks lead the list of attractions sought out by travelers. However, the top-ranking attractions include art and history museums (65 percent), aquariums (59 percent) and science museums (56 percent), with theme parks falling fourth on the list (55 percent).

Implications for travel marketers

- The shift to more domestic travel helps insulate the domestic travel market from the flat growth predicted in the coming year. However, marketers must be innovative, as there's more competition from a smaller list of options. It's essential for DMOs to fight for traveler attention and interest as early in the planning cycle as possible.

- With the resurgence of road trips, travel marketers may want to consider additional marketing and promotional focus on their

drive markets as a way to maximize revenues.

- With this shift, U.S. destinations, hotels and attractions have the opportunity to maximize their marketing and promotional efforts and be more targeted in reaching their core travelers or guests.

- U.S. destinations, hotels and attractions need to ensure they keep their websites relevant and as innovative as possible, as Google's new tourism products are affecting how U.S. travelers are consuming content.

- Creative and timely content online and offline is crucial. As public relations professionals, we need to ensure we're peeling back all the layers and discovering new and different features and offerings for our clients' destinations, hotels and attractions that will pique the interest of both media and potential travelers.

Now in its 27th year, MMGY Global's Portrait of American Travelers survey provides an in-depth examination of the impact of the current economic environment, prevailing social values and emerging travel habits, preferences and intentions of Americans. It's widely regarded as a leading barometer of travel trends and an essential tool for both the development and evolution of brand and marketing strategy.

The Portrait of American Travelers survey polled nearly 3,000 U.S. adults who have taken at least one overnight trip of 75 miles or more away from home during the past 12 months. Respondents included those from more than 2,000 households with an annual income between \$50,000 and \$124,999; more than 700 households with an annual income between \$125,000 and \$249,999; and more than 160 households with an annual income of more than \$250,000. Data was collected in February. For more information about these insights, or to subscribe to the 2017–2018 Portrait of American Travelers white papers, visit www.mmgyglobal.com.

Nancy Friedman is a Partner and Julie Freeman is Managing Director of NJE, an MMGY Global company. ○



Julie Freeman



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An integrated approach to travel PR

Forging a connected path in a new, complex marketing world.

By Lou Hammond

In the early days of digital media, travel PR professionals initially came to terms with the phenomenon by treating social media as an “add-on” to traditional PR activities. They sensed there was some opportunity for promoting travel, and soon discovered they could share an online story over social media, but then went back about their business of pursuing placements within the traditional media outlets they had grown accustomed to working with. The relationship between websites, social media and online content and how they could all complement each other was far from understood.

Then PR pros began to realize those tweets, posts, likes and shares were more than just a fad and that they deserved more than just a passing nod. Recognizing they’d better get onboard or get left at the station, they subscribed to the old mantra: “If you lack certain expertise, then hire it.” So, they brought in a social media “expert” (typically a digital native newly graduated from college). PR professionals mostly reserved their own social accounts for personal use. At most they used them professionally to follow and track members of media — especially travel writers and editors. Otherwise, the PR team performed its customary function, while the social media team did theirs. Whatever thought was put into planning a social media strategy, for instance, was usually developed apart from the larger overall marketing strategy, including PR.

The above describes a typical siloed approach to marketing. It relies on the assumption that traditional PR and digital marketing would continue their journeys on separate, although related, tracks. Eventually, though, savvy PR professionals began projecting that the tracks did not run on parallel courses but were headed for an inevitable convergence. Now all astute travel marketers view digital marketing and PR as an integrated, complementary bundle of services that function as interrelated parts of a greater whole.

In many instances established destination marketing organizations evolved in the direction towards integration in an almost natural process as digital became more entrenched (and less distinguishable from “traditional” PR). A good case in point: Eight years ago, Market New Haven hired our agency to provide traditional PR services to promote its revitalized dining, shopping and cultural amenities. Market New Haven also recognized that social me-

dia was a critical component for reaching untapped markets. Pleased with our PR work, they hired us to take over their social media.

Two years later, we have embarked upon a fully integrated approach that combines branding, public relations, web development and social media into a single interrelated marketing strategy. Each element will complement the others in communicating Market New Haven’s message but each in its own way according to its specialized function and target audience. We will develop the InfoNewHaven.com website to serve not as a digital travel guide and information resource, but as a sophisticated, optimized marketing tool that reflects and functions as a part of the overall marketing strategy. It will work integrally with New Haven’s social media channels and promote the same resources and assets. As a public-private partnership, Market New Haven serves as a great example of how separate entities can collaborate to pursue a common goal of enhancing the community’s positive image, and now the marketing strategy follows that same seamless, collaborative approach.

As those who promote the travel industry embark on new marketing campaigns, they will increasingly follow a pattern similar to Market New Haven’s and demand a scope of work where each marketing activity acts as a link connected to the next to form a chain of interconnected services. Interaction between digital components and a robust website have already become increasingly important components of marketing campaigns, and this trend will only grow. Smart travel PR professionals are already adapting their way of thinking and approach to the business in light of these new circumstances.

One point travel marketers instinctively know: although integrated, each marketing discipline performs its own function best. A website successfully optimized to achieve a high organic search ranking serves a different purpose than an earned placement in the travel section of a newspaper. That story targets a different demographic than a carefully arranged and curated Instagram takeover. A timely blogpost may spark an impromptu side-trip to a destination, unlike an online itinerary planner that travelers wield to plan an extended vacation. And nothing else elicits the same response as the logo that distills a complex message into a single visual impulse. But all these pieces

should harmoniously serve the same overarching goal. That’s the point of integrated marketing.

Each element performs a separate function to further the marketing goal. A truly integrated marketing campaign is made up of different types of rail cars linked together to deliver the right message to the right audiences at the right times. When it’s done right, such a campaign resembles a luxury train with a well-appointed sleeping car coupled to an elegant lounge car adjoining a gourmet dining car — all served by an attentive staff.



Lou Hammond

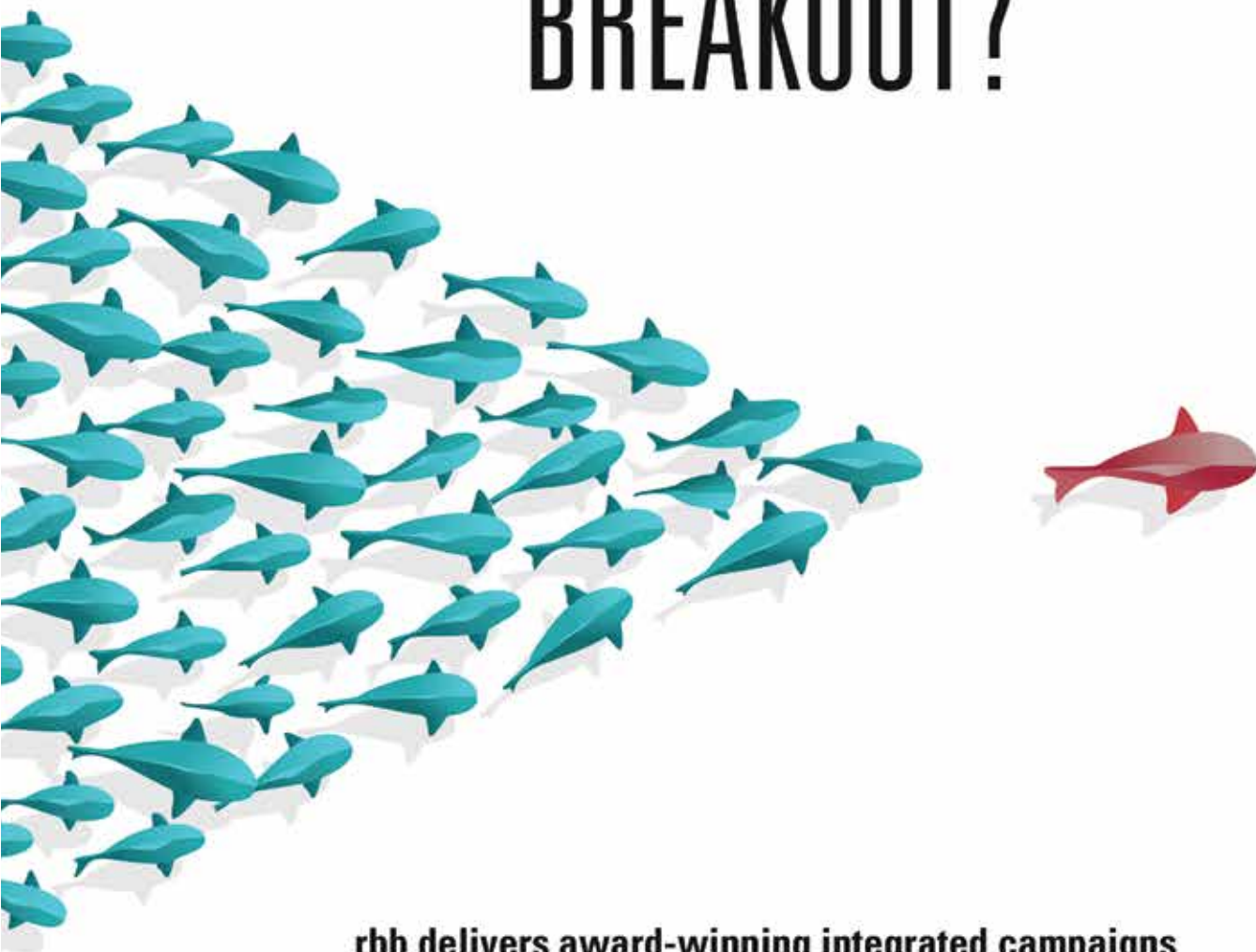
One thing has not changed: travel marketing is still executed by people who value relationships, especially with the media. Today’s editors and producers may be quicker to respond to a text or a private message over social media than to answer your phone call, but if anything, that only increases the need for building stronger relationships.

Today’s media environment is marked by ever-shrinking editorial and production staffs, where fewer people are constantly required to create more content than ever before. Editors need a steady stream of new digital content. Television producers are finding that the lines distinguishing a broadcast segment, a Facebook live post and footage posted on the website become increasingly blurred, but they’re responsible for scheduling and producing it all. One national travel editor recently confided that in addition to fulfilling traditional editorial duties for print, she is required to produce and post three new online stories per week. Such editors increasingly rely on marketing professionals to help provide that content. This creates a prime opportunity for travel marketing professionals to showcase amenities and strengthen bonds with media, while positioning themselves as go-to sources.

Another added benefit, online content is easily customized for digital use, not to mention it is naturally shareable across social channels, which repurposes and extends its reach. Integration, in other words, brings us full circle to that happy ideal: the seamless marketing campaign wherein each element works together to execute their individual tasks at the highest levels and in perfect accord.

Lou Hammond is Founder and Chairman of the Lou Hammond Group. ○

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The parallel lines of traditional, social outreach

The importance of a maintaining a dual-strategy for both traditional and social media when managing travel PR campaigns.

By Allyn Magrino

There's never been a better time for the travel industry in terms of exposure opportunities for hotels, airlines, cruises and destinations. From the tried-and-true traditional methods of magazines and newspapers to the equally-important social media platforms and video options, the vehicles for raising awareness for travel entities have never been so plentiful.

Additionally, as hotels and the like offer so much visual content, the travel industry has been one of the business sectors to benefit most from social media and video platform opportunities.

As travel industry professionals, having these additional avenues to spread the word about our clients has made our jobs more exciting, yet also more challenging; with more outlets to understand and manage, the potential for fast-moving exposure presents potential liabilities.

The good news is that experienced travel PR professionals are more valuable than ever, provided they have the ability to leverage a traditional media approach — which remains crucial — alongside the evolving world of social media and many new avenues of exposure these visual platforms provide.

It's not enough to employ an either/or approach of traditional outreach vs social platforms; the combination of the two ensures the widest reach possible of the target audience, and the ability to effectively tell the story of a property's or destination's many facets in the most creative way.

At our agency, we've tripled the size of our digital team over the past year due to demand from clients, who have recognized the necessity of pairing traditional PR efforts with a targeted digital strategy. It's not enough to simply throw up a Facebook page or post some pretty photos on Instagram; without a thoughtful plan for increasing engagement, haphazard social media postings will do little to build awareness.

One client, Grace Bay Club in Turks & Caicos, asked us this year to develop a strategy for increasing engagement on their social media platforms. As an agency, we also felt that a more integrated approach between traditional media relations and social media content was key to our success moving forward.

Through our efforts on digital for Grace Bay Club, we've introduced new audiences

to the resort through targeted influencer visits to the property, generating exposure for the hotel among coveted groups of affluent travelers based on influencers' core followings. Over the past six months, we've grown the Grace Bay Club's Instagram following by 45 percent, with nearly 1,500 new followers, and the resort's Facebook page following by 15 percent, with over 900 followers.

Award submissions are a great example of traditional and social media working in tandem to maximize awareness. While awards fall under the traditional media relations scope, we're able to solicit awareness among key constituent groups and loyal guests to solicit votes and increase the property's chances of being included in coveted roundups such as *Conde Nast Traveler's* Reader's Choice Awards.



Grace Bay Club in Turks & Caicos, where Magrino was able to deliver a 45 percent increase in Instagram followers in six months employing a targeted digital strategy.

We also pay close attention to our clients' social media platforms to help us develop traditional print and broadcast angles.

We note which posts get the highest engagement, including comments and other feedback, and use that data to craft story angles that we know will resonate with consumers.

As much as social media platforms help hotels and other travel businesses raise overall awareness, there's the other side of the coin, with every traveler being a travel critic who has access to TripAdvisor and other highly influential digital platforms. Getting even one less-than-positive review on one of these sites can spell disaster for a client, based primarily on the reach of the review platform and the PR company's abil-

ity to minimize any fallout.

Recently at one of our hotels, a guest with more than 100,000 followers on Twitter started tweeting that she was unsatisfied with the housekeeping in her room. Our social media team quickly picked up on the tweets and alerted the hotel management team on site. The team moved in to contact the guest and rectify the housekeeping situation, additionally offering the guest a free night's stay. The guest was thrilled with the quick response and deleted her negative tweets, instead tweeting that she loved the hotel and would definitely be back again soon.



Allyn Magrino

The rise of social media platforms has also made digital-savvy travelers increasingly influential in all aspects of travel, from the amenities travel companies are offering to where hotels are being built. While in the past, hotels often focused on travelers with a higher disposable income in the 40-plus demographic, there's a switch toward focusing on a psychographic rather than a demographic.

Those travelers who have a fluency not only with social media platforms, but also with mobile booking and online travel planning, are shaping how the travel industry is evolving. As such, travel PR campaigns need to speak to these travelers, and an integrated social and traditional media focus is essential.

