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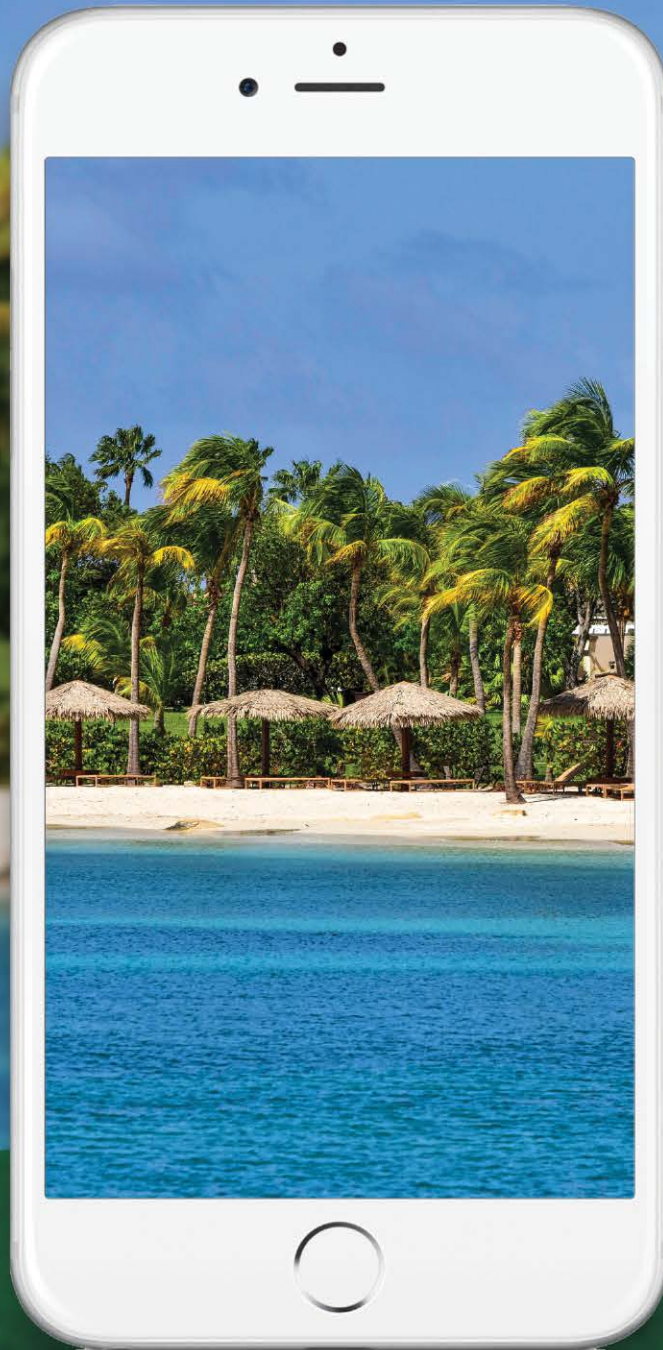




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# Trade debate is party politics in action

One reason I seldom engage in political discussions online anymore is due to the fact that people are so committed to their tribes that party loyalty now supersedes the greater value that can be found in developing and expressing coherent viewpoints. The drama and subsequent debate surrounding Trump's tariffs plan underscores this dilemma perfectly.

Since when did the left become the party of free-trade orthodoxy? Liberals have collectively derided the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and similarly recognized the free-trade agreements before it — GATT, NAFTA, etc. — as emblematic of a playing field tilted against U.S. workers to the benefit of corporate profits.

Defending America's manufacturing sector and the communities that have been de-industrialized, displaced and decimated by globalization and the unchecked mercantilism of foreign free-trade agreements was a *sine qua non* of Bernie Sanders' platform. Has everyone forgotten this?

I ask because there's not a lot of daylight between what rank and file liberals are now saying about Trump's tariff plan and arguments used by free-market Republicans for ages, and listening to these hilarious T. Boone Pickens repudiations of Trump's policy as an attack on business and the markets has left me scratching my head.

I'm convinced that many liberals are either confused about basic economics, or — the more likely scenario — they're too preoccupied playing knee-jerk politics to recognize they're contradicting themselves when they oppose a measure that bucks traditional Republican views simply because the guy pulling the lever is a President they despise. Politics, right?

If it's any consolation, the right is doing the same thing: a recent poll found that 70 percent of conservative voters — who've traditionally seen protectionist policies on tariffs as barriers to corporate profits and a high GDP — now say they favor Trump's tariffs plan, which is a 180-degree contradiction from what they were saying during Bush II, when our trade deficit peaked. Everyone needs to make up their minds.

Threading the needle on this contentious issue has revealed a greater problem underwriting our divisive political climate: everyone is playing party politics these days and no one seems interested in thinking critically for the sake of discovering meaning and truth in a rational, coherent worldview. If Republican voters are now championing Trump's attacks on foreign competition at a cost to their long-standing support for free trade — that is, if their views on trade have now become a proxy for an anti-immigration stance — it's only fitting that Democrats have failed to articulate a sensible counter narrative for the rust-belt and labor union base it claims to support.

Notice this confusion isn't quite so pronounced in Washington, and that's why GOP leadership (Ryan, Flake, Hatch, Graham and about 110 other Republican members of Congress) are now rolling out legislation in an attempt to nullify Trump's plan, because they view unfettered trade agreements as a windfall for the economy and U.S. corporations. That's also the reason why many Democratic leaders from red states (such as Ohio's Sherrod Brown) have joined Schumer, Casey, Warren et al. in manking a begrudging about-face in recent weeks, admitting that Trump's tariffs plan is a step in the right direction in addressing the world's largest trade deficit while returning our priorities to the manufacturing base at home. It's a sad day when someone you're politically opposed to does something you like.

For the record: there's a lot to criticize about Trump's tariffs. For one, they're haphazard; putting a lid on unregulated imports from China, which has been engaged in the unfair practice of dumping cheap products stateside whose cost is subsidized by the Chinese government and often bear prices far below their U.S. value, doesn't sound like a bad idea. Europe, Canada and Mexico? Not so much. Then there's the trademark boardroom braggadocio stunts Trump has pulled to gain leverage on these deals, sowing bad faith and distrust with some of our closest allies in the process, which could result in corresponding tit-for-tat tariffs on U.S. goods and a broader trade war. Those steel tariffs aren't going to do much for U.S. steel and aluminum workers anyway. Oh, and Trump imposed them under a seldom-used section of the Trade Expansion Act, which allows a sitting President to impose tariffs on the grounds of national security, which is ludicrous.

These criticisms are all fair game. But when you begin engaging in ad hoc, navel-gazing arguments that appropriate your political opponent's positions, the only audience you're going to find for these grievances are those who are just as confused as you. ○

—Jon Gingerich

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O'Dwyer's is published monthly for \$60.00 a year (\$7.00 a single issue) by the J.R. O'Dwyer Co., Inc.  
271 Madison Ave., #600  
New York, NY 10016.  
(212) 679-2471 Fax: (212) 683-2750.

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# Journos believe media trust is making a comeback

A perceived public trust in journalism is on the rise, according to an annual media survey conducted by Cision.

By Jon Gingerich

**D**espite the constant chaos encircling today's media world, perceived public trust in journalism has been on the rise in the last year, according to findings in the latest State of the News Media report issued by Chicago-based PR software giant Cision.

The report, which surveyed journalists regarding their current perceptions of the media world as well as the trends and challenges facing the press today, found that 71 percent of respondents believe the public has lost trust in journalists in the last year. It's an alarming number, but a positive sign if you consider this percentage is down markedly from the 91 percent who said the same thing in Cision's survey last year.

Journalists' newfound confidence comes in light of a recent return in profits and readers to many subscription-based news outlets. The New York Times Co. reported that first-quarter revenues were up four percent and operating profit had jumped 22 percent to \$34.1 million (digital-only Times

subscriptions, by contrast, leapt 46 percent in 2017). The *Wall Street Journal* added 300,000 digital subscriptions in fiscal 2017.

Misinformation and the fake news phenomenon continue to take the blame for the media's trust problem: more than half (56 percent) said fake news has made readers more skeptical about the content produced by newsrooms.

By and large, journalists said they consider being accurate more important than being first: 78 percent of respondents said that being 100 percent accurate in their reporting is their top priority, superseding the possibility of breaking a story or having an exclusive. Only 10 percent placed an emphasis on being first, a three percent decline from 13 percent in last year's survey.

Members of the media also ranked different earned and owned channels for trustworthiness.

The survey polled journos on what PR outreach channels they find most helpful, accurate and trustworthy. Most opt for the

historic route — press releases — as 63 percent said this is how they prefer interacting with PR pros, and nearly half (44 percent) said they found these announcements to be the most trustworthy source of brand-related information, compared to only 30 percent who said the same about company spokespersons and 20 percent who cited a company's website.

When asked what factors could make press releases more effective, 45 percent suggested PR pros utilize a clearly-stated news hook. Nearly a third (28 percent) also wanted PR pros to do a better job of researching their newsbeats and outlets before pitching them, and a similar number (27 percent) said they disliked releases riddled with jargon, preferring writing with a conversational tone.

When asked to predict what new technologies journalists think will impact the ways in which they work, more than a third (34 percent) cited new social media algorithms, followed by cheaper video production technology (26 percent) and AI and machine learning technology (21 percent).

Nearly a third of journalists (28 percent) said staffing and resources would be the biggest challenges facing the industry in the coming year. ○



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# Weathering the effects of a natural disaster

You never know which way the wind will blow or when the ground will shift; that's why creating a communication preparedness roadmap to ride out the downpour is a step that can't be overlooked.

By Stacy Moskowitz

**H**urricanes, earthquakes, volcano eruptions and more. Words we never want to hear, but know all too well, it's not if but rather when because natural disasters are inevitable.

The U.S. has had its fair share of late — Hurricanes Harvey and Maria, the California wildfires, and just recently Kilauea erupting — and it seems that mother nature doesn't plan to let up any time soon. In fact, some climate experts predict we are going to experience these events more often.

When natural disasters strike, the ripple effects can be endless. And anything that happens to the tourism industry impacts the entire country. In 2017, the travel industry generated \$2.4 trillion in economic output and supported 15.6 million American jobs directly and indirectly. That's 2.7 percent of the GDP that can be attributed to travel and tourism.

If you're a tourism industry communicator like me, you know the need for weather-related crisis preparedness is more important than ever. With events like earthquakes and tornadoes that don't provide advance warning, a plan to navigate a crisis effectively should be a critical element of your organization's overall communication playbook.

Here are a few best practices to successfully manage communication surrounding events of such enormity.

## Learn from the past

While numerous natural disasters have occurred since Hurricane Katrina, the images of New Orleans are still raw and vivid in our minds to this day. It's the one that so many others are compared to.