The travel industry has had to adapt to a tech-savvy generation of travelers, and that has had huge — mostly positive — ramifications for travel PR practitioners. We now have more tools than ever at our disposal to raise awareness, allowing us to speak to consumers in whatever medium they're most comfortable, be it via a traditional magazine, a social media posting or a video on YouTube.

This plethora of outlets for disseminating news can be a double-edged sword, in that we all now have more to monitor and manage on the media front, combined with the rise in user-generated content. While our jobs as travel PR practitioners have become increasingly complex, it's clear that our role is more crucial than ever in helping hotels, airlines, spas, cruise lines and destinations navigate this brave new digital world.

Allyn Magrino is President of New York-based travel and lifestyle PR and marketing agency Magrino. ○

How kids shape travel, vacation decisions

Online surveys and review sites show that adults are no longer the lone determining authorities of vacation planning. Popular websites and platforms are now beginning to survey kids in order to gather statistics from this demographic as it relates to family travel.

By Adrienne Jordan

The data collected from kids via online surveys and review sites typically explores vacation-related desires and interest levels in categories such as hotel amenities, beach vs. cultural travel and social media. Ultimately, these surveys show how important youth are in shaping travel plans and decisions.

Today, it appears that most kid-focused travel data is being collected primarily through online surveys as opposed to online reviews. For example, Booking.com, which has more than 118 million user reviews, recently sought to collect post-vacation reviews through a targeted survey of 22,564 kids and teens ages 5-15. The site found that vacations that include trusty Wi-Fi, social media scenery opportunities, late breakfasts, bouncy beds and other specific categories were important to kids. The data, which was collected from children across the globe with their parents' permission, provides some much-needed insight into how to match families with a fitting choice of vacation.

Todd Dunlap, Managing Director of Booking.com, Americas, said that "spending time away together is an important part of family life, but we understand that planning to keep all the children happy can be hard," which is one of the reasons the company decided to orchestrate the kid survey.

Kids want to stay connected on vacation

Booking.com found that teens 12-15 years old rate social media — the ability to keep in touch with friends at home while away — as highly important. Of this age group, 89 percent characterized a strong Wi-Fi connection as essential. This shows how social media has affected the world, with kids claiming that being able to access social media for posting during vacationing is essential. Almost half of the 12-15 year olds valued having the chance to "take cool photos for social media." Other categories such as "staying near a pool or a beach" and "enjoying lots of activities" were also ranked in the top five important factors.

Based on these results, the top destinations around the world for the 12-15 age group were Japan (Wi-Fi/fast internet connection); U.S. (a pool, lots of activities); Greece (near the beach); and Brazil (the chance to take cool photos for social media). The surveys not only show what kids want to experience while vacationing, but also what isn't important to them when

traveling. For example, only 25 percent of surveyed kids ages 12-15 think it's important to make friends with other kids on vacation.

Another age group surveyed were kids ages 5-11, whose results varied from the 12-15 age group. Over half (73 percent) of this demographic wanted a vacation by a pool or beach. Other top choices were activities they can't do at home, playing with other children and having all the ice cream they can eat on vacation. Some of the categories that were not as important were staying in a room bigger than the one they have at home (24 percent), bouncy beds (22 percent), and for vacation staff to be good at telling jokes (10 percent). This data is relevant because it can help parents shape family vacations, or at least gives some insight into what they should be looking into as they plan their next family trip.



Although there aren't many heavily trafficked websites that cater exclusively to online reviews, Kidzcatonz.com was created in 2015 by 12-year-old Bella Tipping from the UK to allow children to rate travel interests such as hotels, restaurants, and theme parks based on the reception of service and other factors. Tripadvisor allows only adults to set up accounts on the site, serving as a basis of inspiration for Tipping. Kidzcatonz, which is affiliated with Expedia, will allow people to book their holidays

directly through the website. Kids can log in to the website to become reviewers, and provides a safe portal that uses an avatar system.

HomeAway, a vacation rentals site representing more than 1.2 million online bookable vacation rental homes in 190 countries, recently released its 2017 Kidpinion Travel Survey, which polled kids and parents across the U.S. The survey collaborated with polling site YouGov to collect data on behalf of HomeAway and FamilyFun magazine.

The purpose of the online survey, which gathered data from more than 500 U.S.-based kids ages six to 18 as well and their parents in households with incomes of at least \$50,000, was to see how much of an influence kids have on future vacation plans.

Experiences more desirable than 'stuff'

HomeAway family travel expert Melanie Fish said the survey suggest that "young people value experiences over 'stuff,' and families are planning vacations together."

"People always ask adults their opinion, but what's really cool about including kids in the research is that we found making memories is just as important to them as it is to their parents," Fish said.

The survey also found that experiences matter more than things, with 43 percent of kids claiming they'd rather choose to go on vacation over receiving a physical gift. Harry Potter was a top scorer when it came to the category relating to magical vacation destinations: 27 percent of kids would want to travel to Hogwarts over any other fictional place. The runner up to this survey was Star Wars Galaxy at 21 percent. The survey also found that the number one influencer on kids (37 percent) is their friends, which topped celebrities, social media, TV and movies. Based on parent's additional participation in the survey, the study found that 87 percent of parents said their kids play a role in vacation planning, and 13 percent said their kids actually make the final decision. This data from HomeAway and FamilyFun magazine research revealed almost 9 out of 10 parents let kidpinions guide trip plans. For example, both parents and kids ranked a private island, castle and treehouse as their top three choices among unique places to stay. Finally, the survey found that parents and kids both ranked having a pool is important to them as a top amenity. ○

How changing US demographics affect travel PR pros

Destination marketers must include more diverse perspectives at the marketing communications table if they want to attract consumers across varying cultural and community backgrounds.

By Karyl Leigh Barnes

The United States is likely the most diverse country in the world. Thanks to a long-held interest in welcoming immigrants and celebrating individuality, the American melting pot is overflowing. The country is poised to become a minority-majority country by 2040 and already, multicultural markets are in the majority in several states, including California, New Mexico and Texas.

Antonio Hernandez, Chair of Diversity Initiatives for PRSA Chicago, noted in a blog post for the organization that “leading brands that want to build relationships in diverse and emerging markets know it begins with recruiting, developing and retaining talent reflecting their client population.”

The same goes for consumers of travel experiences. Growing business from diverse markets is not merely a matter of talking the talk; destination marketing communicators actually need to walk the walk, and are now starting by including more diverse voices at the marketing communications table.

Having varying perspectives is crucial for making informed, strategic decisions on the right ways to attract consumers from various cultural and community backgrounds. Diverse voices bring cultural context and authenticity to communications efforts. Communications professionals with direct connections to targeted communities are more likely to have an innate understanding of what works and doesn't in terms of effective positioning and storytelling.

Frances Wong, Senior Public Relations Manager for Visit Oakland noted, “In today's day and age, diversity is an asset. We are selling destinations and experiences — and it's about connecting with people. The more diverse the DMO staff, the more genuine the message will be.”

Jenea Robinson, a Senior Media Relations Manager for Visit Philadelphia, pointed out that having a staff filled with people from various backgrounds is a matter of dollars and cents. “If you don't look at diversity in marketing from within, your organization won't grow,” Robinson said. “Moreover, from a business standpoint, your city will miss out on a huge economic driver.”

The proof is in the statistics. According to the University of Georgia's latest Multicultural Economy Report, total Hispanic buying power in the United States has grown from \$495 billion in 2000 to \$1.4 trillion in 2016. African American buying power is estimated at \$1.2 trillion in 2016, and it will

grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2021, according to the same report.

Today, a greater percentage of the traveling public is made up of people who identify by ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion. 2016 valuations from Out Now underscore why targeting LGBT customers is smart business: in the U.S. alone, LGBT spending on travel is nearly \$61 billion, with an annual growth rate of 2.5 percent.

That said, few destinations can be all things to all people, and few have the dollars to market to every single group.

“You have to look at the destination and see who you are selling it to,” Wong said. “For us, for example, the LGBT audience is such a natural element that it just happened.” Wong said that Visit Oakland set up an LGBT task force in 2016, made up of small business owners and people in the community. “We wanted to get feedback to make sure we are being sensitive and sending the right message out,” she said.

The communications team at Discover the Palm Beaches in Florida found success with a similar community-influenced strategy. As President and CEO Jorge Pesquera explained in the *Palm Beach Post*, “Every guest, regardless of lifestyle, race or origin, is valued and respected.”

Indeed, community outreach is a key part of the diversity effort. Kitty Ratcliffe, President of Explore St. Louis, noted the bureau has had great success by partnering with local community members and associations connected to a variety of diverse cultures. “They have a lot of insight that we won't find out just by doing general research.” Explore St. Louis also has a multicultural committee that assists in developing and reviewing marketing communications initiatives.

Whenever Visit Philadelphia aims to target a specific audience, it starts by forming a community task force. According to Levitz, “In 2004, Philadelphia was the first DMO on the planet to air a television ad openly targeted to the LGBT community. The ad was backed up by a wider advertising and public relations campaign.”

But Visit Philadelphia didn't start the project from scratch. “We wanted to ensure a campaign that would be serious, respectful and representative of the community,” said Levitz. That's why, before embarking on the ad campaign, “we first established a Gay Tourism Caucus as a sounding board. We included the local business community, along with cultural and thought leaders

who had interests in seeing that the LGBT market got its due.” Visit Philadelphia has used the same approach with its outreach to Latino and African American audiences — task force first, action second.

Another way to attract a diverse set of visitors is by supporting businesses and special events targeted at those markets through media relations efforts. Visit Oakland's Wong said the bureau asks the local LGBT community about the activities they participate in and the businesses they patronize in order to develop programming of interest to that market. Visit Philadelphia's Robinson says destination marketing organizations should “show up and support existing events within your community.” She noted that Visit Philadelphia helps special interest festivals with publicity and media outreach, and makes sure her own organization has a strong brand presence at such events.

Another aspect in diversity marketing is reaching out to consumers where they are. For example, Robinson noted that in the past five to seven years, there's been an enormous growth in travel spending among African Americans Millennials. Studies show this group heavily consumes social media, particularly YouTube. To reach this market, Visit Philadelphia is developing a YouTube web series featuring a noted Philadelphia celebrity and several social media influencers. In other cases, DMOs can target social media influencers or reporters for traditional media outlets that appeal to specific demographics and invite them on focused press trips. The resulting coverage from respected, independent voices can spread the diversity message via objective third-party sources.

In the next twenty years, the American market will continue to evolve. Given America's changing demographics, having diverse staff at the marketing communications table will help ensure that all destination communication is effective and that reality, not stereotypes, is presented to the majority-minority populations of today and tomorrow.

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



Karyl Leigh Barnes

Five ways to retain top talent

The team members that bond with coworkers and clients and are part of a brand's mission are what truly give agencies their staying power

By Amy Ogden

It's no secret that people are the most precious commodity at any company. This is no different at our agency, which has a knack for retaining top talent across our four offices. The numbers speak for themselves:

As a company of 55 total employees, 23 of our team members started as interns. That's an astonishing 40 percent; and 15 team members — or 27 percent — have been with the agency for more than five years and have since grown into senior roles.

Nine team members — or 16 percent — have been with the agency for three-plus years. The same number have transferred within the agency to other JPR offices.

The agency's eight executive team members have each been with the agency for more than five years.

This retention has stayed strong through years of agency double-digit growth with 2016 topping revenue of \$7.7 million.

What does this all mean? Beyond the numbers, it means the agency has a team that's truly bonded with their coworkers and clients; it has low employee and account team turnover; and sets the standard for client service and retention. JPR has people on its team who know the brand inside and out and are a true part of its mission.

"We founded JPR on the promise of relationships, with the media, with clients and most importantly with our own team," said JPR Partner Jamie Sigler O'Grady. "It's incredibly rewarding to watch our team members grow in their roles over the years and become leaders and trendsetters at JPR and in the industry."

What does it take to retain top talent? One word: culture.

Hire for culture, build the talent

A top priority during the hiring process at JPR is a focus on cultural fit. The best team members are a cultural fit first, followed closely by top talent. Both are necessary, but culture reigns supreme. One of the top ways to gauge cultural fit is to have team members in various roles be part of the interview process. Hiring a manager? Have the actual team members who would work with that manager join the interviews. Their feedback is important.

"Ultimately, culture comes first when creating a cohesive and successful team," said JPR Partner Sarah Evans. "We not only create an amazing cultural experience within

JPR, we also bring in new team members who see our culture through a fresh lens and add to it in their own unique ways."

Champion experiences

Cross-office camaraderie is key to success as a global agency. Twice a year, select team members are flown coast to coast and hosted at a JPR client hotel for a week of meetings with bi-coastal media. Most valuably, team members get to innovate with far-flung colleagues, swapping ideas on all platforms, and collaborating on everything from media visits and pitches to brand partnerships, influencer relations and social strategy. Bonus: They get to explore a new city, sparking the curiosity that drives the industry.

Beyond the office-swap program, team members across all offices attend the annual PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference and the agency sends team ambassadors to cross-office team retreats to build upon the brand pillar of collaboration and sharing best practices.

Empower

The agency empowers team members to wow their clients and media. The "what," "how" and "when" is completely up to the account team. They've had team members create a post-trip video for a traveling journalist to relive the trip of a lifetime. For clients who participated in a philanthropic cross-country cycling race, the team rewarded them with welcome-home packages containing personal notes and healthy treats.

Grow and guide

JPR long ago dropped the standard annual review format in exchange for a more fluid, ongoing growth and development plan for team members. This includes multiple check-ins throughout the year with clear goals and milestones. Each team member receives anonymous 360-degree feedback at all levels — this leads to a true understanding of his or her place in the agency and within its teams. Additionally, the agency has an internal mentorship program where team members are paired up to create ongoing guidance, goal-setting and championing.

Create space for personal innovation

With longevity comes team members who grow personally and professionally over the years and may seek new challenges or develop new skills. The team at JPR

sees this as a bonus and has thoughtfully moved team members into new roles over time based on their talents and passions.

Retaining top talent takes daily dedication to relationships, activities and results. JPR over the past 12 years has steadily risen in the ranks to become one of the country's fastest growing bi-coastal agencies in the travel and hospitality spaces. JPR's global roster includes more than 100 independent boutique hotels in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, Asia and more. The agency steadily garners and retains partners including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality, Grace Hotels, InterContinental, the destination of Newport Beach and 17 Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

While accolades are incredibly rewarding, it truly is the team behind the brand that matters the most. "Culture isn't just a buzz word at JPR, it's part of our brand DNA," said O'Grady. "We wouldn't have it any other way."