Having worked with Visit Houston for several years, Padilla supported the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau's communication efforts surrounding Hurricane Harvey last summer.

Given the proximity to NOLA, and the magnitude of impact that was expected, we knew H-Town's response would be compared to that of Katrina. Not knowing how the storm would unfold, we identified clear roles and responsibilities for the GHCVB team. We anticipated loss of power, employees working remotely, and interrupted internet and cell service.

We also had to hope the Federal Emer-

gency Management Agency's response would be swift and organized, unlike that of Katrina.

We were ready, to communicate to stakeholders early and often about Houston's resilience, big hearts and determination. With planning and careful thought, aided by the community's incredible support of neighbors, we set out to instill confidence and maintain long-term affinity for the city now known as #HoustonStrong.

## Show compassion

We are humans first, communicators second. Human suffering and loss takes precedence above all else.

Once your team is accounted for and out of harm's way, the tourism body should get to work serving the business community with resources for those affected and keep the media informed. This is particularly important for a civic organization trying to aid its constituents.

Most crises are a 24/7 job for communicators. A natural disaster will veer from this norm. It's very likely you'll want to do your part by volunteering to support the relief efforts. After all, it's your hometown, and there is no greater way to show your love for it than with actions that mean so much more than words.

You can and should contribute. Your perspective and tone from firsthand involvement could be vital to communication messaging that stakeholders need and want to hear. It can also help set the record straight if media are not reporting accurately.

While you or your team is walking the talk, your agency partners should be drafting messaging and statements, fielding media requests and monitoring news coverage and social discussions.

## Stages of social media

Social media has changed the way we do just about everything. During a natural disaster, it can be a lifeline. For tourism businesses, there are often three key stages.

First, serving as a source of information. The Hawaii Tourism Authority is currently using its social channels to provide continuous updates on the status of the Kilauea volcanic eruption, as did Sonoma County Tourism in the wake of the wildfires last fall.

Social media can then move to serving

as a conduit to inform people about how they can help. You know the city's businesses better than most, so there's no organization more knowledgeable to gather and share relief information. It could be the difference between whether or not someone has a place to sleep and a meal to eat.



When disaster strikes, the location is put in the spotlight. Often the perception of how the destination weathers the figurative storm can dictate how quickly it will recover and what the future of tourism might look like.

By sharing accounts of heroism and strength, the human stories aren't forgotten in the barrage of one destruction photo after another. Social media allows the good that comes from the bad to take center stage in a way that wouldn't have been possible before.

## It's a marathon, not a sprint

The immediate relief effort might be days or weeks and the action is sure to be fast-paced, but the recovery phase often takes years. And there is no doubt tourism will fall off in the immediate short term.

Go in with eyes wide open and let the idea of revitalization fuel your passion to bring your town or state back to better than its former glory. Learn from the community's experience, then celebrate the rebuilding process with enthusiasm.

Get back to bread and butter communication. Your contact list is a goldmine waiting to tell the world you are ready to welcome visitors once again. And make sure travelers and clients understand the important role they can play simply by visiting and contributing to the local economy.

Communication over the long haul will be a determining factor in the success of a destination's resurgence.

Even though you can never fully prepare for any type of natural disaster, having a strategic guide map in place can help minimize the effects from events of incredible magnitude, and be a catalyst to get back to business quickly.

*Stacy Moskowitz is a Senior Director in Padilla's Consumer Practice. ○*



# How hotels can harness the power of paid social

Marketing agencies are now utilizing smart, ROI-driven paid social campaigns to build big business for hotel clients.

By Amy Ogden

Let's be honest, social media can feel like a moving target. It seems like every week produces a new feature, tool or algorithm change. Something you've probably heard more and more about in the past year is paid social media, which might feel like just another "thing" to keep up with. However, paid social is a key part of any good social media campaign and understanding how it works will bring your social strategy to a new level and show true ROI.

Have you ever wondered if paid social media really works for booking hotel rooms? In an ROI-driven industry, that's a valid question. Here's a real-world example of paid social for a hotel (certain names and details have been changed to protect the brilliant):

The Islands had captivated honeymooners for decades — often at a price point they would not pay otherwise. Then, in 2016, Zika made its first appearance on the islands. Immediately, this started scaring off freshly married couples who were not willing to risk exposure.

One of the Island's top destinations, Hotel X, saw a steep decline in bookings. Decades of marketing efforts were out the door. So, what now?

DINKs (double income, no kids), particularly those in the LGBTQ+ market, were the solution. Through social media, Hotel X was able to rebrand themselves through visuals and partnerships to appeal to this audience. From there, content was lifted to social media users who fit the target, living in the hotel's direct flight markets. Within 6 months, spending \$1,000 a month on paid social ads, the hotel saw \$1,000,000 in confirmed bookings, tied to the paid social media campaign as a key conversion touchpoint.

That's just one example of a smart, ROI-driven paid social campaign. Let's go back a few years to understand how we got here and how we can work with today's current social media space to show true ROI and leverage paid social media in the smartest way possible.

The numbers are staggering: 7.6 billion people in the world; 2.8 billion using social media; Facebook reported advertising revenue of \$35.8 billion in 2017.

The good news: 10 years ago, 7 percent of the US population used one or more so-

cial networking sites. Today that figure is 65 percent. That's great news; there are so many people to reach through your social channels.

The bad news: This means billions of people are logging in daily to see posts from billions of people and brands, causing a mind-bending digital traffic jam. To offset this information overload, Facebook has implemented algorithms to filter what content your followers see, essentially "choosing" what Facebook thinks a follower wants to see and hiding the rest. Even if someone follows your page or brand, they may never see your posts unless they proactively go to your page.

Reality check: In 2012, Facebook Business Pages were reaching 100 percent of their audiences organically (no payment required). Today, that number is about seven percent on the high end. This explains why you may see a page with 10,000 followers but nine likes on a post. Introducing social media ads. The obvious reason for ads is to support the currently free business model, but this also offers marketers a way to target their audience in a way like never before at a price unheard of at this scale.

Due to Facebook's extensive algorithmic efforts to make the platform an interesting place for people to spend time online, they gather as much data on users as possible. This means your ads can be targeted towards active users who have provided every detail about their lives: job updates, marriages and breakups, brands they love, the music they listen to and even where they vacation.

The best news yet, these ads are relatively inexpensive compared to traditional advertising and they are trackable with the implementation of the Facebook Pixel. What is the Facebook Pixel? The Pixel is used for conversion tracking, optimization, and remarketing on Facebook and Instagram, allowing you to track the efforts tied to lifestyle content needed for success in 2018's digital landscape. The Pixel allows you to customize your audience based on activity on your website. You can remarket to everyone who visits your site or define rules for people who visit specific pages or take specific actions. From there, you can track the actions that matter. The pixel automatically tracks visits across your website. You

can add custom events to track actions like viewing specific content, entering the booking engine or making a purchase.

Ads Manager reporting tools allow you to see if your social media feeds are driving their intended goal. By spotting trends over time, you can identify areas to adjust — for instance, your image, budget or audience — to improve social media performance.

What this means in a nutshell:

For a relatively small budget you can create and implement ads that are more targeted than ever before with the added budget of direct attribution.

The implementation of the Pixel allows you to see exact details about your ads and also direct results: rooms booked, sites visited, actions taken.

Social media marketing has never been more quantifiable.

Where do you go from here? If you're starting from a classic organic paid strategy (posting images with no paid strategy), here's a good roadmap:

**Create gorgeous content.** Either hire a social media photography team or take a few classes and shoot your property yourself. It all starts with beautiful, socially-driven content.

**Implement a smart paid campaign.** You can do this yourself by learning how it works and keeping up with changes in the industry or you can partner with a paid social team to manage this for you.

**Continue to build your following.** You can do this through consistent strategies including engaging with new guests who are visiting the property, following fans of synergistic properties and engaging with current and past brand fans.

This is such an exciting time in branding, marketing and sales teams. Never before have we been able to target and track so specifically. Embrace this new opportunity, learn how to navigate it or find a great partner and get ready to bring your brand and sales to a new level.

Amy Ogden is Senior Vice President of Brand Development at JPR. ○



Amy Ogden





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# A look at the 'New South'

**Affordability and a high quality of life have brought jobs, opportunity and prosperity to the U.S. South. But as a new economic powerhouse emerges, the region continues to retain the charm, traditions and culture that have always defined the Southern experience.**

By Lou Rena Hammond

**M**arketers and manufacturers, the media and developers are focusing their attention on the South. The region has become a powerful economic engine bringing unparalleled growth and opportunity. This isn't a new phenomenon; it's a long-term shift that has been occurring over a period of decades.

A quick look at the numbers helps tell the story. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the South is now home to 38 percent of the U.S. population, with the Southern region growing at the fastest rate in the nation. Stretching from East to West, the Sun Belt states are forecast to account for 88 percent of the population growth between 2000 and 2030, according to Census Bureau reports. The South is also home to ten of the fifteen fastest growing large cities in the U.S. The Southeast Region — generally considered to include twelve states — has experienced a boom in its service economy, manufacturing base, high tech industries and financial sector. This growth has fueled a dramatic increase in housing and office development, as well as expansion of travel infrastructure.

The region's favorable climate and quality of life has always contributed to the "Snow Belt to Sun Belt" migration. In increasing numbers, Americans are also heading south in search of jobs and more affordable housing. Sometimes described as "aspirational cities," they can offer greater upward mobility and opportunity. This population shift has brought with it a change in demographics, with younger, more affluent and hip residents moving into the region. These are the foodies, travelers, adventurers and members of a new creative class that are now the face of the New South.

## Manufacturing moves south

The manufacturing industry is being lured to the South by lower taxes and new incentives. Four cities in the Southeast — Nashville, Miami, Raleigh and Atlanta — are on the short list of finalists competing for Amazon's planned second headquarters in the U.S.

The region's business-friendly environment has attracted auto manufacturers from the Midwest as well as from Europe and Japan. Offering wide expanses of space for manufacturing facilities, major auto-

motive plants have opened in Montgomery and Mobile, Alabama. Aerospace and defense manufacturers have also expanded their presence in the Southeast to capitalize on the availability of large tracts of land, an available workforce and its strategic location. With its railroads and upgraded port facilities due to the Panama Canal expansion, locations in the Southeast offer access to both domestic and foreign markets. Airbus has opened its first U.S. plant in Mobile, Alabama. Google has opened several data centers in the region, and even Starbucks now has a coffee roasting plant in South Carolina. All of this activity adds up to an ongoing economic boom for the region.

Southern universities, medical and research facilities enhance the region's reputation as a center of innovation on both a national and international stage.