Amy Ogden is Vice President of Brand Development at J Public Relations. ◉



Amy Ogden

PR news brief

Barbados brings on DCI

Travel and economic development PR powerhouse Development Counsellors International has been named North American PR agency of record for Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc., the official tourism development agency for the eastern Caribbean island nation.

The retainer follows an RFP Barbados Tourism Marketing issued for a U.S. PR agency of record in November.

As AOR, DCI will manage all tourism PR and marketing initiatives for Barbados throughout the United States and Canada in a bid to drive visitor growth. The agency in a statement said it will work to elevate Barbados' profile as a leading Caribbean travel destination by differentiating the Lesser Antilles island destination from its sister islands and drawing attention to the destination's travel options for jetsetters and families.

DCI also manages communications duties for the independent British Commonwealth's economic development agency, Invest Barbados.

DCI, which maintains offices in New York, Denver, Los Angeles and Toronto, took in more than \$10 million in travel and tourism related net fees in 2016. Other destination clients include Chile Tourism, The Hangzhou Tourism Commission, the Japan National Tourism Office, Visit California, Visit Huntington Beach and Visit Scotland.

Why U.S. Hispanics should be a top target for hoteliers

The U.S. Hispanic audience is now one of the largest leisure target niche groups, and presents strong marketing opportunities for hotel brands. But how can hoteliers tap into this powerful and growing consumer segment?

By Lisa K. Ross

Annual hotel openings have nearly tripled over the past five years, according to a recent forecast by Statista. Just who's expected to fill all these new rooms moving forward? Rather than think in age demographics (baby boomers vs. millennials), it's time for the hospitality industry to recognize a powerful yet largely untapped target audience: U.S. Hispanics.

Now taking more vacations across every income level — and spending nearly \$300 more per trip, according to research by ThinkNow Research — U.S. Hispanics are a smart consumer segment to pursue. Coupled with their buying power — which is projected to top \$1.7 trillion in 2017, according to Statista — the call-to-action for hoteliers is obvious, though questions remain, namely: How can I effectively market to this group?

What drives Hispanics' travel decisions

No matter the business, understanding your customer is vital to earning their interest and loyalty. However, unlike other industries currently experiencing disruption from technological advances — like Amazon vs. brick-and-mortar retailers or Uber vs. taxis — travel planning is more heavily based on emotional drivers than convenience. Reaching the travel decision makers and influencing their thought process prior to booking is key. So, what should hotels do to court the growing and influential U.S. Hispanic guest? The first step is to understand what makes this group unique.

U.S. Hispanics have a greater curiosity to see the world compared to their fellow Americans. Research conducted by Wakefield Research and Hampton by Hilton revealed a key travel motivator for the segment: A thirst for experiences and discovery. In fact, 90 percent would travel for a year without pay if money weren't a concern, eight percent higher than non-U.S. Hispanic respondents.

Additionally, children in U.S. Hispanic families have a 16 percent greater influence on vacation decisions compared to non-Hispanic families, according to a 2017 report from ThinkNow Research. And, for the most part, while Millennials have shown to be less brand loyal, that isn't the case with this audience. Bicultural Hispanics in the U.S. (first- or second-generation Americans who identify with U.S. culture

as well as their Hispanic heritage) have proven to be more brand loyal than less acculturated Hispanics, a reverse in traditional thinking.

Speaking the right language

While U.S. Hispanics of course stay with a wide group of hotel brands, building a strong relationship with this audience requires a true commitment. If there has not been a previous dedicated marketing effort, it's important that entry into this market be authentic. This means not just settling on some "Spanglish" taglines, but becoming a trusted voice.

Consider this: More than half of U.S. Hispanics find planning and booking a vacation to be difficult. Is this because of a language barrier or have communications not been appropriately tailored to feel inclusive to this and other multi-cultural audiences?

Traditionally, the approach to multicultural marketing was to simply offer language-specific websites. However, just as there has been the need to create device-specific interfaces to maximize the customer experience, there is a similar parallel need in properly targeting these audiences. U.S. Hispanics are bilingual and bicultural, requiring a hybrid approach that reimagines the marketing strategy and delivers a genuine first impression. Hoteliers are encouraged to spend the appropriate time and resources to efficiently, and respectfully, communicate with this potential guest base. After all, would you listen to someone who appears not to understand you, your desires and communication preferences, and then make decisions costing thousands of dollars based on a non-existing relationship?

Earning U.S. Hispanic business

Reflected in countless studies, it's far more costly to acquire a new customer than it is to keep an existing one. Therefore, brands must ensure their marketing efforts to a niche market like U.S. Hispanics reflect audience-specific insights about what matters to the target to make effective connections that drive business results.

Penetrating a new audience can be tough, especially if you don't have an existing channel of communication or relationship history. One way to overcome this is to leverage strategic partners and influencers who are immersed in the community, and

trusted. Identify those that align with your brand, and utilize tools and platforms that maximize reach and entice audience engagement.

An example, rbb Communications took this approach for client Hampton by Hilton when creating the U.S. Hispanic-targeted integrated communications campaign, "Soy Seekender" (I am a Seekender), which delivered measurable audience penetration and received major industry recognition: PRSA Silver Anvil and HS-MAI Platinum Adrian awards. The agency and brand's PR and marketing teams collaborated to fully embrace a 360-degree marketing strategy that looked to cultivate true brand champions to spread awareness of key attributes that would stick with this audience. The campaign went beyond contracting a few niche influencers with offers of free room nights and instead employed customized messages, multiple touch points and incentive-based promotions that engaged both ambassadors and consumers. Working with powerful partners such as the WeAllGrow Latina Network, the reach and engagement went deep, exceeding goals by 114 percent and producing more than 7,000 pieces of user-generated content. Strategically launching around Hispanic Heritage Month offered an opportunity to speak to relevant traditions, including travel to visit the family, while also driving an emotional connection with the audience. The conversation continued focusing on themes that historically give special meaning to travel for this group including vacationing with friends and creating lasting memories.

Companies like Toyota ("Más Que un Auto"), Universal Pictures (Straight Outta Compton) and Sprint (The Last Emoji) have also seen marketing success, resonating with U.S. Hispanic audiences. When studying these campaigns, one of the things that becomes immediately apparent is each brand's understanding of the audience through its customized communications. In Toyota's case, the campaign showed awareness of the personal status a car has in U.S.



Lisa K. Ross

— Continued on next page

Small screens, micro-influencers, growing opportunities

Media's ongoing evolution has presented enhanced opportunities for brand exposure even as many consumers' attention spans are shrinking, challenging brands to incorporate target media strategies that penetrate across various platforms while making an impact in less time than ever.

By Jennifer Hawkins

Travelers aren't simply reading travel guides anymore. In the last decade, consumers have transitioned to TripAdvisor, Google, Yelp, online forums and social media in a bid to crowd-source information, recommendations, visuals and make more purchasing decisions.

The media landscape has undoubtedly changed, and our definition of media has greatly evolved. Where most people used to get their news through the television or newspapers, today, micro-media organisms are popping up on an almost daily basis. Podcasts, mommy blogs, social media influencers and news outlets like NowThis, which use social media platforms to distribute news, have changed the game for public relations and for consumers.

These new media organisms create enhanced opportunities for brand exposure, widening the realm of public relations' creative capabilities to reach new yet relevant audiences. In the past few years, publishing houses have amplified digital content with dedicated video production studios, audience engagement editors, renewed websites and podcasts to keep up with emerging digital media trends.

It's a new world of media, which represents cultural shifts in how people consume and engage with content, and it presents brands with greater opportunities to reach targeted audiences, as long as they can keep up with the deluge of compelling content that cuts through the clutter.

According to Pew Research, 62 percent of Americans now get their news from social media. Combine that with the fact that the average consumer now spends at least five hours a day on his/her smartphone. Yet, as the time we dedicate to the smallest screens expands, many consumers' attention spans are shrinking, challenging brands to make impact in less time and where it matters most.

Our agency takes a magnifying glass to our clients' existing and desired audiences to really understand where these potential customers are engaging. We also use a deep-dive technique to identify similar brands which help bolster our clients' stories, and media exposure, through immersive partnerships and collaborations.

While we know that 57 percent of Americans still get news through television, we're also aware of the "Netflix population"

(those using streaming services over cable subscriptions), which continues to grow. Therefore, our media strategy must incorporate creative ideas that break through to the various platforms where we know our identified target consumers are watching, reading and listening.

New media verticals outside of the yesterday traditional print and broadcast only mean more opportunity and creative bandwidth for public relations, which ultimately now encompasses greater capabilities and wide-ranging services.

While online media can seem like a repository of sharable listicles and images, we cannot overlook the fact that these forums are grabbing attention and fostering authentic engagement. From a public relations perspective, we've found that we can be a dependable resource for digital editors, working hand-in-hand with them and our clients to create meaningful stories — whether it's through image slideshows, videos, infographics, etc.

We also cannot ignore influencers, though we must study them more closely to understand the level of engagement as well as the psychographics of their followers. New services such as HYPUR are emerging to help debunk the data to carefully select the most powerful collaborators and potential brand ambassadors through an assessment of reach, resonance and aesthetic.

What we're really excited about is turning the right knobs on media and digital to provide strong results for our clients. Humanizing a brand is much of what public relations does, by bringing personalities and experiences to media and finding the right outlets for them to express themselves. While some see public relations professionals as liaisons between editors and clients, we think of ourselves as part of the creative process, the media researchers that unearth how people are interacting with brands. Once we've articulated the target demographics, that's when the fun part starts.

The (r)evolution of the media landscape will continue to grow public relations' opportunity to modernize their approach to communication, integrating the diverse and emerging platforms to ultimately achieve one goal for clients: find the places where your brand matters most and where we can amplify your exposure with an eager and engaged audience.

Our main focus is to creatively bring stories and experiences to life through any channel that can create conversion and affect the bottom line. Our boundaries and limits have been tested and we're embracing this new era where we can dive into our clients' collective objectives and make a difference through curated storytelling that materializes online or in print, on television or radio, podcasts or online video, or through social media. Today, all media channels matter, and we have to assert ourselves with integrated solutions to evolve with the media trends.

Jennifer Hawkins, CEO and Founder, Hawkins International Public Relations. ○



Jennifer Hawkins

The U.S. Hispanic market

— Continued from page 20

Hispanics' lives. That special relationship leads many U.S. Hispanics to assign their cars super personal monikers. Focusing on this "relationship" and thanking consumers in a genuine way — by rewarding Toyota owners with free custom nameplates for their cars — was powerful with more than 100,000 consumers "cashing in" on the offer.

Connection is key

As hoteliers battle to fill rooms and hotel companies continue to expand and introduce new brands and properties, they should ask themselves whether micro-targeted sets of travelers may be an audience worth considering. Certain multi-cultural groups offer tremendous business potential; however, a tailored marketing approach based on research is a must to effectively reach them and capture their loyalty.

With expected room inventory increases, now is the time to act. The hotel industry should follow the lead of other consumer product companies that have successfully penetrated multi-cultural audiences to target and entice U.S. Hispanics to check out their brands, and ultimately check in for future travel.

Lisa K. Ross is President of rbb Communications. ○

Travel trade show PR: a world at your fingertips

To get coverage for your travel industry clients, consider exhibiting at a consumer travel show in addition to the standard TV and print media mix.

By Todd Schuetz

For many of us in the travel PR world, press trips dominate our focus. Securing top tier national newspapers and travel magazines are the cream of the crop, with the occasional TV win thrown into the mix.

Having worked in the industry for over 25 years, a lot of things have changed. What hasn't changed, however, is that securing TV interviews for clients still reigns supreme. Whether it's a segment on a destination, resort, cultural activity or the latest must-have travel gadgets, clients weigh your success heavily on what local and national TV segments you're able to secure.

Within the last few years, I've come across another way to get some great coverage for my travel industry clients: exhibiting at the largest consumer travel show series in the United States, the Travel & Adventure Show. For those of you who are not familiar with the show, the Travel & Adventure Show is a series of eight shows in the US in the Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Denver markets.

Each show happens on a weekend and is like a mini world vacation. Consumers who love to travel come to the show to tour the

global sights, sounds, aromas, cultural experiences, and insights from well-traveled speakers and experts from around the globe.

For the past two years, I've had the opportunity to work directly with the Travel & Adventure Show in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area, promoting and handling the public relations around each show including pre, during and post coverage. Working with the show management, exhibitors, and sponsors, the team secured top tier national and local press for each market including morning show TV segments and standalone TV feature pieces.



In each market, the PR team hosts a media broadcast morning that airs live from the show room floor the Friday before the

show opens. The purpose of the event is to give the media a preview of what's at this year's show and features spokespersons, talent, live demonstrations and exhibitors. For example, some of the morning shows feature top travel destinations, while others feature cultural activities, food, and family activities like rock climbing, bungee jumping, and diving. Show sponsors and top exhibitors are included in press segments when available and are tapped for interviews with top tier press.



Todd Schuetz

If your client is one of the sponsors of the show, you can work directly with the PR team to be included in TV, online, and print articles. Sponsors receive access to the over 200 media contacts covering the show, and are provided with assistance in coordinating interviews. In addition, exhibitors may put press information in the pressroom and have access to an on-site interview room.

In Los Angeles alone, over 38,000 people attended the 2017 Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Show. For more information about the show, please visit www.travel-shows.com. In 2018, the PR team will see you at the San Diego, San Francisco and Los Angeles Travel & Adventure Shows.

Todd Schuetz leads Marketing Maven's travel and tourism practice in LA. ○

Influencers give boost to cause marketing campaigns

Cause-related campaigns featuring online influencers are more likely to inspire people to dedicate their time and resources to the cause being promoted.

By Jon Gingerich

The use of influencers in online marketing campaigns has grown markedly in recent years, but the efficacy of leveraging spokespersons to raise brand awareness and drive engagement has been a topic of much debate.

When it comes to the use of influencer marketing campaigns in cause-related spaces such as charities, however, a June report issued by San Francisco-based agency Allison+Partners might put that debate to rest.

According to the MDC Partners unit's Influence Impact Report, cause-related marketing campaigns that rely on influencers appear more likely to inspire people to engage with that cause and dedicate time and resources to it, suggesting that this breed of marketing could be a vital component for marketers with a cause-related client.

According to the report, more than a third

of those who follow online influencers — 35 percent — said they engaged with a cause due to an influencer's recommendation; another 31 percent said they were open to the idea of engaging with a cause simply due to an influencer's recommendation.

Of the 35 percent who admitted following the influencer's recommendation, more than half — 52 percent — said they later spread awareness of that cause, and a similar amount — 51 percent — said they made a financial donation. An additional 37 percent said they now even volunteer for the organization promoted by the influencer.

Of those who follow digital influencers, 43 percent additionally said they now engage with that cause at least once a month.

The study also suggests that influencer-backed cause campaigns are especially effective when consumers deem the cam-

paigns authentic, and when they provide stories from people who've been affected by the issue in question.

Of those who follow digital influencers, 62 percent said their trust in influencers is particularly earned when that spokesperson volunteers for the organization, 61 percent said they trusted the cause when the influencer shares stories from those who have been impacted by it, and 60 percent said they're won over if the influencer was personally affected by the cause in some way.

For those who follow digital influencers, 30 percent said they find brands' charitable partnerships to be "extremely important," and 75 percent found brands that were purpose-driven to be "extremely/very important." Millennials, as well as those belonging to Gen Z, were among respondents who reported being more wont to participate in cause campaigns, with 34 percent and 38 percent of these age groups, respectively, claiming to have volunteered or donated at least once a month. ○



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O'Dwyer's guide to TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR



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The Brandman Agency is a dynamic, results-driven public relations firm, specializing in luxury. We live and breathe the hospitality and travel business, and as a result, have earned a reputation as being a "one-stop-shop" for media and industry insiders looking for high-end travel partners. With offices in New York, Los Angeles, London and Sydney, we shape opinions — on a global scale — and we deliver what we promise. Our creative campaigns and forward-thinking strategies affect the bottom line. Whether it is our excellent media relations or our digital strategies, we utilize all facets of communications to execute fully integrated campaigns. Our clients are the best of the best, and therefore, lend themselves to incredible synergies across our portfolio. We have exceptionally high standards, and we deliver exceptional client service. www.thebrandmanagency.com.

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CIIC is a full-service public relations, social media and communications firm specializing in creating dynamic campaigns for the travel, hospitality, food and beverage and lifestyle industries. CIIC's work is strategic, creative and results-driven. In its 20 years in business, CIIC has been honored with a Media Relations Award by PR Daily, as well as numerous HSMIA (Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International) Adrian Awards across Gold, Silver and Bronze categories.

With offices in New York and Miami, and affiliates in Los Angeles, San Diego and Mexico City, CIIC is an esteemed member of LATAM PR and a Certified Women's Business Enterprise by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

Featured hospitality clients include: Caribe Hilton; Hotel El Ganzo; Mandarin, Riviera Nayarit; Mexico Grand Hotels; Rancho San Lucas, Solmar Hotels & Resorts; Coney Island Brewing Company;

The Time Hotel Nyack; and Hotel Quando, among others.

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Development Counsellors International (DCI) is the expert in how North American travelers and business executives select destinations. We partner with destinations to increase visitor arrivals, disperse visitors, augment daily spend and increase business investment. Since 1960, our firm has represented more than 450 places

around the world. DCI's Tourism Practice delivers tourism research, destination branding, travel and lifestyle public relations/consumer marketing, digital/social media marketing, travel trade marketing/representation and meetings/incentive sales programs to our clients. Our client roster includes some of the world's most dynamic destinations, such as Abu Dhabi, Barbados, California, Chile, Scotland, Tahiti and Thailand. DCI's destination storytelling approach defines what makes a place unique and results in bringing more visitors to the destinations with which we partner. Our destination marketing work has been recognized annually by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, achieving Best In Show and Platinum awards.

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Cathleen Decker, President
Stacy Royal, Managing Director

Decker/Royal 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



Reno Tahoe tapped Decker/Royal to share its new brand story, positioning the region as a destination in the midst of exciting transition and inviting visitors to satisfy their ambition for outdoor adventure and city excitement.



The Eleven Six team celebrating a successful Hyatt event on the roof of Grand Hyatt New York.

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 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.

Award-winning Decker/Royal represents some of the most well-known brands in the travel industry including Sandals Resorts International and American Express Travel. New clients this year include 18-35 year old travel experts Contiki and the dynamic destination of Reno Tahoe.

ELEVEN SIX PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Katie Barr Cornish, Principal

Eleven Six Public Relations was founded in 2013. Eleven Six prides itself on creating a new normal in the PR agency world. It is not business as usual at this young and rapidly growing company.

Our media relationships are deep and varied. We seamlessly pitch across multiple verticals, placing our clients beyond the travel pages and in business, arts and fashion

pieces. Our thinking is strategic and most importantly, creative. We are big believers in pushing the creativity envelope, always aiming to create the trends and not just stay ahead of them. What works today, does not work tomorrow. We push ourselves to think better, smarter and more creatively each and every day. Our innovative campaigns deliver tangible, profitable results.

With a focus that goes beyond just public relations and includes marketing and social media, we are driven not only by how much press we can secure for our clients but rather how we can positively impact their bottom lines. The marketing and social media tactics we employ are creative, cost-effective and realistic to execute. And most importantly, they drive sales and impact the bottom line.

Our clients include: Andaz Mayakoba Resort Riviera Maya, Grand Hyatt New York, Hyatt at The Bellevue, Hyatt Centric Times Square, Hyatt House Chelsea, Kindred Resorts & Hotels, Remote Lands, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, The Embassy Row Hotel, Tourism & Events Queensland, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Visit Richmond.

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In late 2014, Middleton & Gendron joined Eric Mower + Associates (EMA), a long-established integrated marketing communi-

cations agency with nine offices across the North and Southeast regions. Now, as EMA's New York City office, we continue to specialize in travel and tourism with the same senior management team that led Middleton & Gendron. Our combination gives us even deeper roots in PR for destinations, hotels, attractions and other travel-oriented businesses, along with exceptional sophistication in digital, social, marketing, reputation and crisis management, and advertising.

We continue to be well-known for our influence in such key sectors as hotels and resorts, domestic and foreign destinations, spas, conference and convention centers, professional travel organizations and hospitality services companies (such as software providers). We are grateful to our many longstanding clients who want to be challenged by people who have great ideas and the wherewithal to make them happen, who expect well-thought out strategies, not just tactics, and who appreciate our drive and dedication to our partnership with them.

In the past year, EMA rebranded the 60-year-old Adirondack Museum as the Adirondack Experience, the Museum on Blue Mountain Lake, and launched its \$8-million, 19,000-square-foot "Life in the Adirondacks" exhibition. We launched the inaugural Nirvana Culinary Festival at Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona, a four-day, star-packed culinary extravaganza. We also opened Hilton Brooklyn, the first high-caliber, full-service hotel in downtown Brooklyn, and Residence Inn Breckenridge. Additionally, we launched Aloft Boston Seaport's voice-activated hotel rooms in tandem with Starwood.

Our staff is admirable with a shared sense of fun, resourcefulness, and ambition. They are the best at what they do from writing riveting content to being indispensable to reporters to executing flawless promotions and events.

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Matthew Bertritt, Vice President/Director, Lifestyle Group Practice & Celebrity/Influencer Programming

Stephanie Preston, Senior Director, Travel & Hospitality Group Practice

We architect and build brands, and we transform brand and business potential into brand and business performance. We facilitate connecting brands and audiences, help to define a brand's essence and create emotive experiences that foster engagement between brands and constituents, as well as catalyze and optimize how brands and their publics converse and interrelate. We create programs that engender brand trial and experience; leverage brand experience to foment engagement, conversation and storytelling; catalyze brand engagement to optimize brand advocacy and mindshare; and transform brand mindshare into brand marketshare. We are the point where insight meets execution and bridge the divide between what a brand is now and what it can become in the future.

EVINS is the leading branding, marketing, communications and public relations firm in the luxury, premium and prestige sectors, with specialist expertise in travel and hospitality. In addition to our Travel & Hospitality Group, EVINS encompasses three other practice areas: Digital Content & Integration; Food, Spirits & Wine and Lifestyle. For thirty years, we have made a consequential contribution to the growth and development of numerous icon and legacy brands, including American Express Centurion/Platinum and DEPARTURES Magazine, CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa, Hotels & Resorts of Halekulani, Inspitato, Jet Linx Aviation; Marquis Jet/NetJets, Preferred Hotels & Resorts, Rosewood Hotel & Resorts, The Knickerbocker, The Lanesborough and Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, amongst many others.

EVINS has a proven track record of doing exceptional work for extraordinary brands, and is consistently recognized for its excellence in creativity, strategies and tactics.

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EVINS COMMUNICATIONS

— Continued from page 25

We offer a client far more than traditional public relations, and we are committed to providing consummate business and strategic counsel in order to make an essential and measurable contribution to a client's brand and business. EVINS builds and maintains long-term client partnerships, with an average tenure of more than eight years and several in excess of two decades.

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 including *Elite Traveler* and *HOTELS Magazine*. Mr. Evins serves on the boards of such prominent travel industry organizations as the International Hotel Investment Forum (IHIF), Luxury Travel Exchange (LTX), ULTRA Luxury Exchange, and the International Luxury Hotel Association (ILHA), a global nonprofit professional association dedicated to promoting, unifying and advancing the luxury hotel industry by providing insight, opinion and research, as well as a platform and resource certification and training, for executives and professionals engaged in the business of luxury hospitality.

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Fahlgren Mortine works with clients in 29 states and is a top 20 independent firm nationally. The agency has been recognized with dozens of national PR and tourism awards, including Silver and Bronze Anvils from PRSA and Mercury Awards from the U.S. Travel Association. In 2016, Fahlgren Mortine was recognized with a PRSA Silver Anvil for an integrated marketing campaign on behalf of TravelNevada.

Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine has locations in West Virginia, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, New York and South Carolina. Travel industry client experience includes Office



Fahlgren Mortine's Marty McDonald onstage at the US Travel Association's ESTO Conference, accepting a Mercury Award for Best PR Program along with clients from TravelNevada.

of TourismOhio; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; TravelNevada; Wyoming Office of Tourism; Airstream; Experience Columbus; Niagara USA; Visit Sun Valley; North Dakota Department of Commerce/Tourism; and many other destinations, regions, hospitality properties and more.

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Gail L. Moaney, APR Director & Founding Managing Partner, Travel / Lifestyle Group

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 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, special events, hospitality marketing services and social influencer programs.

With a staff of highly skilled professionals, we have represented 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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French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs and brand communications agency and the

winner of the *Holmes Report* 2016 Consumer Agency of the Year and the *Bulldog Reporter* Communications Agency of the Year. Founded in April 1997 by Agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV employs 103 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles and Tampa offices.

FWV's dedicated travel and tourism practice, ranked as the 9th largest for Travel and Tourism PR by O'Dwyer's, boasts extensive destination marketing experience, specializing in lifestyle and leisure marketing and public relations. Current travel and tourism industry clients include the Dude Ranchers' Association, Concord Hospitality Enterprises Company, Greater Raleigh CVB, Wilmington and Beaches CVB (Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach and Wilmington, N.C. and the Wilmington Convention Center), Tweetsie Railroad, High Gravity Adventures (N.C.) and the Washington Tourism Development Authority (N.C.).

The agency has also done work 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.; America's Historic Triangle, located in Williamsburg, Va.; and Trailways Transportation System based in Fairfax, 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.

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At Hawkins International, travel is our passion. As an award-winning public relations and communications agency, Hawkins International has built an impressive global reputation for full-scope and impactful integrated social and digital campaigns.

A bi-coastal agency with offices in New York and Los Angeles, Hawkins International boasts a strong team of communication professionals that seamlessly cross from traditional public strategies to social activations in dynamic and stimulating ways on behalf of a roster of internationally acclaimed hospitality clients.

With expertise in creative, engaging and multi-dimensional storytelling, Hawkins International promotes its clients through calculated media relations, influencer activations, inventive experiences and the development of newsworthy content for its prestigious clients which include hotels, resorts, and real estate and lifestyle brands. While Hawkins International specializes in new property launches, it continues to successfully drive national and regional coverage and engagement for its 60+ clients, many of which have been with Hawkins for five years or longer.

HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

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Samantha Jacobs, Founder & President
Michael Jacobs, COO

With headquarters in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and an expanding global presence with offices in Atlanta, Georgia and Orlando, Florida, Hemsworth Communications is one of the world's fastest-growing travel, tourism, hospitality and lifestyle PR agencies. Heading into its fourth year, Hemsworth continues making waves, attracting the attention of leading international brands and top PR talent.

Hemsworth combines unparalleled passion, insight and connections to wow clients, providing personal client service and generating powerful results. The agency's expertise and connections are diverse, however the team is collectively driven by the desire to create fresh, innovative and impactful



Jamie Lynn Sigler and Sarah Evans, Partners of J Public Relations (JPR).

campaigns.

Hemsworth has earned multiple industry awards and recognition by the national business community. In 2017, the agency was ranked a top PR firm on several lists based on performance and billings. The agency also received gold and silver HSMIA Adrian Awards for its programs within the luxury, cruise and resort spaces.

Clients include Air Partner, AmaWaterways, Amicalola Falls State Park & Lodge, Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa, Best Western Hotels & Resorts, Coral Hospitality, Driftwood Hospitality, Driftwood Acquisitions & Development, HHG, Lake Blackshear Resort & Golf Club, Locale, Margaritaville Holdings (global brand PR, as well as individual properties in Tennessee, Florida and the Caribbean), Pearl Beach Club (Punta Cana), Sonesta Coconut Grove, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale Beach, TCRM, Unicoi State Park & Lodge, YARA and others.

HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Partners: **Grace Leong, Jonathan Lyon, Mark Newman, Donetta Allen, Gigi Russo, Erin Hanson**
Travel Practice Leader: **Meagan McCutcheon**

Hunter Public Relations is an award-winning consumer products and services public relations firm with offices in New York and staff based across North America including Miami, Los Angeles, Se-

attle, and Toronto; offices in London; and affiliate partners in Mexico City. Our mission is "earning it," and from consumer attention, to long term client relationships, to our talented staff's dedication, we strive to "earn it" every day.

Founded in 1989, Hunter has grown into one of the most respected mid-size marketing communications firms in the country, proudly serving a broad range of esteemed companies and brands in the travel and tourism, food and beverage, home and lifestyle, and health, wellness and beauty sectors.

From creating wanderlust for Wyndham Rewards members on social and digital channels, to engaging media and telling brand stories through unique travel experiences around the globe, our creative approach and client-service orientation has led to some of the most enduring client relationships and impactful public relations programs in the business.

J PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Jamie Lynn Sigler, Partner
Sarah Evans, Partner

J Public Relations (JPR) is an international powerhouse PR and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury lifestyle with offices in New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego and London. JPR is a trusted leader in creating unparalleled media placements worldwide, trend forecast-

ing, brand partnerships, influencer relations, social media content and management.