**Charleston, South Carolina in 2017 was named the "Best City in America" by Travel + Leisure magazine for the fifth year in a row.**

## Media opportunities abound

The big news in the media world was the announcement last year by Time Inc. that the company is moving *Food & Wine* to its multimillion dollar facility in Birmingham, Alabama. It will join its stable of food publications including *Cooking Light*, *Coastal Living* and *Southern Living*. The sprawling complex provides space for 28 test kitchens, photography bays and video studios. The facility also houses a "digital food desk" with its online publications including Food 52 and Eater.

*Food & Wine* Editor Hunter Lewis said that the move gives the publication a more

national flavor. "There are sophisticated food eaters and wine drinkers everywhere now, in cities large and small," he told the *New York Times*.

While New York may still retain its reputation as the media capital of the nation, regional magazines are zeroing in on local interests. The award-winning *Garden & Gun Magazine*, based in Charleston, SC boasts one of the most affluent audiences in the nation. The monthly magazine covers all things Southern — home and garden, cuisine, travel, arts and culture, sports and events. Similar publications such as *Magnolia Journal*, *Local Palate* and the Modern Luxury group cover both the local and national scenes.

## Travel and entertainment destination

Visitors continue to be drawn to the Southeast to experience the charm of the Old South along with the vibrancy of the New. In 2016, Charleston, SC was voted number-one "City in the World" by *Travel & Leisure*. Expanded airline service on national and regional carriers has made these destinations more accessible for both business and leisure travelers. Increased travel has produced a dramatic increase in new hotel construction throughout the region.

Today's travelers are particularly interested in historic and cultural destinations, as well as scenic locales that are off the beaten path. They are traveling to experience the local scene whether it is the cuisine, arts and entertainment, or the region's natural beauty.

The fueled economy has brought significant change to the area. We are witnessing the gentrification of old neighborhoods, increasing real estate prices and unprecedented population growth. But, as the New South emerges, the Old South continues to retain its charm, traditions and culture. Southern hospitality and cooking — from the Kentucky Derby and the Grand Ole Opry — and the new South Beach scene are all part of the unique flavor that defines the Southern experience.

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



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# How wellness is changing the travel industry

Consumers' desires for wellness experiences is now transforming clients, contacts and the travel and hospitality industry overall.

By Jennifer Hawkins

It wasn't that long ago that the concept of "wellness" was the exception in the luxury hospitality industry. As recently as the turn of the millennium, travelers seeking to enhance their personal health and well-being and bring balance to their demanding and disconnected lives had to seek out wellness-focused destination spas and resorts for programs to benefit their mind, body and spirit. Hotels were places to check in to on business or relax on vacation, not places for personal transformation.

How times have changed. Over the past decade and a half, wellness has worked its way into nearly every inch of the hospitality industry, from hands-on cooking classes for guests to master techniques for creating healthy dishes at home, to spa menus that highlight products made from local ingredients and authentic treatments drawn from ancient cultures. Even as the definition of wellness continues to evolve and its application differs from program to program and address to address, it's everywhere.

Along the way, the relentless growth of wellness has transformed the way my public relations firm works with our clients, partners, and the media.

As with any trend, there are plenty of individuals and enterprises seeking to capitalize on opportunities related to the concept. And why not? According to the Global Wellness Institute, "wellness" is a \$3.72 trillion global industry encompassing preventative/personalized medicine, beauty and anti-aging, healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, the spa industry, fitness and mind-body, workplace wellness and more.

While there's much for hotels, resorts and tour operators to gain from the growth of wellness, my firm has seen a lot of attempts to attract wellness seekers go awry due to lack of knowledge and proper investment, financially, logistically and spiritually.

Here are some things we've found:

Travelers and hoteliers equate wellness with a new form of luxury, and guests are willing to invest significant time, money and attention upon it.

Wellness programs are transforming local communities and tapping into a different demographic to add new revenue streams for hotels.

Wellness and wellbeing are authentic extensions of a brand or a personality, and we, as communicators, can use these diverse offerings to better tell a local or brand story.

As consumer interest continues to grow, media focused on travel, bridal and fashion

are hungry to cover places, properties and experiences that incorporate health and wellness.

**Wellness is the new luxury: Guests will spend significantly more on wellness offerings.** Here in New York, at least, it's almost impossible to walk anywhere without seeing a sign for a yoga studio or a juice cleanse. This was not always the case; throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, hotel and resort spas and yoga studios were the exception, rather than the rule. Today, wellness comes packaged to inspire consumers and meet resulting demand. It can be found in urban hotels offering halotherapy (salt inhalation room) or cryotherapy (intense cold chamber) for business guests seeking a quick-and-easy way to unwind; rooftop yoga to raise the spirits of vacationers as high as the sights; or, as offered by Carillon Wellness Resort in Miami, a grocery guru to accompany guests on their trip to the local market for a stress-free lesson on deciphering nutrition labeling and making healthy choices.



The Moon deck at the Gaige House + Ryokan in Glen Ellen, California's Sonoma Valley wine country.

One thing's certain: People will spend more time and money for wellness. According to the Global Wellness Institute, the average international wellness tourist spends nearly 61 percent more on a wellness vacation than a traditional tourist. Compound that with the fact that wellness tourism accounts for close to one in six tourism dollars spent and it's easy to see how wellness programming can be lucrative for hotels or a good investment for entrepreneurs.

Meanwhile, from a communications perspective, it has been exciting to watch the ways in which wellness is changing the travel industry and to share innovative examples of authentic offerings around the globe. Whether it's horseback riding, meditation

on planes, or immersive wellness programs, we have seen an influx of wellness professionals able to personalize itineraries onsite at hotels, as well as relaxation and advanced healing treatments available to give guests the next level of comfort and well-living.

**Discerning where wellness ends and hospitality begins: Wellness programs are transforming local communities and tapping into different demographics, adding new revenue streams for hotels.** Hotels can similarly provide access to a bells-and-whistles fitness center — if not right onsite, then through partnership with a nearby facility. Meditation partners or yoga practitioners offering onsite instruction and activities in a bustling city are also the sorts of programs customers will flock to.

There's an entire community aspect found in wellness, and wellness-focused guests residing at luxury hotels often long to be part of a community scene, from eating healthful cuisine created from local ingredients by a local chef to engaging in communal experiences such as bath houses and infrared saunas. As such offerings are cost-effective with minimal ongoing labor costs, they're a win-win.

Guests also desire for wellness experiences to extend throughout and beyond their stay. Many hotels now offer access to yoga videos for guests to practice in their rooms, and every hands-on cooking (or cocktail) class led by an executive chef (or bar manager) includes recipe cards for guests to use in their own kitchen at home. Similarly, the goal of the grocery guru at Carillon Wellness Resort is to help guests continue on a path to better health and wellbeing, while the Mindful Living Program offered onboard the luxury yachts of Seabourn includes the daily practice of meditation and yoga as well as wellness seminars to lead guests toward change both during and after their cruise.

**Keeping wellness "real": wellness offerings can help tell a better story.** First and foremost, we're advising our clients to keep wellness "real." As consumers and the media become more and more knowledgeable, only authentic wellness programs and experiences will find customers and coverage.

Resilience is another wellness-associated trend in the hospitality industry, and we've seen many creative properties use their perceived challenges as opportunities. For



Jennifer Hawkins

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# Has the digital revolution really changed travel PR?

PR pros working in the world of travel have adapted to publishing's digital revolution, but many clients remain skeptical of digital media's efficacy in bringing them business and continue to treat print as priority number-one, adding an additional obstacle to the challenges communicators face in the course of ensuring a client's contentment and enhancing their bottom line.

By Geoffrey Weill

Let's imagine you're a travel PR pro and it's 2008. You slip into a coma and you regain consciousness today, a decade later.

As you emerged bleary-eyed from your slumber, there's no doubt you'd be gob-smacked by the revolution that has occurred in the publishing scene during the years you missed. Magazines that were once considered the bible of travel and lifestyle writing have either disappeared or have been sold to unexpected owners, or have new editorial teams who are transforming the look, the feel, the thrust, the ethos. Then there are stunning new imprints, particularly those published by the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and the transatlantic-style magazines. And then there are those newspaper travel sections that are now so painfully paltry, stabbed into virtual insignificance by the downturn in advertising when they once required an entire Sunday morning.

The biggest shock for your ten-year nap, however, would be the explosion of digital and online media. In 2008, the web was still somewhat remote, somewhat off-the-grid, somewhat daunting. iPhones were used for messaging and yes, engaging in conversations, but the app era had yet to fully dawn. The idea that a client would send out a tweet — not to mention that the President of the United States would habitually issue a torrent of over-morning-coffee tweets — would've been implausible, not to mention ridiculous.

All of us in the travel PR realm have du-

tifully adjusted to publishing's digital revolution, and indeed, have had to adapt to it, some with impassioned fervor. We've jumped on and off the Facebook phenomenon. We've jumped enthusiastically onto the Instagram bandwagon. We dig Pinterest. We've dabbled with Snapchat. We've been seduced by the influencers. Some of us have embraced Twitter, some of us have sneered, while others have embraced it and then thrown it in the trash. We've all been challenged by the "Millennials-are-the-target" spectacle, adopted it, sanctioned it, signed on to its promise. We court the major blogs, we win over the magazine's online versions, we do everything we possibly can to ensure our clients receive their due in this burgeoning digital world.

But while all this is happening, many in the media and social media are unaware of — or inevitably indifferent to — the skepticism of the client of a certain age (could be 25, could be 55, could be 85). So, while we may be thrilled with the wealth of fabulous online coverage, or a dozen Instagram posts viewed 50,000 times, let's not forget that as PR firms we survive by making our clients happy.

And, let's face it, we all have clients whose eyes glaze over at the word "online." What those glazing clients still want in 2018 is that big glossy article in that big glossy magazine to plunk onto their coffee table. And this has added another level to the challenge all of us face every day — and have always faced — the simple need to ensure the client's contentment. So, yes, it's

our job to persuade and convince the client that online, social and digital media are stupendously effective and should bring them business. And it's a task in which, I am sure, we are all engaged with varying degrees of success.

The bottom line remains, however, just as it was for your decade-long coma beginning in 2008, that print is unquestionably priority number-one for many clients. And it looks like it will remain that way for the foreseeable future.

The question is whether, in the travel sphere, digital and social media are replacing print or augmenting it. In my view, it's a mushrooming and increasingly meaningful addition, rather than spelling the death-knell of glossy print. Yes, undoubtedly, five years from now, fewer and fewer newspapers will have print editions. But there's every indication that the glossy travel and lifestyle media will still be around — albeit maybe with different names or formats — still ready for our clients to plunk proudly with a thud on the coffee table. And, especially in the luxury sphere in which my company mainly operates, the glossies will continue to pack phenomenal power to engage and persuade readers and — let's not forget the point of it all — to enhance our clients' bottom lines.