Established in 2005, the award-winning agency has steadily risen in the ranks to become the country's fastest growing, bi-coastal agency in the travel and hospitality spaces. Its global roster includes more than 100 hotels in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, Asia and more. JPR steadily garners and retains marquee accounts including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Irvine Company Retail Properties, Vail Resorts Hospitality, Grace Hotels, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, Four Seasons Lanai and 17 Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

J Public Relations' in-house social division works seamlessly alongside the PR masterminds to align and elevate client voice for peak engagement. Together, they drive content missions with alluring lifestyle photography and hyper-specific influencer partnerships, creating brand campaigns that captivate. They are more than community messengers; they are stewards of multi-platform communication strategy.

JPR was named by the *New York Observer's* "Power 50" PR Agency List as one of the most powerful PR firms in the country, "Small Agency of the Year" Under 10 Million in US and Canada by *PR News* and *Bulldog Reporter*, Be+Spoke Communications' Agency of the Year Award and *Smart CEO Magazine's* New York Company Culture Award.

K. SUTHERLAND PUBLIC RELATIONS

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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*, *Playboy* and many more.

The team at K. Sutherland PR executes innovative, personalized and targeted campaigns comprising of both traditional and new media

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K. SUTHERLAND PR

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

Launched as a "go to" resource for media, KTCpr has become renowned for responsiveness and going "that extra mile" to assist editors with travel stories. KTCpr's expertise covers media relations, the launch of new hotels and resorts, social media campaigns, marketing consultation, crisis communication, events, creation of promotions, speech writing and publishing services.

KTCpr's current client roster includes Aranui Cruises (Marquesas Islands), Apple Vacations, April Travel Protection, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, Fareportal, Interval International, the Mango

Bay Hotel Group (Barbados), Pacific Delight Tours, Spice Island Beach Resort (Grenada), Travel Impressions, Victoria Cruises, and Warwick Paradise Island-Bahamas.

LANE

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Wendy Lane Stevens, Managing Partner
Shannon Riggs, Partner

LANE, a Finn Partners Company, 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 audiences seek information and inspiration: 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, Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, Riverhouse on the Deschutes, The Grand America Hotel, The Heathman Hotel Group, Brasada Ranch Resort, Evergreen Wings & Waves Waterpark and Travel Portland.

LAURA DAVIDSON PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Laura Davidson, President
Leslie Cohen, Executive Vice President
Meghna Patel, Senior Vice President
Sara Geen Hill, Senior Vice President

LDPR is a highly driven and innovative travel and lifestyle PR agency with headquarters in New York City and a presence in LA and Chicago. Guided by industry visionary Laura Davidson, the firm

has been at the forefront of integrated initiatives for destinations, international hotel companies, independent resorts, luxury tour operators and lifestyle products. The agency is well regarded for its integration of consumer brand partners and strategic alliances into PR activations to increase brand awareness and reach beyond the travel media.

LDPR pursues bold approaches that exceed client expectations across all channels. We have an in-house social media manager and a partnership with Gather + Grow media agency to implement content development, community and influencer outreach, SEO and contest/sweepstakes.

LDPR's unique culture is defined by our collaborative and strategic approach to working with clients, media and our staff, leading to successful long term partnerships and measurable results.

Our clients include Aman; Abercrombie & Kent; VisitScotland; Sydney/Destination New South Wales, Australia; Travel Portland, Oregon; Curtain Bluff, Antigua; DuVine Cycling + Adventure Co; The Resort at Paws Up, Montana; The Gleneagles Hotel, Scotland; Atlantis Paradise Island, Bahamas; Park Hyatt, St. Kitts; Residence Inn by Marriott; The Ocean House, Watch Hill, Rhode Island; The Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott Grande Lakes Orlando; Briggs & Riley, among others.

LOU HAMMOND GROUP

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Lou Hammond, Founder/
Chairman
Stephen Hammond, CEO
Terence Gallagher, President,
New York
Gina Stouffer, President,
Charleston

Lou Hammond Group (LHG) is a celebrated integrated marketing communications firm with offices in New York, Charleston, Miami and Los Angeles. LHG has built a legendary reputation over the past 33 years as the leading mid-sized agency serving the travel industry. A few things to know:

- 40 clients, 40 employees and 70+ top travel industry awards from 2016 alone, including more of the prestigious HSMIAI Adrian Awards than any other entity.

- Independent: known for boundless creativity and enthusiasm

- Operates differently: no time sheets — clients get the attention they need, when they need it.

- International: founder of the PR World Network

- Owns one of the industry's highest retention rates with clients such as Mandarin Oriental Hotel group with us more than 30 years.

At the end of the day, however, it's all about the results. In the past year alone LHG has:

- Arranged more than 325 visits to clients from top media and influencers.

- Secured broadcast hits from outlets such as: "Today," "Good Morning America," "CBS Sunday Morning," CNBC, Peter Greenberg Worldwide and more.

- Regularly delivered impactful results including: *Architectural Digest*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *Departures*, *Food & Wine*, *Forbes*, *New York Times*, *Travel + Leisure*, and many more.

- Built clients' social media platforms, designed their websites and increased SEO.

LHG clients know they are working with the most trusted, go-to media resource in the industry with a singular commitment to delivering quality, measurable results.

MAGRINO PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

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Magrino celebrates its 25th year in business in 2017 as an award-winning PR and Social Media agency with a 360 lifestyle approach that has earned both media and consumer recognition.

We work with clients in our practice areas of Travel and Real Estate, Spa & Wellness, Food, Wine and Spirits, and Consumer brands to craft campaigns and communications that are exciting, culturally relevant and integrated within

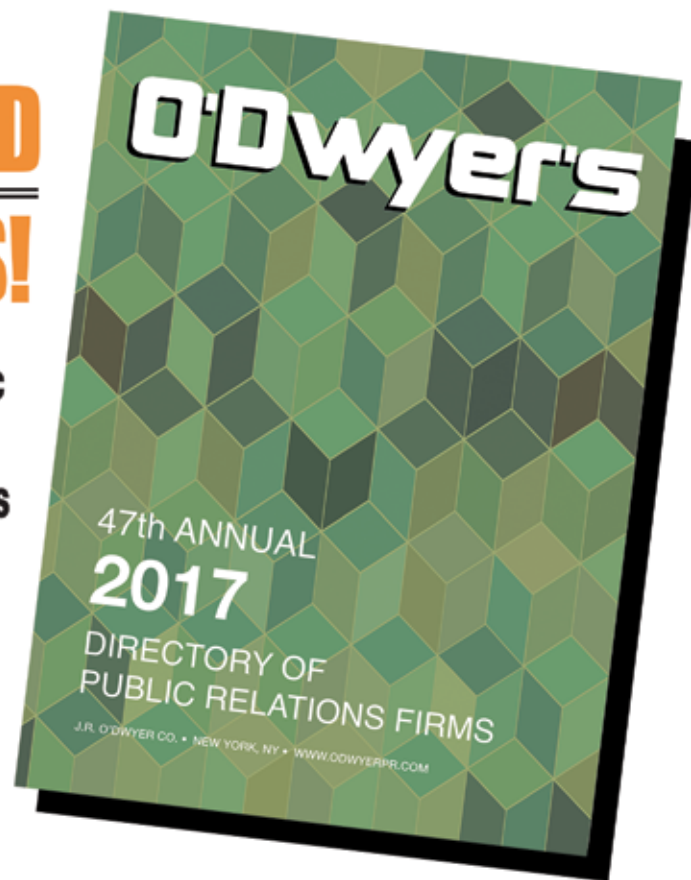
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O'Dwyer's August issue will profile Financial PR, Investor Relations, & Professional Services firms. If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or jon@odwyerpr.com

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.

You get quick access to large, medium-sized, and small PR firms and even experienced freelancers who work out of their homes. Whether you seek a long-term, worldwide relationship or need extra help on a project, **O'Dwyer's Directory is the place to shop.**



Why O'Dwyer's Directory of PR Firms is so popular:

- ✓ *Has brought billions of dollars in business to PR firms.*
- ✓ *Authoritative industry rankings, based on CPA statements, tax returns.*
- ✓ *Firms ranked by 14 geographical regions in the U.S.*
- ✓ *Leaders ranked in 12 specialized categories: agriculture, beauty & fashion, entertainment, environmental/PA, financial, food & beverage, healthcare, home furnishings, professional svcs., sports/leisure, technology and travel.*
- ✓ *Easy-to-use, PR firms sorted geographically and by 22 types of PR specialties. Firms listed alphabetically.*
- ✓ *Articles on how to hire and use a PR firm by industry experts Jack O'Dwyer and Fraser Seitel.*
- ✓ *Cross-Client Index: O'Dwyer's Directory of PR firms is the only place you can look up a company and determine its outside counsel.*

"O'Dwyer's Directory of PR firms is the finest source of information on PR firms."

- Howard Rubenstein, President
Rubenstein Associates

"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

MAGRINO PR AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Continued from page 28

brand narratives.

As passionate communicators, we are adept at telling stories that reflect brand values, consumer attitudes and end-user behaviors. We believe the heart drives the head in terms of purchase intent and work with our client teams to bring emotional resonance to our campaigns and pitches.

Our work drives sales, awareness and consumer affinity. We are proud of our shared success with clients that include Hilton Hotels' Waldorf Astoria, Conrad and Canopy brands; Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas; Brookfield Properties; Tishman-Speyer; Fontainebleau Miami Beach; The Ranch Malibu; Martha Stewart Omnimedia/Sequential Brands; Dean & DeLuca; Whispering Angel; James Beard Awards; Hendrick's Gin and Moët Hennessy.

Our Social PR practice is dynamic and on the leading edge of this fast-changing field of communications. We work with our Social PR clients to craft, manage and execute Influencer programs of multiple sizes and types. We develop Digital Strategy for clients who want to make sure their brands come to life on social platforms in the most relevant and engaging ways. Our content development team creates growth-driving imagery for all social feeds. Social PR Clients include Farrow & Ball; Tishman-Speyer; Flor de Cana rum; Grace Bay Club; Dempsey

& Carroll stationers and STK/The One Group.

In a world where substance is the true indicator of style, you can be assured that our work is driven from meaningful insights that represent the image, identity and intent of our brands and clients.

MARDIKS PR

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Charles Mardiks, President/
Managing Director

At the intersection of creative and strategic, Mardiks PR is a marketing solution provider, specializing in travel and tourism. The agency leverages the power of storytelling to create engaging, integrated campaigns. Our multi-channel campaigns combine media outreach, social media and event activation along with strategic partnerships to build buzz and business for leading global travel brands, destinations and associations.

The agency was founded by Charles Mardiks. Charles has two decades of integrated marketing and public relations experience in global travel and tourism, and he brings together a highly networked, nimble team of senior-level, hands-on strategists and creative thinkers. The dedicated Mardiks team is fueled by a love for travel, a nose for news and a scrappiness that gets the job done. As a true extension of our clients' teams, we work diligently to nurture, build and connect



Mardiks PR cooked up a culinary event for Visit San Jose in New York showcasing the city's newly-awarded Michelin star restaurant, Adega and the destination's undiscovered Portuguese heritage and award-winning, but little-known vineyards and wines. The event was attended by more than 50 top-tier travel, culinary and wine and lifestyle media.

media and industry relationships to solve clients' marketing problems with smart, strategic and creative solutions.

Current clients include: Condor Airlines, Fareness, GroundLink, Thomas Cook Airlines UK, Visit Buffalo Niagara, Visit San Jose and Wendy Wu Tours.

MARKETING MAVEN

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Lindsey Carnett, CEO & President
Natalie Rucker, Director of
Business Development

Marketing Maven drives brand conversations with traditional travel, hospitality, culinary and lifestyle media, as well as key travel influencers via all social channels. Representing the largest consumer travel show in the nation, Marketing Maven has a strong pulse on what brand messaging and promotions U.S. travelers want to see to book a trip.

Our travel mavens specialize in developing and executing revenue-generating communications strategies. From the creation of engaging online promotions targeting millennials via social media to specialized trips and tours targeting baby boomers via traditional media, Marketing Maven segments your target demographic by listening to conversations both offline and online, then uses appropriate messaging and mediums to drive action.

MFA MARKETING & PR (MISSY FARREN & ASSOCIATES)

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Missy Farren, Founder & CEO
Samantha Lacher, Vice President

Mfa is a full-service communications agency providing sharp strategy and results that matter to a vast array of travel/tourism, culinary and hospitality clients. A consummate personal touch accompanies extreme professionalism and deep expertise. 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; influencer campaigns; social media strategy and management; omni-channel campaign execution; press trip planning and execution; partnership development; event facilitation; spokesperson positioning; and crisis communications. Industry experience includes: Aspen Ski Co.; Cayman Airways; Cayman Cookout; The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism; Charlie Bird Restaurant (NYC); Chatham Bars Inn; The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Colorado Ski Country; Dart Real Estate (Cayman Islands); Disneyland; Disneyland Food & Beverage; Golden Horseshoe Golf Club; Gunter Seeger restaurant (NYC); Intrawest; Learn to Ski and Snowboard Month; Limelight Hotel; The Little Nell;



Marketing Maven coordinated multiple segments with KTLA 5 Morning News to promote the Travel & Adventure Show at the LA Convention Center. Pictured here is reporter Lynette Romero.

The Lodge at Woodloch; Martin's Lane Winery; Megpies; Michelin Food & Travel; Mountain Collective; Mission Hill Family Estate winery; National Trust for Historic Preservation; Pasquale Jones Restaurant (NYC); Peet's Coffee; The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New York; Roadtrips Inc.; Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort; Ski Utah; The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg; Squaw Valley; Steamboat; Twin Farms; Westin Hotels & Resorts; Whistler Blackcomb; and more.

MWWPR

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JP Schuerman, President,
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MWWPR's Travel & Tourism practice can take you anywhere you want to go. We believe in pushing PR beyond the boundaries of expected thinking to create attention-grabbing communications campaigns. We are a seasoned group of fearless travelers who understand the tourism industry and the forces that drive it. But we're far more than your traditional travel shop.

As a leading global independent communications agency, with eight offices across the U.S. and Europe plus a global network of partners, MWWPR develops award-winning campaigns powered by insights, technology and social media to drive patronage and connect clients with their key stakeholders.



Myriad recreated a Macao city scene at Grand Central Station for commuters to experience its iconic Senado Square, bustling spice markets and traditional dancers.

MWWPR's deep bench of hospitality experts is connected with the industry's most respected influencers and is deeply knowledgeable on the trends that are shaping the media landscape today. We've worked with both established and emerging brands within the travel industry, ranging from hotels and destinations, to airlines, online travel agencies and travel publishers. Services include strategic partnerships, visiting media programs, key executive/spokesperson industry positioning, celebrity and athlete seeding and referrals. 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.