*Geoffrey Weill is President of New York-based agency WEILL. ○*



Geoffrey Weill

## How wellness is changing travel

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example, a business hotel whose clients regularly clear out on the weekends might fill guest rooms by hosting wellness-themed retreats from Thursday through Sunday. The iconic Gstaad Palace in Switzerland offers complimentary "woga," or winter yoga, for guests in its pool during those months, as well as the services of a Nike Pro trainer who offers custom workouts, including training for skiers.

In Glen Ellen, California in Sonoma Valley wine country, Gaige House + Ryokan recently relaunched with an Asian-inspired redesign that incorporates a number of mindful, wellness-inspired features, including a peaceful Sun Deck and Moon Deck

for quiet relaxation overlooking the property; a Meditation Deck with views of the garden and pool for quiet reflection or yoga practice; and information and locations for guests to dive into "forest bathing," a new trend for the mindful exploration of nature.

**Media outlets — from those focused on travel and markets, to those covering bridal, fashion and food — are hungry to cover destinations, properties and experiences that focus on healthy living.** As consumer demand for wellness has grown, we have seen a corresponding growth of wellness-focused offerings throughout our client base as well as interest from media covering luxury hospitality. As such, our agency is not only adapting to the needs of the market, but also adapting to meeting the

needs of the media. A few months ago, for instance, we brought a coach from Carillon Wellness Resort to lead a Pop-Up Spin Class at the downtown offices of a major media conglomerate in New York City. It was a big success, drawing editors and writers from onsite lifestyle and news publications and piquing interest that we hope will result in more extensive coverage of our client.

As the wave of wellness rolls on, public relations firms are well advised to hold on tight and enjoy the new opportunities that wellness stories, personalities and events can provide. It has been a great learning experience for us, our clients, and the media and we can't wait to see what happens next.

*Jennifer Hawkins is CEO and Founder of Hawkins International PR. ○*



# What hoteliers should know about mobile bookings

**Mobile is no longer a secondary source for communication and receiving information. Mobile technology continues to evolve and shape the customer journey, with most transactions now taking place primarily on mobile devices.**

By Lisa Ross

Switching between devices used to be commonplace. Travelers would often begin their journey on mobile but would switch to desktop or laptop to go through the customer journey and book travel. This shift is expected to grow exponentially going forward: A study conducted by TrekkSoft found that 82 percent of bookings were made through a tour or activity operator's own website, and of those bookings, almost half were made on mobile, gaining from 31 percent in 2016 and 49 percent in 2017, showing significant growth.

Additionally, new research from Google has found that almost the entire booking transaction now takes place on mobile. Google found that of all the digital interactions in which people engaged in researching and booking a trip, 87 percent of these moments happened on mobile.

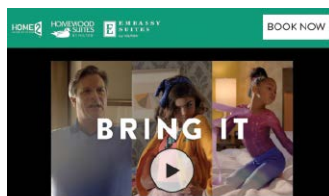
The increasing shift towards mobile means there's a new opportunity for hoteliers to engage with travelers in interesting and personalized ways pre-, during and post-trip, with the goal of creating emotional consumer connections that foster brand loyalty. With this in mind, here are three key strategies for mobile marketing that all hoteliers should know to maximize mobile booking and the customer journey.

**Make sure your website is optimized for mobile to ensure positive user experience.** Having a flashy, impressive website is not enough anymore. Hospitality companies must make sure to enhance the mobile user experience and optimize their mobile sites since that's where the majority of the customer journey is now taking place. Hoteliers should ensure they're emphasizing the most relevant and engaging parts of their sites on the mobile version.

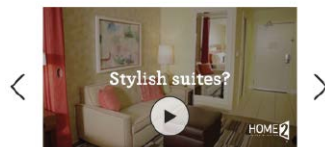
A large part of this involves tailoring your website content to ensure it's optimized for mobile viewing and browsing. For example, companies should emphasize quality visuals and eliminate heavy text because it won't appeal to mobile users. Any video content that lives on your site should be relevant, informative and optimized for mobile.

Another part of this equation is strengthening your local SEO so that your hotel shows on mobile search, as well as optimizing your website for key mobile search terms. It's now estimated that hotel mobile search queries are up 49 percent year over year, so it's crucial to ensure that your ho-

tel has strong local SEO to capture eyeballs. Marketers should also consider the importance of voice search and its growing influence on SEO and optimize their websites to follow a conversational tone and longer keywords that tend to characterize voice searches.



Once you see what our all-suites brands have to offer, you'll be ready to **BRING IT**



**Hilton All Suites' Bring It campaign is an example of a properly optimized mobile site, using mobile-friendly images, layouts and video content.**

**Strategic digital planning is necessary for staying in front of consumers.** With so much information coming through users' mobile devices on a regular basis, it's crucial hoteliers tailor their digital strategies to cut through this clutter and capture the target audience's attention. Social media is also important because it gives brands an opportunity to develop relationships and connect with customers when they're not traveling. The most successful digital marketing campaigns integrate both paid and organic strategies to engage consumers and strategically stay with them throughout their online travel journey.

When it comes to paid digital media, hoteliers should invest in strategies that leverage both search and social content. Effective local search ads on mobile can capture last-minute travel buys. With consumers now constantly connected via mobile, they are more flexible and likely to make last-minute booking decisions when traveling, which presents a huge opportunity for marketers to invest in mobile advertis-

ing to appear prominently in search results. Hospitality companies should also consider paid social buys to reach relevant targets with content that aligns with their brands' messages and goals.

An organic social media strategy is also key to capturing consumers' attention, and marketers should ensure that their social media platforms are robust, engaging, and well-thought out to capture a traveler's attention when they are in the mood to be inspired. Sharing images, experiences and smart travel content is necessary for staying in front of consumers.

**Create key partnerships with like-minded brands.** Strategic partnerships are an efficient way to establish new consumer relationships and enhance brand loyalty among existing guests. By partnering with other like-minded brands that are engaging with the same consumer, creating an emotional connection and sharing information becomes easier and in the end results in an experience that customers become more invested in. Brands can utilize the demographic information of its guests to determine which brands are the most appropriate for a strategic partnership, and then agree on how to integrate the activity via content creation, promotions, visuals, etc. into their overall marketing strategy.

For example, Embassy Suites by Hilton's Bring It! campaign strategically engages social influencers to get in front of specific different target audiences with a common overarching theme, taking advantage of space for families, extra stuff or just stretching out. Engaging with these different influencers to reach their networks involves using smart visual content that pairs travel opportunities with the brand's spacious suites. The key is using appealing images more than text to optimize the mobile experience. This not only earns consumer interest and trust but encourages them to browse on mobile and ultimately drive mobile bookings.

Now that the mobile journey is the main journey, travel brands are beginning to better understand user behavior and adapt their marketing strategies to align with travelers' mobile habits. By ensuring that marketers adhere to these three guidelines, travel campaigns will be more effective, engaging and successfully resonate with consumers in the digital marketplace.

*Lisa Ross is President and Co-Founder of rbb Communications. ○*



Lisa Ross

# A shift in storytelling

How emerging consumer trends, habits and preferences are impacting today's travel and hospitality marketing world.

By Nancy Friedman and Julie Freeman

**T**raveling — it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller,” said scholar and global traveler Ibn Battuta. As marketers specializing in travel and hospitality, we believe nothing can shape our view of the world like travel. Every day we tell stories and capture attention through vivid imagery that inspires people to see the world differently and then go experience it for themselves.

## A history of sensationalism

As an industry, we have a long-standing history of telling fantastic stories about far-off lands and mystical travel adventures. Travel has driven literature and poetry, influenced television and continually finds itself on the big screen. Certain destinations in travel have been successful in embracing these fantasies. Most recently, Tourism Ireland has received awards for campaigns tied to “Game of Thrones” and “Star Wars,” which were both filmed in the country. However, while there’s a growing appetite among U.S. travelers to explore more on vacation, their desires are grounded in something a little more genuine and real.

## Understanding traveler motivations

Today’s traveler has a growing desire to explore. According to MMGY Global’s 2017–2018 “Portrait of American Travelers” study, 78 percent of all active travelers say that they’re motivated by exploration when choosing their vacation. That’s an increase from 62 percent just five years ago.

We see this reflected in some of the

**bon appétit**

How Baja Locals Build the Ultimate Fish Taco



Culinary feature coverage recently secured for Los Cabos in *Bon Appétit*, *Endless Vacation*, *Esence*, *Hotels* and *Robb Report*, among others, further emphasizes the growing international recognition of the destination’s leading gastronomy and reinforces that travelers want to try new cuisines.

top-ranking desires and motivations that travelers seek when booking their trips: 73 percent want to experience different cultures; 70 percent want to try new cuisines; and 50 percent are interested in guided tours with exclusive access to local experiences.

The concept of traveling like a local is pervasive in tourism today. Yet, creating stories that connect with travelers must be rooted in understanding why this trend has come about.

There’s an inherent desire among today’s traveler to stake claim to new experiences by being one of the first to visit a new hotel, travel to a location that others may not have heard of or gain local access to activities that others have not. Sixty-four percent of travelers visited at least one new destination last year. And more than one-third of that group cited the desire to visit someplace off the beaten track as the reason for choosing that new location.



Highlighting off-the-beaten-path experiences in South Dakota like this *Nylon* feature about the first-ever Wild Gypsy Tour, an all-female motorcycle gang at Sturgis-Buffalo Chip, helped contribute to a 0.1 percent increase in visitation to 13.9 million visitors to South Dakota and a 1.2 increase in visitor spending to \$3.88 billion.

Perhaps this motivation is being driven by people’s connection to travel and self-identity: 41 percent of travelers say that the places they visit say a lot about who they are as a person. Or, maybe it’s as simple as bragging to others. After all, 40 percent of travelers say that they like using social media to post images from their travels, and 20 percent admit doing so to make their friends and family jealous.

## Storytelling today

As a result, the most influential travel sto-

ries today are not grand or sensational by nature. Yes, there will always be those who want the best of the best, who seek to check off their bucket lists or who plan their travel itineraries based on top user rankings and reviews. But, the stories that truly connect today are those that are new and undiscovered, hidden among the locals or perhaps just overlooked. After all, 75 percent of travelers are willing to try new things when on vacation, and 85 percent say that the memories they get from those experiences are what make the trip worth it.



Nancy Friedman



Julie Freeman

## The New York Times



Feature coverage in the *New York Times* shines a light on a relatively unheard-of town in southern Arkansas, El Dorado, and its effort to bring back its livelihood, lost after the 1920s oil boom, by turning to music and the arts to help in its revitalization.

## About “Portrait of American Travelers”

Now in its 28th 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 the evolution of brand and marketing strategy. The survey polled 2,902 U.S. adults who have taken at least one overnight trip of 75 miles or more from home during the previous 12 months. For more information, visit [www.mmgyglobal.com](http://www.mmgyglobal.com).

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



# Social media in the era of 5G PR

*O'Dwyer's met with Laura Davidson, President of LDPR, and their digital agency partner, Kim Zebor, Director of Social Media of Thin Pig Media, to discuss the present state and future of social media.*

**Q: Social media celebrates its 10th birthday this year. What's changed?**

**LD:** It's not a little kid anymore. Just like any other hyperactive ten-year-old, social media is moving ever faster, constantly picking up new skills and yes, even skinning its knees occasionally. And like a good caregiver, PR agencies must be vigilant, looking out both for new opportunities to engage and dangers to avoid.

In the beginning the social networks were just what they sound like, a place for friends to gather and share (Six Degrees, My Space, etc.). They connected people. Today, social media is still based on online communities but now it has grown up, left the eddy and joined the mainstream. In a single decade it has turned the telephone into a relic. Traditional media is running scared. And everyone you need to reach is right there waiting ... mostly for free. Of course, it's not just "social" any more. It's an immense marketplace where we go to do business, market products, promote brands, connect to current customers and foster new ones. We use it for CRM, advertising, growing databases and yes, word of mouth third-party endorsement.

**Q: In a nutshell, describe the different strengths/purposes of the top social players?**

**KZ:** Facebook is the aging giant in the room, with nearly two billion users. It can deliver extraordinary results if you have great short video content, or the ability to go live, or post personable videos. It's also a great advertising platform for reaching highly targeted individuals both on its site or on other sites as part of its audience network.

**Instagram** is the right choice if you have an eye-catching/visually arresting product. The emphasis is more on the catchy image than catchy copy. Use it to create visual "stories" to showcase live events or capture "right now" moments.

**Twitter's** strength is driving traffic to your website. 47 percent of people who visit a Twitter profile also visit the website linked to that profile. It also works well for customer service opportunities and event engagement.

**Snapchat** is the best way to engage the younger generation: 71 percent of its users are under 34 years old. While small businesses can find it difficult to gain traction, larger brands can leverage their advertising

budgets to reach the younger demo.

**Q: Why is social media so important in today's PR mix? What does it do that traditional PR can't?**

**KZ:** The data says it all. Almost half (49 percent, according to *AdWeek*) of today's consumers rely on product recommendations from influencers to inform their next purchase. That explains why a social media/influencer marketing program has morphed from an add-on to one of the most important tools in the marketing toolbox.

Social media's power in the PR mix stems from its virality. Messages spread through social media are like meteors flying through space. There is nothing to impede their reach, no circulation numbers, reader demographics, publication dates, or shelf lives to slow them down. They reach huge, often new and unintended audiences and they travel so fast they can have an immediate effect.

The messaging pushed out on a social media channel should align as closely as possible to the messaging pushed out for PR pitches and other marketing efforts.

**Q: Tell us about influencers. How do they fit in?**

**LD:** Influencers are just another branch on the media tree. As with the more traditional offshoots (journalists and editors), PR success depends on nurturing close, mutually beneficial relationships. In many cases, to engage with one influencer is to engage with many. They have their own networks and often specify others with whom they like to travel. An added bonus: sometimes they bring other brands into the marketing mix, creating interesting partnerships. For example, in a recent campaign for the Watch Hill Inn, our client in Rhode Island, an influencer helped LDPR involve the American clothing retailer, Anthropologie.

**Q: Can you give us a couple of examples of how LDPR works with influencers?**

**LD:** Our LDPR in-house social media team works closely with our affiliate partner Thin Pig Media to identify and measure influencer programs.

Our luxury luggage client, Briggs & Riley, needed content to launch and maintain their social media profiles, but didn't have the lifestyle assets to compete. So LDPR established a campaign surrounding modern business travelers (photographers, chefs, etc.) that would generate content/photography and video assets that Briggs & Riley

could use for their marketing and sales needs. We secured photographer James Relfdyer (@Jamesrelfdyer, 297,000 followers) to produce 15 stock images, in addition to his three posts on Instagram, that Briggs & Riley used for a year to promote the brand and reach new audiences.

Ocean House (Watch Hill, RI) wanted to generate lifestyle media coverage and attract the local community to come in and enjoy their F&B offerings. So, it partnered with the Champagne house, Veuve Clicquot, and launched an outdoor "Secret Garden" for the summer. To back up the initiative with real-time buzz, LDPR coordinated an influencer trip with local Insta-stars. The result: we reached millions of followers and the Ocean House sold enough Champagne to fill a swimming pool.

**Q: What social media measurements does LDPR use?**

**LD:** Historically that was the big complaint leveled against social media. It couldn't show concrete results. Now that's all changed. At LDPR we use a range of sophisticated metrics to determine ROI including:

**Engagement:** When an influencer travels to one of our clients, we track engagement on their posts (likes, comments, shares) and growth on the client's channels throughout the life of the campaign.

**Click-throughs:** Often we give influencers a click-through link to use (it can take the form of a Bitly link, or can be created in-house by the client). We then measure how many times the link was used and link conversion (how many times the link ended in a sale). For the latter, we work hand-in-hand with the in-house team.

**Hashtag impressions:** Using tracking tools from Rival IQ and Hashtracking, we are able to measure the impact of a hashtag (this is important, as many of our clients create a dedicated hashtag to stand out in the digital space). We measure both how and how many times the hashtag was used.

**Additional services:** While harder to quantify, this measurement is equally important. What else do influencers bring to



Laura Davidson



Kim Zebor

— Continued on next page

# Relationship-driven PR is more important than ever

Relationships are the backbone of all public relations efforts, and fostering and maintaining those relationships is more important now than ever in today's increasingly fast-moving media environment.

By Teresa Delaney and Nichole DiBenedetto

As everyone chases the “next, next” social channel or hottest influencer, it's important to remember that the foundation of any public relations effort — print, digital or social — is relationships.

In travel PR, even more so than other industries, relationships are critical to driving success at every level of a campaign. Whether it is the client/agency relationship or that between the PR professional and the journalist, the fundamentals of building trust and creating human connections should lay the framework for all endeavors.

We consistently underscore the importance of relationships with our team and work with our newest members to help develop their skills to become adept at building rapport with both clients and the media. Here's why.

## The client / agency bond

At its best, the connection between agency and client is absolutely seamless. The agency becomes an extension of the company. We act as external team members that live and breathe the client's culture, infusing it into every aspect of our public relations effort. This type of strong understanding grows from a constant flow of information and open, two-way communication.

Beyond the schedule of monthly conference calls, there should be ad hoc discussions as relevant topics arise and before key decisions are made that will have an impact on PR. Timing here is, obviously, critical. Being continually informed translates into having the time to properly plan and execute a well thought out media strategy, thus ensuring success.

As an extreme example, we had a client who called us almost daily on his drive to the office while he sat in Los Angeles traffic. On these morning drive-time chats, he discussed his plans and ideas with us, both the big picture and the small details. In return, we gave him our thoughts from a PR and marketing perspective. This casual and familiar style between us belied a true brilliance. It meant we always knew what was on the horizon, and it informed our thinking and every media interaction we had on his behalf. The end result was an intimate knowledge of his company, his goals and future plans. We could literally get in his head and think like this CEO. This made us incredibly successful when we pitched him as a subject matter expert enabling us to land him interviews and placements in highly

sought-after media outlets.

What this client understood, more than most, is the competitive edge that's gained from a strong relationship and the subtle nuances we picked up from our conversations. Quite often, this was the tipping point needed when pitching him and his company in a cluttered marketplace.

## A media / agency symbiosis

The relationships we develop with journalists are some of the most valuable we have. As PR pros, we cherish and nurture the ones we've established, while constantly working to expand our networks. For those of us who've been in the industry at length, we've witnessed first-hand the editorial assistant we met in our 20s rise to the top of the masthead at an influential outlet in their 40's. And, that connection is as significant as discovering a freelancer that contributes to a magazine that's at the top of your client's wish list, and then reaching out to form a new bond.

The approach we cultivate with our publicists is to go beyond one-way pitching and a continual flurry of press releases. We want our team to become a trusted media resources and teach them that it's about being responsive, communicating honestly and gaining a grasp on the writer's particular style, personal likes and preferred topics. We remind them that journalists are bombarded daily by someone just like us, sitting behind a computer, sending pitches in the same way we are. So, when journalists find PR people who have done right by them, they become a reliable, trusted source whom they will come back to when it's time to bounce story ideas or validate trends.

These are the types of relationships that cut through the clutter. When asked how many emails they receive a day, most journalists will respond flatly: “hundreds.” So, it's not surprising that some of our best-crafted pitches may never even receive a glance. However, when trust has been established, they'll open it, read it and usually respond, even if it's brief. They do so because they know that the person sending the email has proven themselves and, perhaps most importantly, not wasted their time.

This may seem like a back-to-basics approach, too simple for today's ever-changing media landscape. But that's precisely why it's critical. In every aspect of life, we rely on those we trust to help us navigate and point us in the right direction.

Our suggestion? Step away from your computer and build authentic relationships with your clients and your journalists. Remember that a simple, endearing gesture can go a long way, such as remembering birthdays, special anniversaries, and the names of their loved ones. Send thank you notes (handwritten is even better) and flowers. Read a journalist's article and tell them how you liked it, even when your client is not mentioned. Pick up the phone and call that writer you've been cultivating a relationship

with on email or better yet, meet them for a coffee. Sometimes you need to make it less about the work and more about the relationship. It will set you apart from the rest.

While it's easy to get caught up in the allure of new media and following the hottest social influencers, the basic principles of public relations don't fall away. The most basic of all is fostering and maintaining relationships and it is more important than ever as the world moves at increasingly faster speed.

*Teresa Delaney and Nichole DiBenedetto are Principals of D&D PR. ○*



Teresa Delaney



Nichole DiBenedetto

## Social media in the 5G PR era

Continued from page 18

the table? It might be a partnership. They might host an event or workshop designed to attract guests. Or they might provide image assets for future social media and marketing use.

**Q: Give us three predictions for the future.**

**KZ:** Consumers will demand high levels of customer service on social media platforms with quick responses. The number of mobile phone users in the world will pass the five billion mark by 2019. With more and more people using mobile phones, companies will have to have excellent mobile experiences. Micro-influencers will grow in importance. Why? Less expensive and more engaged/targeted audiences. ○



# Travel and the transformation economy

How travelers are shifting away from memorable vacations to transformative experiences that provide new perspectives and produce an emotional and psychological impact.