MYRIAD INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

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Al Merschen, Partner
Mike Price, Executive Vice President
Julie Cuesta, Vice President,
Destination Services

At the close of 2016, Myriad joined MMGY Global to become Myriad International Marketing. Specializing in destination representation, Myriad works with more international destinations in North America than any other marketing company. Our executive team provides senior level strategic direction and tactical solutions to clients in the travel and tourism sector.

Many of our clients have been with us since the day we first opened for business in 1989. We provide a complete range of highly integrated services ranging from destination representation, creative direction, media buying, public relations, crisis communication, experiential events, trade relations and partnership marketing programs. With clients ranging from international tourist offices to convention bureaus, airlines to travel companies, Myriad offers an in depth global perspective.

Clients include: Australia's Northern Territory, Dominica,

Kenya, Macao, Melbourne Convention Bureau, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea and Qatar.

NJF

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Nancy Friedman, Partner
Julie Freeman, Managing Director
Chris Walters, SVP
Lauren Kaufman, SVP

Last year, three long-recognized leaders in travel and hospitality, MMGY, NJFPR and Spring O'Brien, joined forces to create a PR industry powerhouse. The combination of MMGY's PR, Social & Experiential Marketing practice, NJFPR and Spring O'Brien was rebranded NJF, an MMGY Global company. NJF offers boutique service and expertise in consumer and trade media relations, social media, corporate and brand positioning, experiential and event marketing, strategic partnerships and promotions, influencer engagement and crisis communications.

For those seeking senior level counsel, unwavering brand advocacy and unrivaled media savvy, NJF is a one-stop shop. Hundreds of hotel, destination, travel and lifestyle brands have entrusted their reputations to NJF whose "Leave No Stone Unturned" philosophy has catapulted the firm to the top of the category in hospitality and travel. Our integrated public relations and social media team prides itself on long-standing client relationships and an innate ability to move within many spheres: tapping media and industry influencers, forging creative partnerships uncovering strategic advantages, and providing global perspective. Our campaigns are rooted in research and insights, and we are master storytellers and content creators who know how to make news out of simple concepts or large-scale programs. We forge an emotional connection to reach our audiences where they live, work and play.

Industry innovators and thought leaders, NJF is the pioneer of Hotel Week NYC and MMGY is the author of the widely acclaimed *Portrait of American Travelers®* annual research study. With offices in New York City, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Madrid, Orlando, Washington, D.C. and an international partner network, Travel Consul, we



NJF's powerhouse team of PR and media mavens in our new flagship NYC office.

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NJF

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serve many of the world's premier travel and tourism brands. 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.

Clients include: Visit Los Cabos, South Dakota Tourism, Borghata Hotel Casino & Spa, Canyon Ranch, Lufthansa, Eurail, Ft. Myers & Sanibel, NH Hotels, Generator Hostels, Cheap Caribbean, Intrepid Travel, The Asbury, Gansevoort Hotel Group, Pod Hotels, The Bowery, Harley-Davidson Museum, STA Travel and One Aldwych.

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Tom Merrick, Vice President, Chief Creative Officer
Rudy Webb, Vice President, Account Services
Tara Tufo, Vice President, Director of Public Relations

Paradise Advertising is a full-service advertising, marketing and Public Relations agency with offices in St. Petersburg, Naples and Daytona. The agency specializes in destination, travel, lifestyle and luxury brands. Paradise

tells vivid stories that capture the unique qualities of places, people and products that evoke consumer response and brand loyalty.

The agency's Public Relations, Creative, Media Planning & Buying, Digital Ops, Video/Studio, Social Media and Account Management departments provide innovative, research-driven strategies and solutions for a broad and growing list of clients.

The Paradise Public Relations team is made up of PR strategists with a keen eye for media opportunities and the savvy to turn them into results. The goal, ultimately, is to ensure return on your investment. Clients include The Dali Museum, The Vinoy Renaissance Resort, The JW Marriott Marco Island, Sawgrass Marriott Resort, Orlando North, Seminole County Tourism, Space Florida, Navarre Beach CVB and more.

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Ann Barlow, Partner & President, West Coast
Deborah Brown, Partner & Managing Director
Jacqueline Kolek, Partner & Managing Director
Maggie O'Neill, Partner & Managing Director

Peppercomm is an independently owned 21-year-old integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New

York with offices in San Francisco and London. Helping clients see around the corner and determine what's next sets Peppercomm apart from other integrated communications and marketing firms. It enables us to push boundaries while mitigating risk for clients in financial services, consumer, B-to-B and multi-industry sectors.

Our unique approach and dynamic workplace attract the best talent who, in turn, help us win and retain the best clients. While we've won countless awards, we're most proud of being named Best Place to Work in New York City by *Crain's New York Business* and a Best Workplace for Women by Great Place to Work® and *Fortune*.

Our combined years of deep category experience and love of what we do shapes our work. We engage your audiences on every level and set your brand apart. And we do all this to help your bottom-line and build your business. So get in touch. We're all ears.

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Quinn is a 65-person lifestyle public relations firm with a flagship penthouse in New York City, a store-front in Wynwood-Miami and a new LA office in WeWork Fine Arts Building.

Our strategic and creative approach builds audiences, produces revenue and transforms brands.

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

We believe there is magic to be found at the intersection of creative thinking and value-driven strategies. Many of the world's most recognized brands, such as Hilton, Marriott, Waldorf Astoria, W South Beach, AKA and Paris, believe as well.

RBB

COMMUNICATIONS

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Lisa Ross, President & Travel Practice Leader

Maite Velez-Couto, Vice President
Shawn Warmstein, Vice President

rbb is an integrated marketing communications firm and four-time winner of the Agency of the Year title. As the Champion of Breakout Brands, rbb Communications inspires companies with insights on creating customer passion to increase sales.

rbb's Travel & Leisure Practice develops breakout campaigns for hotel and cruise industry clients that spark new conversations, inspire action and drive meaningful business results. The agency's deep hospitality experience comes from working with companies from all industry segments from global hotel chains, boutique resorts and destinations to airlines, cruise lines and online travel agencies. Whether a client's goal is to gain more market share, increase bookings or online engagement, enhance its reputation or all of the above, rbb will get them there faster and smarter.

The rbb difference is our customized, integrated breakout approach to marketing communications. Our public relations, creative, social and digital teams leverage the right mix of communication tactics channels, partnership activations, design, media relations, influencer and celebrity engagement, content creation and social media strategies, digital marketing and research/analytics to effectively deliver measurable outcomes that build brands.

rbb has the vision to introduce a new brand, product or service from all angles and develop engaging and successful creative launches and brand refresh strategies. Whether it's an in-market media event, a multi-city PR push or integrated digital and direct marketing campaigns, generating awareness and creating emotional connections to get target audiences to act is always our goal.

rbb's recent work with client Hampton by Hilton for its multicultural "Seekender" campaign "First Comes Like, Then Comes Love" earned a Silver Anvil Award from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), and a Platinum Adrian Award in Public Relations from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMIAI). In just four weeks,



Quinn generated 170-million media impressions, including *T Magazine* and *Vogue*, in 4 months for Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club, Waikiki's newest boutique hotel.



rbb Communications' award-winning travel practice helps clients imagine and execute integrated marketing programs like Hilton All Suites' new "Bring It" campaign.

results showed the Seekender microsite drove a 226 percent jump in visits to Hampton.com. The innovative campaign also earned 64 million combined impressions to potential travelers, and significantly increased online mentions of Hampton, especially on Twitter. Success metrics like these are why companies such as AMResorts, DHL Express, Hilton, Simon Malls, Virgin Voyages and others, choose rbb as their communications partner.

Other rbb specialty practices include consumer products/services, food & beverage, healthcare, higher education, professional services, entertainment and real estate. rbb's family of brands offer media relations, digital marketing, influencer engagement, corporate communications, social media management and creative services/advertising. With offices in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, New Jersey and Los Angeles, the firm also has an international reach that extends across more than 100 cities in 50 countries through its partnership with PROI Worldwide, the largest global network of independent communications agencies.

ROGERS & COWAN

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Mark Owens, CEO

Rogers & Cowan offers significant experience in creating and executing integrated marketing, PR and social media campaigns for clients in the travel and tourism industries, including resorts and resort developers, hotel associations, government tourism offices, visitors bureaus, museum and cul-

tural exhibits, live shows, airlines, cruise lines, sporting events and travel media. We create marketing communications and social media strategies that elevate a client's core messages beyond travel outlets and into lifestyle media through the influence of entertainment. Our distinctive approach goes beyond core media relations to include destination integration into entertainment content, influencer programs and outreach, experiential events and social media strategies. The agency's work has included building awareness for hotels and resorts through celebrity seeding programs, introducing new travel services in key markets through influencer events, creating online content tied to entertainment properties, activating sponsorship of sports and entertainment events, managing PR for consumer-focused travel shows, and driving ticket sales for shows and exhibits.

Current / past clients include American Airlines, Etihad Airlines, Canadian Tourism Commission, Universal Studios Hollywood, Mondrian Hotel, Madame Tussaud's Hollywood and Las Vegas, and *LA Times* Food & Wine Festival.

THINK PR

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Elaine Drebot-Hutchins,
President
Tracey Manner, Partner & Vice
President

THINK PR is a full-service public relations, digital influencer and

marketing agency that began in 2001 and specializes in the hospitality, lifestyle, fashion, beauty and design industries—and very often a melding of those worlds. Using our extensive media network, vigorously and carefully built over our 16 year history, we tell our clients' stories with passion. We represent a broad spectrum of hospitality providers, from iconic international global brands to individual boutiques destinations.

Since our inception, we have kept service and results-driven strategies at the core of our approach to Public Relations. Our work has been honored by *PRNews* as well as HSMIA, with Gold and Silver wins for the launch of Aloft Hotel's robotic concierge, Botlr. Our team also thrives on creative ideation and execution and has been responsible for global campaigns that include W Hotels' "Social Media Wedding Concierge" as well as Aloft Hotels' "Text It. Get It." Emoji-Only Room Service Menu.

Client experience includes: W Hotels Worldwide, Aloft Hotels, Element Hotels, Four Points by Sheraton, The Stafford London, Anamaya Resort (Costa Rica), Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp and Saira Hospitality.

TJM COMMUNICATIONS

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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 multiple Hospitality Sales and Marketing International (HSMIA) Adrian Awards for Public Relations. As a boutique agency, we focus on delivering personalized service with an emphasis on innovation, creativity and strategy. Our work is distinguished by a basis of strategic marketing. We operate as an extension of our clients' sales and marketing team as trusted and integrated partners delivering measurable results and nothing less than client satisfaction.

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.

TURNER

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

TURNER is a progressive communications agency dedicated to the intersection of earned, owned and paid media strategy. Specializing

Continued on page 34



TURNER's 2016 Holiday Party at Stir.

TURNER

Continued from page 33

ing in travel and lifestyle brands, we represent some of the world's best hotel, resort, destination, fashion, active and modern outdoor brands. Our clients include all of the places you'd like to travel, and what you'd pack for those journeys.

We have three U.S. offices in New York, Chicago and Denver to best service our worldwide clients based in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Europe, Caribbean and South America; our Miami office will open July 2017. Founded in 1997, our tenured team of talented veterans has a passion for travel and active lifestyles. We live and breathe our clients' cultures and deliver meaningful results from our deep industry relationships with journalists and influencers.

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

WEBER SHANDWICK

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The Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle practice is the leading specialist in travel and tourism



Finland has seen double digit growth of travelers from the USA since beginning work with Zapwater.

Photo credit: VISIT FINLAND

public relations. Want proof? Our work landed five of our travel clients in a single issue of the *New York Times* travel section. From places to go, places to stay, sustainability and loyalty, our clients were featured throughout the coveted "52 Places to Go" 2017 issue.

We know 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 consumers and deliver inspiration to them early and often. Digital media platforms open new opportunities for us to influence 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 blend 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, President
Ann-Rebecca Laschever, EVP
Mark Liebermann, SVP

WEILL, a boutique PR firm specializing in luxury, exclusive travel experiences, moved downtown to new digs this year, joining the majority of the media now based in lower Manhattan. Our new offices at 29 Broadway are situated in a landmarked Art Deco building, across from the Bull and Fearless Girl statues, and overlooking the Hudson River from our 22nd floor location.

Run like a close-knit family of travel enthusiasts, WEILL represents several family-owned hospitality businesses. Of more than 30 clients, half are family-owned, including such iconic hotels as The Hassler Roma; Baur au Lac in Zurich; The Royal Portfolio, South Africa; Soneva resorts in Thailand and the Maldives; Aqua Expeditions in Peru and Asia; and Ted Turner Expeditions in the US. Of those family-owned companies, about half of those are owned or led by women. These include Ashford Castle in Ireland and The Milestone in London, curated by Bea Tollman of Red Carnation; AdventureWomen, owned and operated by the Wineland trio — Judi Wineland and her two daughters; d'Angleterre in Copenhagen, led by Else-Marie Remmen, and family; and the Perfect Experiences owned

by a group of sisters and captained by Madelyn Willems. The personal touch and care that is innate in a family-owned business is reflected in the way WEILL also operates. We showcase the heart and soul of our clients in this ever-changing media landscape—reaching the still important print and broadcast media, while simultaneously engaging bloggers and social media influencers.

ZAPWATER COMMUNICATIONS

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David Zapata, President & Founder
Jennifer Lake, SVP
Jennifer Barry, Managing Director,
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Zapwater Communications is a public relations agency specializing in lifestyle brands, with a focus on travel, hospitality and destination clients. We integrate multidisciplinary services — digital engagement, experiential tactics and media relations — to drive bottom-line results.

To date, we have won 105 industry awards including Best Travel Tourism and Destination campaign at the PRSA Los Angeles Chapter PRISM Awards. Zapwater has also won numerous HSMIA Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze (Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International) Adrian Awards in both the public relations and digital marketing categories.

Our offices in Chicago and Los Angeles share a culture that fosters creativity, quality, collaboration and enthusiasm. Long-standing relationships and the determination to lead in a dynamically evolving industry distinguishes Zapwater's work.

Zapwater is a founding member of Travel Lifestyle Network (TLN) and represents the United States within its international network of owner-managed marketing and communications agencies serving tourism and lifestyle clients. Network members collaborate to deliver international know-how to clients seeking connections and reach across the globe.

Client experience includes: Visit Finland, National Tourism Office of Serbia, Visit Maldives, Hainan Airlines, Icelandair, Fairmont Mayakoba Riviera Maya, Coco Prive Private Island, The Grand Geneva Resort & Spa, Pacifica Hotels and Casa Kimberly Puerto Vallarta. ○



Weill's new offices.