By Kerry Anne Watson

**A**mong our many roles as counselors, strategists, marketers — and as the occasional message contortionists for clients — PR professionals representing travel brands maintain the pulse of consumer behavior and how it affects global destinations, hotels, resorts and travel partners. And though we have yet to reach the halfway point of the year, our agency is prepared to proclaim 2018 as the year of transformational travel.

While the desire for experiential travel remains alive and well, the trend has moved toward travel that has a greater impact on the lives of the traveler than simply creating indelible memories. In January, Skift highlighted this shift as a tipping point in its annual travel industry trends forecast, “Personal Fulfillment is the New Ultimate Luxury.” As more and more consumers seek travel experiences for a personal evolution, travel brands are keeping the pace by developing programming and amenities to meet them upon arrival.

This goes beyond the desire for experiences just for the sake of the experience. Travelers — especially the affluent — seek an emotional and psychological transformation as a result of the travel experience. The “personal improvement” trend has been accelerating since at least 2015, with 84 percent of Boomers and 94 percent of Millennials making personal improvement commitments, including online courses, webinars, apps and video classes, according to *Forbes*. From a macro-trend perspective, this is a direct result of consumers feeling hesitant about the chaotic world we’re currently living in: divisive politics, shaky economy, global terrorism. This world contributes to consumers’ sense of unease. And consumers are self-medicating through travel.

The most transformative experiences help consumers learn something new and gain a new perspective on their lives. In a recent survey, nearly 40 percent of affluent U.S. travelers noted that food, arts and wellness were key elements that led to a transformative vacation. We’re seeing “wellness” blossom into multidimensional experiences designed to elevate travelers to be at their personal best. From Bhutan’s “Six Senses Discovery Retreat” to Survivor-style trips in the Amazon with physical and personal challeng-

es, to even Ayahuasca and cannabis-based tourism, consumers are demanding transformative experiences that use the power of epic storylines, where the traveler is the “pilgrim in an immersive story,” according to the Skift forecast.

Luxury travelers are seeking more a remote and locally-cultural feel to their travel experience. According to March consumer research from Iconoculture, non-traditional stays are increasing across the board: nature lodges are up 700 percent, ryokans up 600 percent, yurts 155 percent and even RV/campers are up 133 percent. An Estonian-based travel company is creating pre-fabricated, temporary accommodation hotel rooms. All provide examples of the consumer need for a different type of travel, one that will challenge the boundaries of what they usually expect or need. Hotels and resorts will be smart to grasp this concept and comply.



**The Zimmerman Agency is PR firm of record for Park City, Utah’s tourism development agency, Visit Park City.**

Imagination is another facet of transformative travel emerging in destination marketing. Using the tagline “Only Slightly Exaggerated,” the state of Oregon taps into the concept of authenticity through an exaggerated imagination. Knowing that

destination marketing has a habit of selectively portraying only the most attractive part of the destination, Oregon goes over the top to stir curiosity and invite consumers to step into a world where they can be transformed. For those of us working in travel public relations, this is an amazing opportunity and creative palette for transformational — and, yes, fun — ideas.

The concept is now apparent in destination weddings. The Zimmerman Agency has done a considerable amount of romance and bridal work with exclusive resort clients around the world. We’ve witnessed transformative experiences for destination weddings using a distinct balance of local culture and personalized experience, as these weddings shift away from formal occasions to become truly reflective of the unique culture of the destination and personalities of the couples. It is a growing trend that is picking up momentum as the more customized and personal nature of the experience meets every criterion for transformational travel.

Traveler imagination can also be fueled in the planning process for vacations, once the technology around virtual reality is sophisticated enough to get us there. To date, brands haven’t been able to hold consumer attention beyond the initial “wow” factor, but the technology is tailor-made to give consumers a taste of transformation, even if they’re just sitting in their living rooms. Marriott’s VRoom Service is an early example of a hotel brand using this technology to entice consumers desire for something bigger than just an experience.

We view transformational travel as a fresh way to provide creative solutions for hospitality brands. Public relations is a rich proving ground for differentiating messages that enable potential guests and visitors to; create an identity through their travel experiences; enjoy transformative experiences that enrich them culturally, educationally and spiritually, and; find purpose and meaning in their travel.

Kerry Anne Watson is President at The Zimmerman Agency. ●



Kerry Anne Watson

Intelligence + passion + style +  
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utter lack of bullshit = 23 years of  
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# O'Dwyer's guide to TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR



**CIIC Director Amy Sedeño on the road in Panama with Barbados Tourism officials to launch new service with Copa Airlines.**

## 5W PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Ronn D. Torossian**, President & CEO

**Dara Busch, Matthew Caiola**, Executive Vice Presidents

Since 2003, New York City-based 5W Public Relations (5WPR) has worked with widely known and emerging brands, corporations and high-profile individuals. Our practice areas include Consumer Products & Brands, Food & Beverage, Health & Wellness, Beauty, Apparel & Accessories, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Entertainment & Sports, Corporate, Technology, Public Affairs & Government Relations, Nonprofit, Crisis Communications, Events and Digital & Social Media. We have a 360-degree approach to PR, social media, branding and digital marketing that delivers game-changing results to our clients.

Our 150 tenacious and creative communications practitioners develop and execute creative campaigns that connect our clients with their target audiences in memorable ways. Every aspect of our programs is designed to impact

our clients' bottom line, bringing leading businesses a resourceful, bold and results-driven approach to communication.

Clients include: AirHelp, Bowlmor AMF, Camp Bow Wow, CheapOAir.com, Duane Reade, El Cid Resorts, Gray Line New York, Gulliver's Gate, JetSmarter, Loews Hotels, McDonald's, Millennium Hotels, Patina Restaurant Group and Wendy Williams, Inc.

## BERK COMMUNICATIONS

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**Ron Berkowitz**, CEO and Founder  
**Marisa Carstens**, Senior Vice President  
**Brenda Fuster**, Senior Director, Travel & Hospitality

Berk Communications is a full-service public relations firm specializing in the travel and hospitality, food and beverage, sports and entertainment, and lifestyle industries. We pride ourselves in understanding the ever-changing media landscape and creating strategic, results-driven campaigns that speak to our clients' audiences. Berk isn't a conventional travel shop. Our strategists go beyond traditional media relations and storytelling to weave in influencers and celebrities into our programs.

We constantly study today's travelers to understand their triggers and find memorable ways to integrate our clients into their conversations.

Our travel clients consist of some of the world's most dynamic destinations, such as the Israel Ministry of Tourism, as well as iconic hotel brands including Brisas Group in Mexico, Baros Resort in the Maldives, Adriatic Luxury Hotel Group in Croatia and the Meatpacking District in New York. Berk is a division of MWWPR, one of the top leading independent public relations agencies.

## BLAZE

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**Matt Kovacs**, President

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

Clients include: AmaWaterways, Great Mall, Marriott Hotels, Ontario Mills, Outlets at Orange and Santa Barbara Airport.

## CAROLYN IZZO INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS (CIIC)

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**Carolyn Izzo-Feldman**, President & Chief Strategist  
**Patricia Fahie**, Executive Vice President  
**Amy Sedeño**, Director

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 22 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, CIIC is an esteemed member of LATAM PR and is a Certified Women's Business Enterprise by WBENC. For more information or to inquire about new business opportunities, please contact 845/358-3920 x11 or visit us online at [www.ciicnews.com](http://www.ciicnews.com).

## D & D PR

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**Teresa Delaney, Nichole DiBenedetto**, Partners

Based in New York City, D&D PR specializes in luxury travel, hospitality and lifestyle and is led by principals — Nichole DiBenedetto and Teresa Delaney — who have more than 40 years of combined experience in lifestyle and hospitality marketing.

Passionate about telling our clients' individual stories, the agency was born from a deep love of travel and personal curiosity of global exploration. From hotels and resorts to independent brands and destinations, each of our clients have a distinct tale to tell, inspiring us to be fervent storytellers. The D&D PR team gets a thrill from placing coverage in the most sought-after media and celebrating every success along with our clients. We take nothing for granted in the ever-changing world of travel and media. This is why we partner with our clients. We take the time to immerse ourselves in their world and to discover first-hand the unique experiences they offer, so we can communicate their message with authentic enthusiasm.

From print to broadcast, blog-





**After devastating wildfires, DCI worked with Visit California to create a Thanksgiving benefit dinner featuring a 500-foot-long table. The effort garnered media results world-wide, raised \$150,000 to support recovery efforts and encouraged visitation to Northern California's wine country.**

gers to social media influencers, no two client's needs are alike, which is why each client receives a tailored approach to their programs. Supported by a strong team, the agency's partners oversee client campaigns, helping to curate the important details and respond directly to individual needs. We choose our partners carefully, protect their brands vehemently and tell their stories passionately. This level of commitment is what continues to stoke our creative fire and drive D&D PR to push ourselves and our team to exceed expectations.

Clients: Castadiva Resort & Spa, Cox & Kings, Discover Your Italy, Forte Village Sardinia, Grand Fiesta Americana Coral Beach Cancun, Mahogany Bay Resort & Beach Club, Navigo 360 and Saba Tourist Bureau.

## DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL (DCI)

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**Karyl Leigh Barnes**, President,  
Tourism Practice  
**Daniella Middleton**, Vice  
President, Digital  
**Andrew Levine**, Chairman

One Agency. Two Specialized Practice Areas. Established in 1960, Development Counselors International (DCI) focuses exclusively on economic development and tourism marketing. During the last half century, we have worked with more than 500 cities, regions, states, provinces and countries to help them attract business investment, visitors and talent. Our Tourism Practice partners with destinations to increase leisure, corporate and association visitor arrivals and spending. How? By winning the support of key influencers — media, digital influencers, meeting planners and the travel trade. Our goal always? Combine smart strategy with the right tactics to deliver powerful results. DCI's work has been recognized annually by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, achieving Best In Show and Platinum awards. DCI is globally connected through TAAN Worldwide, a network of 46 agencies in 29 countries.

## DECKER/ROYAL

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**Cathleen Decker**, Principal  
**Stacy Royal**, Principal

Decker/Royal connects people to the places special enough for them to visit. Founded by industry veterans, Cathleen Decker and Stacy Royal, the company specializes in merging the best of traditional PR tactics with today's evolving platforms to create programs with a singular purpose: measurable results.

Our rich programs keep clients in the conversation wherever it lives — in the digital space, in print or on-air that seamlessly integrates and enhance clients' overall marketing objectives. We know that working as part of a team — from in-house PR and stakeholders to other agencies, is how goals are reached and we never stand on ceremony. We're all about rolling up our sleeves to get the job done.