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2016)	Firm	Net Fees (2016)
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$37,352,000	19. Hemsworth Communications , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,047,000
2. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	11,300,000	20. Red Sky PR , Boise, ID	\$952,152
3. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	11,209,200	21. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	915,695
4. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI) , New York, NY	10,023,512	22. 360 Public Relations , Boston, MA	802,608
5. Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company , New York, NY	7,752,258	23. LANE , Portland, OR	700,334
6. Lou Hammond Group , New York, NY	6,922,405	24. North 6th Agency (N6A) , New York, NY	563,879
7. J Public Relations , New York, NY	6,877,459	25. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	239,952
8. Finn Partners , New York, NY	5,356,000	26. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	184,977
9. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	4,640,585	27. The Buzz Agency , Delray Beach, FL	143,892
10. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations , New York, NY	4,566,288	28. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	141,000
11. Quinn , New York, NY	4,036,563	29. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations , Nashville, TN	129,828
12. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	3,508,293	30. TransMedia Group , Boca Raton, FL	70,000
13. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	3,297,688	31. Singer Associates, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	66,451
14. NJF, an MMGY Global company , New York, NY	3,077,847	32. Stuntman PR , New York, NY	63,000
15. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	2,400,000	33. Maccabee , Minneapolis, MN	53,375
16. Intrepid Agency , Salt Lake City, UT	2,016,785	34. Peppercomm , New York, NY	15,195
17. Coyne , Parsippany, NJ	2,000,000	35. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	14,000
18. Sachs Media Group , Tallahassee, FL	1,683,552	36. CooperKatz & Co. , New York, NY	10,000

Boycotting Alex Jones interview is right PR advice

By Fraser Seitel

Let's say you're the public relations director of the Chase Bank (Full disclosure: I used to be!). You're sitting blissfully in your Park Avenue headquarters when your secretary bursts in to alert you that you've been summoned to CEO Jamie Dimon's office to discuss the Chase sponsorship of Megyn Kelly's NBC interview of lunatic conspiracy theorist Alex Jones.



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*.

On the elevator ride upstairs, you know full well what CEO Dimon will ask of you. Kelly's interview is drawing intense fire for giving credence to a man who, among other crackpot notions, has suggested that the 2012 Sandy Hook elementary school shooting was a hoax and that some of the

parents whose little children were murdered that day were complicit in it.

The question is: Should JPMorgan Chase underscore its commitment to free speech and a free press by letting its ads run on the program? Or should the bank, in the face of mounting public pressure, cut and run?

You bounce off the elevator, nod to the chairman's secretary, enter the office as the sliding glass doors part and declare ...

Well, here's what I'd say. "Pull the advertising. Announce we're not being party to promoting Jones' repulsive views. And move to the sidelines."

Which, by the way, is precisely what JPMorgan's chief marketing officer announced, attracting opprobrium from various quarters of the communications spectrum.

- The company is getting "too close to the editorial content of one program," tut-tutted a marketing professor from his ivory tower at the Harvard Business School.

- Another college public relations professor found it "frightening" that the bank was "interfering in news content."

Fear not, my fellow academic travelers.

Jamie Dimon and his two-trillion-dollar bank aren't interested in trying to dictate

the content of "news." They're merely acting on the same primary concern that's been the focus of similar companies — and the bane of Bernie Sanders' existence — for time immemorial: sales, profits, earnings and customer approval.

JPMorgan Chase, like any other free market company, is in a business that wants to make money. And if you offend your customers, then you're liable to make less money. So why do it?

Stated another way, most corporations — even those run by outspoken public figures like Jamie Dimon — abhor controversy. They figure there's no percentage in getting involved in a pitched battle if the potential result is alienation, or worse, loss of customers. And they're right.

There are, of course, exceptions, like Starbucks' founder Howard Schultz, who regularly wades into controversies from gun control to race relations. But most CEOs find that when they stick their necks out on a controversial topic — like when Whole Foods CEO John Mackey opposed the health reform public option or when Chick-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy opposed same sex marriage — they get their heads handed to them.

That, by the way, is why CNN quickly dropped Trump-severed head-waving Kathy Griffin from its New Years Eve telecast, and why Goya canceled its sponsorship of the New York Puerto Rican Day Parade that honored an FALN terrorist, or why Delta Airlines and Bank of America dropped out of sponsoring a Public Theater production of "Julius Caesar," in which a Donald Trump lookalike title character gets stabbed in the back by Roman senators. They simply didn't need the aggravation. Period. End stop.

And neither did J.P. Morgan Chase, which made the right decision when it pulled out of Megyn Kelly's kamikaze interview with a similarly back-stabbing bomb thrower. ○

PR news brief

Ketchum, Daggerwing partner for M&A offering

Omnicom Group's global PR powerhouse Ketchum has teamed up with the ad/PR combine's management consulting unit Daggerwing Group to launch an M&A services offering titled DaggerwingTransACT.

Ketchum in a statement said the offering aims to focus on "culture-first M&A services," and would examine desired outcomes for corporate culture and the impact these variables can have on value in deals involving mergers, acquisitions, spin-offs and bankruptcies.

The alliance draws on Daggerwing's employee engagement and executive management expertise along with the financial and corporate communications prowess of Ketchum's New York headquarters.



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Safe harbor plans and best industry practices

By Richard Goldstein

This month I'm writing about two areas I feel are vastly important in the PR profession: safe harbor retirement plans and an introduction to the 2017 best practices in the PR industry.



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

Is a safe harbor plan the best move now?

Do you worry each year about whether your highly-compensated talent will have excess salary deferrals returned to them due to your retirement plan failing discrimination tests? Most smaller plan sponsors take advantage of "safe harbor" rules that nearly always elim-

inate the need to worry about passing discrimination tests.

What are the test formulas?

Currently, the threshold for highly compensated employee (HCE) status is an annual salary of \$120,000, or at least 5 percent company ownership. Using a test called the ADP or ACE test, a determination is made if your HCEs can maximize their annual deferrals. (Note: I am not discussing the mechanics of the formula but can provide this information if interested.)

What happens if you do not pass the above tests?

If you consistently fail the test formulas by a wide margin, a safe harbor plan design could look attractive. The rules provide two safe harbor formula categories to choose from to avoid ADP/ACP testing.

Your first choice is one of two minimum contribution formulas:

- Match 100 percent of the first 3 percent of deferred compensation and 50 percent on deferrals between 3 percent and 5 percent (this means the maximum you would contribute is 4 percent of employee compensation), or ...
- Match 100 percent on the first 4 percent deferred.

The second choice is the non-elective contribution rate. The PR agency must contribute 3 percent of the eligible employee's compensation, regardless of how much or little your non-highly compensated employees save on their own.

Note, all safe harbor contribution amounts must vest immediately with the employee.

The QACA

A qualified automatic contribution plan is also a form of safe harbor plan. With this approach, you must auto-enroll employees into the plan and a qualified default investment option such as a target date fund. A QACA must have a minimum initial deferral rate of 3 percent and annual deferred rate increases of at least 1 percent until the deferred rate reaches at least 6 percent, but no more than 10 percent.

In addition, the plan must have 100 percent of deferrals on the first 1 percent deferred, and at least 50 percent on incremental deferrals up to 6 percent. The net result of all the above is a maximum required match of 3.5 percent. A two-year vesting formula is permissible.

Your next step

Safe harbor plans take some planning. If you want to establish a new safe harbor plan, you must do so by October 1 for calendar year plans. Existing 401(k) plans have until January 1 to start as a safe harbor plan.

You must provide participants a notice of intent to be a safe harbor plan for the coming year at least 30 days prior to the new plan year. If you currently have a 401(k) plan, check your plan documents to ensure you can amend them to add a safe harbor plan.

Is this for you?

Going the safe harbor route is the path of least resistance, but can also be the more expensive one. Set a time to discuss the pros, cons and applicable documentation with your benefits advisor. He or she can review the discrimination test with you, as well as determine whether a safe harbor plan would work for your organization.

An introduction to the PR Industry Best Practices Report

I was recently speaking with a person knowledgeable with the PR Industry. His observation is traditional PR has come and gone. Do you agree? I would like to get some feedback on this: rgoldstein@buchbinder.com.

An agency without digital PR may not be able to compete in today's market place. I asked Rick Gould what he thought about this statement. He agreed that in the long run social media/digital PR is a must. When I asked him if it is possible for a more traditional firm to do a "bolt on" acquisition of a digital shop, he said yes assuming you can find a digital agency that wants to be acquired. More on this next time out.

Rick Gould just published the

Gould+Partners PR Agency Best Practices Benchmarking Report. Next month I will review the results of the report that I believe is critical to your agency.

By way of introduction, per the report, there are 22 critical benchmarks. The most critical being revenue per professional; account salaries; labor cost; rent; operating overhead and profit; billing for travel; minimum fees; and baseline hours, to name a few.

Catch up with you next month. ○

PR news brief

Lexis teams up with Text100

London-based consumer agency Lexis has been integrated into global communications agency Text100.

The merger, which primarily affects the Next Fifteen unit's UK office, became effective June 22.

Lexis specializes in consumer PR, corporate communications, social media and digital marketing, as well as live event management. Clients include global consumer brands such as Pizza-Hut, Pernod Ricard and Harley-Davidson, among others. The agency, which was founded in 1992 and staffs 30, was acquired in 2008 by Text100 parent Next Fifteen.

All of Lexis' staff members have moved into Text100's London office, now making it the agency's largest outpost, with 100 employees (the agency relocated its London offices to the city's Holborn neighborhood in 2015 following Next Fifteen's acquisition of content marketing agency Republic Publishing and UK-based digital marketing firm IncrediBull World).

Text100 UK managing director Tara O'Donnell will assume overall responsibility for the combined agency, and former Lexis deputy MD Ruth Kieran now becomes deputy MD to O'Donnell.

Lexis MD Dominic Shales has decided to move on in light of the merger. Shales joined Lexis in 2012 after that agency acquired his former brand/digital shop, Paratus Communications.

The Lexis brand will be phased out later this year.

O'Donnell told *O'Dwyer's* that integrating Lexis into the Text100 fold will broaden Text100's consumer brand portfolio while providing Lexis clients an armory of design, film, web development, content marketing and social media capabilities, as well as global reach.

"This is a really big deal for all of us. Lexis brings a formidable track record of truly understanding consumer behavior as well as serving consumer clients something that so many Text100 clients will benefit from. And Text100 brings marketing communications expertise and extensive skills including branding, web development and content marketing across a range of clients from technology to consumer brands. And, Lexis will benefit from Text100's global network," O'Donnell said.

"By uniting we will become a more formidable powerhouse in the UK. And by uniting you can expect to see our work with consumer brands expand in the UK and other offices across the world where our consumer credentials are already growing," O'Donnell told *O'Dwyer's*.

Text100, which was founded in the UK in 1981, is headquartered in New York and maintains nearly two dozen offices worldwide.

Cutting down on vitriolic political talk

By Arthur Solomon

Ever since the tragic shooting of Republican Congressman Steve Scalise, the typical loop-recording of comments stating that “maybe this will be the incident

that will reunite the American people” has been echoing among members of Congress and the cable TV pundits.

We all know that one insane incident unites the American people for only a short time. Even 9-11 and the Sandy Hook tragedies didn’t bridge the divide between Republicans and Democrats, including those sitting in Congress as well as the Joe and Jane Does sitting next to you at the diner.

Different approaches to political problems have always caused a rift between opponents. Usually it was limited to the legislative halls, but not always: our country has been victimized by assassinations and a Civil War.

The sorry state of U.S. politics is the result of three main causes: members of Congress, fanatics of the left and right and the flame-throwing mentality of the media. Discussing political differences in a sane manner has gone the way of the five-cent ice cream cone. Instead, the use of vitriolic language when discussing political differences has turned a crack into a chasm and our free press shares a large part of the blame.

I’m against censorship. A free press is necessary for the continuation of our democracy. Unfortunately, there have been excesses taken by the media that only they can change.

The most important element in binding the fracture of the political left and right rests with a responsible media that keeps hate mongers from spreading their messages by refusing to give them a platform on which they spread their hate. That’s an easy fix. Report the news as it is without resorting to “he said, she said” guests, which is the backbone of the pathetic journalism practiced by the cable networks.

The latest brouhaha involving responsible journalism was Megyn Kelly providing an

NBC platform to conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. Kelly’s defenders say the only way to expose someone like Jones is by having journalists confront him in person, which I disagree with and history backs me up.

Students of journalism know that it’s not necessary to provide a platform to a person like Jones in order to discredit someone. On March 9th, 1954, Edward R. Murrow, the renowned and respected CBS journalist — who became famous for his coverage from London during the German’s World War II blitz of the city — used his “See It Now” telecast to highlight the excesses of another conspiracy theorist, Sen. Joe McCarthy. The telecast featured the words, actions and videos of McCarthy and is credited with the Senator’s downfall.

I watched Kelly’s less-than-hard-hitting interview with Jones and found him to be the clear winner. Here’s why: People who disagree with Mr. Jones’ conspiracy theory were already anti-Jones. But viewers who knew nothing about him now do. While the interview will not convince Jones’ followers to flee, it might attract people who believe as Jones does but knew nothing about him before the telecast.

It will take decades — if ever — for the rift between the hard right and hard left to begin healing. But here are a few ways that are certain to help:

- Members of the media should refrain from using incendiary adjectives when talking about politicians they disagree with.

- The president should stop denouncing any story he doesn’t like as “fake news.”

- Political pundits on TV should be eliminated. They only create confusion and are mostly wrong. Remember their assuredness for more than a year that Hillary Clinton was a shoo-in. Only news should be reported; opinions should be labeled “editorials.”

- Cable TV has to stop providing unlimited airtime emphasizing Democrats attacking Republicans, Republicans attacking Democrats, Democrats attacking Democrats and Republicans attacking Republicans, which only adds to the political divide.

- Cable TV should stop playing up the name calling of politicians by proponents of the far right and far left and use the time to discuss the ideological differences between Democrats and Republicans regarding legislation.

- Former flame-throwing elected officials like Newt Gingrich should be treated like former elected officials and not be given an open mike across the cable TV spectrum to spread their vitriolic attacks. Instead current members of Congress who seek to

unite, instead of divide, should be given the time allotted to flamethrowers.

- Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter should block extremist hate speech content on their sites.

None of the above will correct the situation that was largely created by the 24/7 cable news networks, unless they cease sensationalizing news, begin acting like responsible news sources and report factually without the never-ending commentary from so-called analysts.

Cable political TV is similar to going to a theatrical production or a movie without leaving home. Any resemblance to actual reporting is coincidental. The cast plays roles, acting as beat reporters and anchors. The supporting cast plays the roles of pundits. The vitriolic language that is now part of our political discussions will continue forever until the cable TV political shows begin acting responsibly. ○

PR news brief

Reputation Partners acquires Words&Pictures

Chicago-based Reputation Partners has acquired marketing and brand development agency Words&Pictures, Inc.