Award-winning Decker/Royal represents a diverse stable of clients including among others, Reno Tahoe, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection, Trafalgar and Sandals Resorts International. New clients this year include destination spa Royal Champagne, the Villas at Le Barthélemy and Abu Dhabi.

## ELEVEN SIX PUBLIC RELATIONS

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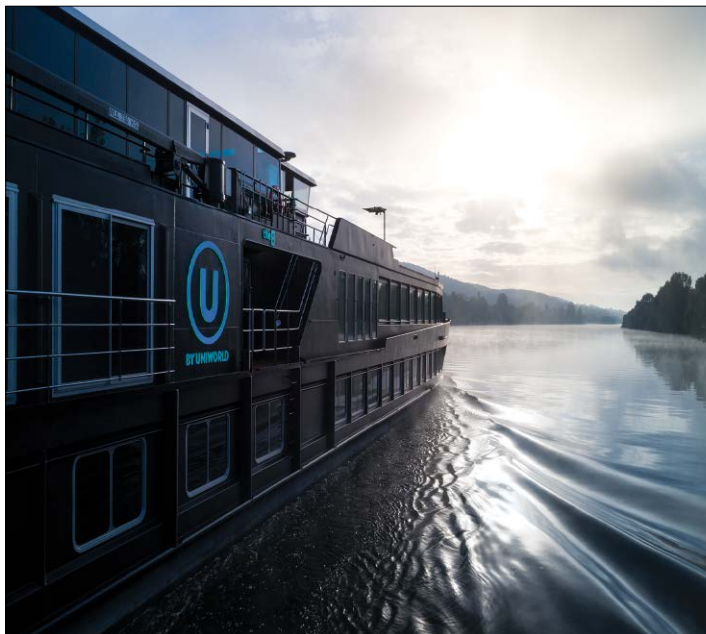
**Katie Barr Cornish**, Principal

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 push the creativity envelope, always aiming to create the trends and not just stay ahead of them. 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

— Continued on page 24



**Decker/Royal launched U by Uniworld, the first river cruise aimed at a new generation of adult travelers that included widespread periodical coverage, an appearance on ABC's The Bachelor, an extensive influencer campaign and brand partnerships.**



## ELEVEN SIX PUBLIC RELATIONS

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impact the bottom line.

Over the past year Eleven Six has handled the official grand opening of Andaz Mayakoba Resort Riviera Maya as well as the Institute for Contemporary Design in Richmond (Virginia), worked with the Australia Zoo on Steve Irwin's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and signed on new clients such as Kimpton Hotels + Restaurants' three New York City properties, luxury travel company Red Savannah, The Ritz-Carlton New York, Westchester and Red Frog Beach Island Resort & Spa in Panama. Additional clients include: Andaz Mayakoba Resort Riviera Maya, Cavit Wines, Hyatt Centric Times Square, Remote Lands, Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas, Tourism & Events Queensland and Visit Richmond.

## EVINS COMMUNICATIONS

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**David Harrison**, Senior Vice President/Director, Digital Content & Social Communications Practice Group  
**Drew Tybus**, Vice President/Director, Food, Spirits & Wine Practice Group  
**Matthew Berritt**, Vice President/Director, Lifestyle Group Practice & Celebrity/Influencer Programming  
**Stephanie Preston**, Senior Director, Travel & Hospitality Group Practice

EVINS architects and builds brands, and transforms brand and business potential into brand and business performance. The Agency facilitates connecting brands and audiences, helps to define a brand's essence and create emotive experiences that foster engagement between brands and constituents, as well as catalyzes and optimizes how brands and their publics converse and interrelate. EVINS creates programs that



**The Eleven Six team officially launched the Andaz brand's first Mexican property, Andaz Mayakoba Resort Riviera Maya, with a star-studded event featuring traditional Mexican celebration rituals including authentic costumes, fire and goddess dancers, acrobats and live music as well as glow body painting, fireworks, a tacology exhibition and an array of regional cuisine and cocktails.**

engender brand trial and experience; leverage brand experience to foment engagement, conversation and storytelling; catalyze brand engagement to optimize brand advocacy and mind-share; and transform brand mind-share into brand market-share. The Agency is at the point where insight meets execution and bridges 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 its Travel & Hospitality Group, EVINS encompasses three other practice groups: Digital Content & Integration; Food, Spirits & Wine and Lifestyle. The Agency offers 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.

In February 2018, EVINS and Sheila Donnelly & Associates (SDA / [www.sheiladonnelly.com](http://www.sheiladonnelly.com)), a renowned travel and lifestyle public relations, media relations and communications firm based in Honolulu, formed a strategic partnership to provide clients with an unparalleled and accretive breadth, depth and scope of capabilities, experience, expertise and strategic

advisory services. Both EVINS and SDA were founded in 1987, are celebrating their 31st year in business, and maintain long-term client relationships, some of which span more than two decades. EVINS and SDA are brand and business strategists that utilize media and influencer engagement, partnerships and creative programming, content and thought leadership, to make a consequential, profound and transcendent contribution to the development, growth and success of a client's business.

Together, EVINS and SDA provide clients with accretive and unparalleled luxury travel and hospitality experience and expertise, as well as a breadth, depth and scope of integrated luxury travel and hospitality services that redefine and transform the traditional agency/client relationship. Both firms also offer clients advice on corporate and executive reputation management; issues and crisis management; cause-related marketing; and affinity programs.

## FAHLGREN MORTINE

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

As a communications-led integrated agency, Fahlgren Mortine works with clients in 29 states, and is recognized as a firm that gets results. The agency has been recognized with dozens of national PR and tourism awards for enhancing brand perception, including Silver and Bronze Anvils from PRSA, Mercury and Destiny Awards from the U.S. Travel Association and many others. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Fahlgren Mortine has locations in Colorado, Florida, Idaho, New York, South Carolina and West Virginia. Travel industry client experience includes Office of TourismOhio; Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB; TravelNevada; Airstream; Niagara USA; Visit Sun Valley; North Dakota Department of Commerce/Tourism; and many other destinations, regions, hospitality properties and more.

## FINN PARTNERS

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

The Finn Partners Travel / Lifestyle Group expanded its global footprint in 2017 with the acquisition of The Brighter Group, a highly respected London-based PR and marketing firm, adding 22 travel experts and clients such as Belize, Dubai, Intrepid Travel, Jordan, Air Europa and South African Tourism. Debbie Flynn, founder & CEO of the Brighter Group, is now a managing partner in our Travel / Lifestyle group.

Our international team is unrivaled for the creativity, execution and commitment we bring to our clients, 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.

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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**Rick French**, Chairman & CEO  
**David Gwyn**, President / Principal  
**Natalie Best**, Executive Vice President / Director of Client Services / Principal  
**Leah Knepper**, Vice President & T&T Practice Lead

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the leading integrated marketing firm in the Southeast and one of the nation's 15 largest independent public relations, advertising and

digital media agencies. FWV is the only N.C.-headquartered public relations firm to earn Agency of the Year honors, with 19 nominations and 12 wins, including seven in the past 18 months. The firm is the winner of the *Bulldog Reporter* 2017 Stars of PR Awards, including the Grand Prize for Best PR Agency of 2017. FWV earned top honors for Midsize and Consumer PR Agency of the Year and was also named the country's Most Innovative Agency. In addition, the firm is the *Holmes Report* 2016 Consumer Agency of Year winner and is a 2018 Midsize Agency of the Year finalist.

Founded in April 1997 by Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV employs more than 100 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 boasts extensive destination marketing experience, specializing in lifestyle and leisure marketing and public relations. Current travel and tourism industry clients include Concord Hospitality Enterprises Company, Wilmington and Beaches CVB (Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach and Wilmington, N.C. and the Wilmington Convention Center), Greater Raleigh CVB, Tweetsie Railroad 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.

## HAWKINS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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**Jennifer Hawkins**, Founder/  
President  
**Corey Finjer Bennett**, COO

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, including AccorHotels, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, Dorchester Collection, La Compagnie, Seabourn Cruise Line, and Wilderness Safaris, among others.

## HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

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**Samantha Jacobs**, Founder & President  
**Michael Jacobs**, COO  
**Kate Wark**, Managing Partner

Hemsworth Communications is a full-service public relations agency that specializes in travel and hospitality companies, tourism destinations, restaurants, food/wine/spirits brands, and luxury lifestyle brands. Capabilities include brand strategy, media relations, promotions, social media, event planning, thought leadership and more.

With an impressive global reach, Hemsworth leverages its Passion. Insight. Connections. to surpass client expectations. The agency has been hired by companies large and small because of its track record for delivering outstanding results with a distinctively personal touch.

Ranked one of the country's fastest-growing agencies every year since its 2014 debut, Hemsworth has received numerous accolades including HSMIA Adrian Awards and American Business Awards.



**Hemsworth Communications launched the first-ever luxury hotel in space, Orion Span's Aurora Station, earlier this year. The agency generated more than 1,000 media placements around the world within 72 hours, including feature stories in Robb Report, Conde Nast Traveler, CNN Travel, Fast Company, Space.com, AFAR, World News Tonight with David Muir, BBC and more.**

— Continued on page 26



## HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

Continued from page 25

Founder Samantha Jacobs was named to *PR News*' Top Women in PR for 2017.

Clients include Air Partner, AmaWaterways, Best Western Hotels & Resorts, Coral Hospitality's Georgia State Parks & Lodges, Driftwood, Margaritaville Holdings, Massanutten Resort, Oasis Travel Network, Orion Span, Sonesta Fort Lauderdale, and others.

## HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

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

Hunter is an award-winning consumer products and services marketing communications firm with offices in New York City and London, and staff based across North America including Orlando, Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Toronto, as well as 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, hospitality, food and beverage, home and lifestyle, consumer services, health, wellness and beauty sectors.

From creating wanderlust for Wyndham Rewards members on social and digital channels, surprising and delighting tour-goers with a celebrity encounter during TripAdvisor Attraction's #1 Game of Thrones Tour in Northern Ireland, 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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J Public Relations is an international PR and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury lifestyle brands with offices in New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego and London. JPR is a trusted leader in media relations and brand strategy, trend forecasting, brand partnerships, influencer



**Jamie Sigler O'Grady and Sarah Evans, Partners at J Public Relations.**

relations, social media strategy and unparalleled media placements worldwide.

Established in 2005, the award-winning agency has consistently risen to become one of the world's fastest growing agencies in the luxury travel and hospitality spaces. JPR's global roster includes more than 125 hotels in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, New Zealand, Asia and more. JPR steadily garners and retains notable clients including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality and Vail Mountain Resorts, Grace Hotels and many individual Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

JPR is listed on the *Observer's* annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms. The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by *PR News* and "Agency of the Year" by *Bulldog Reporter* in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success. The agency has recently been featured in dedicated articles in *Inc. Magazine* online and *Forbes.com* as an innovator and gamechanger in travel PR and social media.