The acquisition, the terms of which were not publicly disclosed, became effective June 16.

Words&Pictures specializes in web development, marketing strategy, brand and identity creation and print and online advertising. The Chicago-based agency, which has done work for regional and national clients such as The University of Chicago Medicine, Walgreens, Lurie Children’s Hospital, Blue Cross Blue Shield, The University of Arizona Medical Center and Ingalls Hospital, was founded in 1982.

All Words&Pictures staff will move into Reputation Partners’ West Monroe St. offices in Chicago’s loop. Principal Nick Quirke joins Reputation Partners as senior vice president and director of creative services. The agency will retain its branding for now.

Reputation Partners founder and president Nick Kalm told *O’Dwyer’s* that the acquisition deepens the agency’s design, website development and brand strategies toolkit, providing clients with a wider range of capabilities.

“The work we’re doing and our clients’ work has become much more visual in nature, and our clients are asking for more visual capabilities, whether it’s design or website development. As a boutique firm, that’s something we used to have to hand off to other companies, but now we’re able to offer our clients what they want and what they need in-house.”

It’s the second acquisition in as many years for the full-service agency: Reputation Partners in April 2016 acquired Milwaukee-based corporate communications and investor relations shop Vollrath Associates, effectively doubling the agency’s Brew City presence (Reputation Partners has maintained a Milwaukee office since the beginning of last year).

Reputation Partners, which specializes in corporate and consumer PR, issues/crisis management, financial/IR and corporate social responsibility, now staffs a total of 25.



Arthur Solomon was a senior VP at Burson-Marsteller. He now is a contributor to public relations and sports business publications, consults on PR projects and is on the Seoul Peace Prize nominating committee. He can be reached at arthursolomon4pr@juno.com.

Chicago PR legend Kraus dies at 95

Herb Kraus, the Chicago publicist who represented Inland Steel, Rev. Martin Luther King, Vienna Sausages and taught PR at Columbia College for three decades, died May 20. He was 95.

The former Army combat correspondent and Purple Heart Award recipient launched Herbert M. Kraus & Co. in the 1950s with American Jewish Committee, State of Israel Bonds and Chicago Committee for the Truman Presidential Library and Museum among charter clients, according to press reports.

Known for his quick wit and sharp writing skills, Kraus hired many of the Windy City's leading PR people, recruiting many of them right from college.

In 1973, he merged his firm into Manning, Selvage and Lee and managed its Midwest office.

Kraus took the helm of Kraus Dunham Nickolich PR ten years later and then re-established it under his own name before retiring in 2007.

In 2006, the Publicity Club of Chicago honored Kraus with its Golden Trumpet Award for Lifetime Achievement. ○



Herb Kraus

Jack Trout, co-author of 'Positioning,' Dies at 82

Jack Trout, co-author in 1981 with partner Al Ries of *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, which sold 2 million+ copies, died June 5 at his home in Greenwich, Conn.

Cause of death was intestinal cancer.

Trout said the basic premise of his book was to capitalize on associations and connections that already existed for a product or service rather than creating something from scratch. He authored or co-authored 16 other books on the subjects and lectured widely about it.

Ries formed his own consulting firm in 1994 with his daughter, Laura.

Both firms built sizable businesses in China. "Positioning" sold more than 400,000 copies in that country.



Jack Trout

Trout, a New York native, graduated from Iona College and served in the U.S. Navy as a flight navigator.

His initial job was in the ad department of General Electric. He joined Ries after working at Uniroyal, a client of the firm.

Clients have included DuPont, Merck, IBM, Procter & Gamble, AT&T, Apple and General Mills, Eli Lilly and Intel.

Survivors include his wife, Patricia; six children and 15 grandchildren. ○

Thomas takes Mower leadership position

Upstate New York ad/PR agency Eric Mower + Associates has named Geoff Thomas senior vice president and managing director of the independent agency's Cincinnati outpost.

Thomas joins the Syracuse-headquartered shop from global brand design agency LPK, which he joined in 1998 as a group director and ultimately oversaw business operations and served as chief operating officer.

EMA, which maintains offices in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Syracuse, Cincinnati, Atlanta and Charlotte, merged with Boston-based B2B and tech marketing agency HB Agency in 2015. ○



Geoff Thomas

Ravinal tunes in Univision

Rosemary Ravinal, who was VP-PR and Content Communications Chief at Miami's Republica multicultural marketing shop, has moved to Univision at VP-Entertainment and Consumer PR.

She's in charge of publicity for the portfolio of the Spanish-language entertainment/broadcast/cable company and PR lead for consumer media.

Reporting to Rosemary Mercedes, Ravinal will work closely with Univision's programming leadership and talent relations.

At Republica, Ravinal served as Senior Counselor for Hispanic business strategy for Toyota North America. ○



Rosemary Ravinal

She also worked in the US and Latin America for Discovery Channel, Sony-Ericsson, AT&T and A+E Television.

Univision is the No. 1 network in the US Hispanic market, which numbers 57 million people and \$1.3 trillion in buying power. ○

Hart pilots United's PR

United Airlines has put Brett Hart in charge of global communications as part of an executive shuffle to accelerate its "momentum in elevating the experience it provides to customers" and continuing operational performance.

The airline's customer satisfaction level took a major hit following the PR crisis triggered when a passenger was dragged off a United Express flight.

Hart assumes the newly created Executive VP, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel slot, where his responsibilities include PR.

He joined United from Sara Lee Corp. in 2010 and stepped in as interim CEO following United chief Oscar Munoz's heart attack in 2015.

Jim Olson, Senior VP-Corporate Communications, now reports to Hart. ○



Brett Hart

Wentzel charges up NEI's PR

Jon Wentzel, who was a top executive at Burson-Marsteller and Ogilvy, joined the Nuclear Energy Institute this month as VP-communications.

The Washington-based executive is in charge of media relations, digital and editorial to "promote timely and effective coverage of the nuclear energy industry," according to the NEI.

At B-M, Wentzel was Executive VP/Chief Client Officer and handled the WPP unit's campaign for Walgreens Boots Alliance. He also chaired the consumer and brand marketing practice.

For Ogilvy, he handled corporate communications and PR practices for its western region, providing issues management and counsel to the American Chemistry Council and Covered California, and served as PR rep to OgilvyEarth, the environmental and sustainability practice. ○



Jon Wentzel

Team Trump taps Corallo

Mark Corallo, who was called a “street smart Republican spin doctor” by the *National Journal*, has been hired to help Donald Trump’s legal team.

The one-time Justice Department Press Secretary and Chief Spokesperson for John Ashcroft during the George W. Bush presidency, distributed a statement from Trump’s lawyer, Marc Kasowitz, following Comey’s June testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee which said Trump is pleased that the former FBI Director confirmed that he is not under investigation in any Russian probe.

Corallo has worked for high-profile clients such as Blackwater Worldwide, Karl Rove and former American International Group Chief Hank Greenberg.

Prior to working for Ashcroft, Corallo was Press Secretary for former Louisiana Republican Congressman Bob Livingston, who chaired the House Appropriations Committee.

Corallo Media Strategies is based in Alexandria, VA. ○



Mark Corallo



technical training programs.

While U.S. construction employment has grown at a faster rate than the overall economy — adding 11,000 jobs in May alone, a 2.9 percent year-over-year increase, according to AGC’s analysis of government data — construction firms now find themselves struggling to find enough suitable workers to meet project demands.

According to AGC analysis, the average weekly work rate in construction is now 39.9 hours, the highest it has been since 2006. ○

Lobbyists pilot travel group on Open Skies policy

Travel trade non-profit the U.S. Travel Association has hired government consulting firm Eris Group to advocate on Capitol Hill on behalf of issues affecting the travel and tourism industry.

According to lobbying registration documents filed in June, USTA has retained Eris Group in support of U.S. Open Skies policies, the bilateral agreements that establish a free-market environment for the airline industry, allowing international passenger and cargo flights to move between the U.S. and foreign nations without government interference.

The United States currently maintains Open Skies agreements with about 115 countries.

The travel industry’s top trade association, the USTA — formerly known as the Travel Industry Association of America — represents the destinations, service providers and travel groups that comprise the U.S.’s \$2.1 trillion travel, hospitality and tourism industry. ○

Construction trade group builds D.C. lobbying salvo

Trade group the Associated General Contractors of America has retained law firm Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr for Capitol Hill representation on government contract issues.

AGC is the leading association advocating for the U.S. construction industry, representing general contractors, specialty contractors and service providers and suppliers on national policy issues. Founded in 1918 at the request of Woodrow Wilson, the non-profit maintains a nationwide network of chapters and represents more than 32,000 industry firms.

AGC has requested that lawmakers address what they characterize as a construction labor shortage in the U.S. by increasing funding for the Perkins Act, which provides funds for career and

Glover Park nets Netflix

Netflix, which has spent heavily for its own programming, has hired Glover Park Group to build awareness of its original content on Capitol Hill.

The streaming service launched its first program, “House of Cards,” in 2013.

Susan Brophy, GPG’s managing director and former senior VP in Time Warner’s public policy office, is working the Netflix business.

She served in the legislative affairs unit of the Clinton Administration and was chief of staff to ex-Democratic Senators Byron Dorgan and Tim Wirth.

The WPP company’s Netflix team includes Gregg Rothschild, legislative assistant to former Senator John Kerry (D-MA); Andrew King, deputy chief of staff to Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Rob Seidman, legislative assistant to Kelly Ayotte (R-NH).

Netflix this month made news with the launch of interactive programming that lets viewers select the various plots the show should follow. ○

Cassidy recruits Sydnor

Cassidy & Assocs. has recruited Chad Sydnor, a Senior Defense Policy Aide to Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), to bolster its defense and infrastructure businesses.

The Army veteran, who rose to the rank of Captain, served as Battalion Intelligence Officer and Company Commander. He continues to serve in the Reserve as an Apache helicopter aviation officer.

Sydnor, who was an Assistant DA in Raleigh before joining the military, moved to Capitol Hill in 2011. Prior to working as Burr’s military legislative assistant, Sydnor was a staffer for Sen. John Boozman (R-AR) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC). ○



Chad Sydnor

Beirut Bank appoints Avenue Strategies

Avenue Strategies, the D.C. political consulting and lobbying firm formed by veteran Republican strategist Barry Bennett and former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski, has been hired by the Bank of Beirut to improve the image of Lebanon's banking system in Washington.

A financial hub of banking activities throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean, Lebanon has come under fire in recent years for harboring a financial climate that the U.S. State Department has characterized as facing "significant money laundering and terrorism financing challenges," where Beirut's banks are often used to launder funds from foreign organized crime groups as well as terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah.

According to lobbying registration documents filed in June, the Bank of Beirut has hired Avenue Strategies for the purpose of educating Capitol Hill on the Lebanese financial sector.

That Lebanese commercial bank, which was founded in 1963, operates nearly 100 branches across the Middle East, Australia, Europe and Africa. In 2015, it was fined £2.1 million (about \$3.2 million) in the UK after Britain's financial authority determined the Bank of Beirut had misled regulators regarding its efforts to hamper money laundering activities.

Beirut-based Al-Mawarid Bank, trade group the Association of Banks in Lebanon and Lebanon's central bank, Banque du Liban, all signed similar image-building pacts several years ago with lobbying powerhouses such as Squire Patton Boggs and DLA Piper.

Barry Bennett manages the Bank of Beirut account. He was formerly chief of staff to Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-OH) and communications director to the G8 Summit under President George W. Bush. He has also founded super PACs for Rick Perry and for the Senate campaigns for Liz Cheney and Rob Portman. Most recently, Ben-

nett served as a senior advisor to the Trump election campaign. Prior to that, he managed Dr. Ben Carson's presidential run.

Avenue Strategies, which was founded in December, also runs a super PAC to aid Trump's 2020 re-election. Corey Lewandowski left the firm in May after it was reported that he did not formally register as a lobbyist. ○

Qatar locks in Ashcroft

Qatar, which is locked into a messy political squabble with its Persian Gulf State neighbors Saudi Arabia, as well as Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, has tapped former Attorney General John Ashcroft's firm for compliance and US government/media work.

Qatar, which fellow Arab states have charged with supporting the Islamic State, al-Qaeda and Muslim Brotherhood, is home of Arab satellite TV channel Al Jazeera. The country has called the allegations "complete fabrications" and nothing more than a campaign to weaken it.

A \$2.5 million retainer covers that effort. The hefty flat fee highlights the "urgent need to commence work immediately and the firm's intention to make this matter a top priority."

The Ashcroft Law Firm will provide the Qataris with strategic advice, legal counsel, crisis response and management, media outreach and advocacy regarding Qatar's efforts to combat terror.

John Ashcroft, who leads the effort, plans to enlist the support of former members of the US intelligence community and Treasury/Homeland Security departments to complete the engagement. He was George W. Bush's AG and former Senator from Missouri.

UK-based Portland PR, which was founded by former UK prime minister Tony Blair's press secretary Tim Allan, has also been separately retained to support with Qatar's D.C. embassy's government relations and lobbying activities. Portland also advises Qatar on public diplomacy and strategic communications. ○

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.

Hogan Lovells US LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered June 19, 2017 for Unidad de Analisis Financiero y Economico**, Quito, Ecuador, regarding discussions with the U.S. government, including those in relation to the principal's exchange with the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN).

Barnes & Thornburg, LLP, Indianapolis, IN, **registered June 2, 2017 for Coalicion del Congreso de Guatemala**, Guatemala City, Guatemala, to assist with developing a close working relationship between the Guatemalan government and the U.S. government.

Sonoran Policy Group, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered June 6, 2017 for Embassy of the Republic of Kenya**, Washington, D.C., regarding tourism, trade, investment and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.

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.

Eris Group (formerly Bartlett & Bendall), Washington, D.C., **registered June 23, 2017 for E*TRADE Financial Corporation**, Arlington, VA, regarding issues related to Dodd-Frank reform, as well as banking and securities regulation.

Crowell & Moring International, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered June 26, 2017 for National Association of Broadcasters**, Washington, D.C., regarding advocacy during the renegotiation of NAFTA.

SMW Partners, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered June 22, 2017 for Build a Better New York Infrastructure Inc.**, Albany, NY, regarding federal infrastructure agreement as it relates to the Davis Bacon Act, which guarantees local prevailing wages on public works projects.

Cornerstone Government Affairs, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered June 21, 2017 for National Alliance for Public Charter Schools**, Washington, D.C., regarding funding for charter schools.

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