Sampling of clients: Adare Manor, Adventures by Disney (project work), Aulani, a Disney Spa & Resort (project work), Chateau du Grand-Lucé, Chewton Glen, Cliveden House, Discover Baja California, Four Seasons Resort Lana'i, Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Great Wolf Lodge, Gurney's Resorts - Montauk & Newport, Helena Bay, Hotel del Coronado, Iconic Luxury Brand, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, InterContinental, Washington DC — The Wharf, Lido House, L'Auberge de Sedona, Mountain Shadows, Perry Lane Hotel, Rancho La Puerta, Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, The Palms

and The Shore Club, The Resort at Pedregal.

## K. SUTHERLAND PR

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K. Sutherland PR is a full-service, boutique firm that offers a comprehensive and personal approach to modern public relations. Delivering 5-Star results for travel and tourism clients worldwide, the firm knows what it takes to promote any destination or resort. At the heart of K. Sutherland PR lies their public relations expertise, but their services expand beyond traditional PR, offering clients a holistic mix of strategic communications, social media, influencer marketing, content marketing and more. K. Sutherland PR maximizes exposure through extensive understanding, and because they are a boutique PR agency, are able to provide impactful public relations services at affordable prices.

## KTCPR

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



Hunter helped client, TripAdvisor Attractions and Kristian Nairn from *Game of Thrones*, recreate the memorable "Hold The Door" scene for unsuspecting tour goers on TripAdvisor's #1 *Game of Thrones* tour in Northern Ireland.

Continued on page 28





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Gloria Bohan Founder & CEO Omega World Travel & Godmother of Windstar's Star Legend  
and John Delaney, President of Windstar Cruises

Photo by Chris Owen for Windstar Cruises.

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## KTCPR

Continued from page 26

KTCpr is an award-winning boutique public relations, tourism consulting and crisis communications agency founded 28 years ago 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.

KTCpr has become renowned for responsiveness and going “that extra mile” to assist editors with travel stories, while helping to establish, define and amplify clients’ brand messaging. KTCpr’s expertise covers media relations, product launches, social media campaigns, marketing consultation, crisis communication, events, promotions, speech writing and brand management.

While KTCpr excels in the art of elevating clients’ brand recognition, the firm’s expertise in crisis management further sets it apart in the industry. KTCpr has tracked and coordinated media response to numerous hurricanes, developed communications to assure visitor confidence in response to reports of crime, Zika concerns, the SARS emergency, natural disasters and terrorist attacks, and consulted upon a variety of crisis situations on behalf of the governments and tourism stakeholders in the Caribbean, Mexico, China and Philippines.

KTCpr’s current client roster includes Aranui Cruises, Apple Vacations, April Travel Protection, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, Interval International, the Mango Bay Hotel Group, Pacific Delight Tours, Spice Island Beach Resort, Travel Impressions, Victoria Cruises, and Warwick Paradise Island - Bahamas.

## LANE

New York City | Portland | Seattle  
503/221-0480  
wendy@lanepr.com  
www.lanepr.com

**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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instagram.com/ldprtravel  
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**Laura Davidson**, President  
**Leslie Cohen**, Executive Vice President

LDPR is a highly driven and innovative travel and lifestyle PR agency with headquarters in New York City and a presence in Chicago, LA and San Francisco. 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 Thin Pig Media 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; Ab-

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

## LOU HAMMOND GROUP

900 Third Avenue  
New York, NY 10022  
212/308-8880  
lhg@louhammond.com  
www.louhammond.com

**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:

- 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 client retention rates serving destinations such as Norfolk, Providence, New Haven, Charleston and the state of Virginia for more than a decade

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

- Arranged more than 289 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
- Opened dedicated office in L.A., lead by a 15-year veteran, to



**LHG Founder and Chairman Lou Hammond.**

serve clients on the West Coast

- Continued to expand in-house services to include branding, creative and digital marketing

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

## MAGRINO

352 Park Avenue South, 6th Floor  
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212/957-3005  
Allyn.magrino@magrinopr.com  
magrinopr.com

**Allyn Magrino**, President & Chief Revenue Officer

Magrino celebrates its 26th year in business in 2018 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 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; Fontainebleau Miami Beach; The Ranch Malibu; the Duniway Portland; Martha Stewart Omnimedia/Sequential Brands; Whispering Angel; James Beard Awards; Hendrick's Gin and Moët Hennessy, to name a few.

Our Digital practice is dynamic and on the leading edge of this ever-changing field of marketing. We work with our Digital clients to craft, manage and execute a multi-pronged approach to their social needs. Campaigns include overarching social strategy, Influencer campaigns, events and trips, content curation and creation, and paid advertising support that produces measurable results.

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 — on their fans' feeds. Digital clients (all of which also work with Magrino for media relations and brand positioning) include Christie's International Real Estate; Grace Bay Club; Hunter Douglas; Chateau d'Esclans; Mouton Cadet, Tishman Speyer, and Mack-Cali.

In a world where substance is the true indicator of style, you can be assured that our work is driven from meaningful insights that rep-

resent the image, identity and intent of our brands and clients.

## MARDIKS PR

261 Madison Avenue, 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
646/283-5273  
www.mardikspr.com

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

Current clients include: Condor Airlines, Safari Pros, Thom-

as Cook Airlines UK, The Travel Foundation, Visit North Carolina, Visit San Jose and Visit Sarasota County.

## MFA MARKETING & PR (MISSY FARREN & ASSOCIATES)

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

**Missy Farren**, Founder & CEO  
**Samantha Lacher**, Vice President

Mfa is a full-service communications agency delivering sharp strategy and results that matter. A vast array of travel/tourism, culinary and hospitality clients benefit from a holistic approach to travel marketing that reaches consumers beyond the travel pages. Campaign strategies capitalize on trends and integrate earned and social media, spanning owned and influencer channels.

A true passion for travel drives success in various niches, including: culinary, Caribbean, adventure, ski and snow, family, romance, arts and culture, wellness, spa, wine and spirits, fitness and sports. Mfa 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 cri-

sis 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, In-trawest, Limelight Hotel, The Little Nell, 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, Replay Resorts / Yotel, The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New York, Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, Ski Utah, The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg, Squaw Valley, Twin Farms, Westin Hotels & Resorts and more.

## MYRIAD INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

an MMGY Global Company

360 Lexington Avenue, 10th floor  
New York, NY 10017  
212/219-7560  
www.myriaddestinations.com

**Al Merschen**, Partner  
**Julie Cuesta**, Senior Vice President, Destination Services

Myriad, an MMGY Global Company, specializes in international destination marketing. With an emphasis on destination representation, Myriad provides integrated services to destinations that want to reach the highly valued North American traveler. 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



Myriad worked with South Tryol to bring a taste of Northern Italy to their stakeholders during an event at New York City's Eataly.

— Continued on page 30



## MYRIAD INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

— Continued from page 29

companies, Myriad offers an in depth global perspective.

Clients include: Australia's Northern Territory, Dominica, Kenya, Macao, Melbourne Convention Bureau, Nicaragua, South Tryol, Papua New Guinea and Qatar.

### NJF

an MMGY Global Company

360 Lexington Avenue, 10th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
212/228-1500  
www.njfr.com

**Nancy Friedman**, Partner  
**Julie Freeman**, Managing Director  
**Lauren Kaufman**, Senior Vice President

At NJF, an MMGY Global company, we inspire people to go places. As marketers specializing solely in travel and hospitality, we help put travel brands on the map and navigate their narrative through innovative thinking, creativity and storytelling. 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 PR powerhouse and 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. Our integrated PR 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*®



**On behalf of client Visit Los Cabos, NJF has produced several large-scale events for media and travel agents, featuring tourism board executives, local hoteliers and top chefs and mixologists to bring the colors, tastes and sounds of Los Cabos to life and showcase the destination's diverse tourism offerings.**

annual research study. With offices in New York City, Kansas City, Los Angeles, London, Madrid, Orlando, Washington, D.C. and an international partner network, Travel Consul, we 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.

Client list includes: Angad Arts Hotel, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, Canyon Ranch, Cheap Caribbean, Enchantment Hotels, Eurail, Gansevoort Hotel Group, Harley-Davidson Museum, Hotel Vermont, Intrepid Travel, ITC Hotels, Lufthansa, Oceania Cruises, One Aldwych, Playa Hotels & Resorts, Pod Hotels, Proper Hotels, Regent Hotels, Rhode Island Tourism, South Dakota Tourism, St. Petersburg/Clearwater, The Asbury, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, The Bowery and Visit Los Cabos.

### PADILLA

Headquarters:  
1101 West River Parkway  
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Minneapolis, MN 55415  
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www.PadillaCo.com

**Greg Tarmin**, Executive Vice President

Padilla is a top 10 independent public relations and communication company comprised of 210 employee-owners. Padilla builds, grows and protects brands and

reputations worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds and the research authorities at SMS.

We don't just connect consumers with brands, we convert them into brand advocates. Padilla's marketing experts combine industry knowledge and consumer branding channel expertise to exceed client expectations and achieve results. We apply insightful ingenuity and creative tenacity to engage consumers and drive purchases in the areas of travel and tourism markets, consumer packaged goods, personal care and beauty, OTC, home products, branded/specialty foods, pet care and consumer education.

Clients in the travel and tourism sectors have included Air New Zealand, Cambria Hotels, Meet Minneapolis, Tru by Hilton, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and Visit Houston.

Padilla is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 143 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Make a connection at PadillaCo.com.

### PEPPERCOMM

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**Steve Cody**, Co-CEO & Co-Founder

**Ed Moed**, Co-CEO & Co-Founder  
**Ted Birkhahn**, Partner & President  
**Ann Barlow**, Partner & President, West Coast  
**Deborah Brown**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Jacqueline Kolek**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Maggie O'Neill**, Partner & Managing Director  
**Mike Friedin**, Chief Digital officer

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses customer insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including *The Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Midsize Agency of the Year. The agency has been listed as one of *Fortune's* 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

Services include Branding, Content Strategy & Development, Creative Services, Crisis Management, Digital Solutions, Experiential, Insights & Strategy, Licensing, Public Relations & Social Media and Research & Measurement.

For more information, visit [www.peppercomm.com](http://www.peppercomm.com).

### RBB COMMUNICATIONS

355 Alhambra Circle, Suite 800  
Miami, FL 33134  
305/448-7450  
www.rbbcommunications.com

**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 Agency of the Year. As Champion of Breakout Brands, rbb inspires companies with insights on creating customer passion to increase sales. Whether it's an in-market activation, multi-city media tour or digital marketing campaign, developing emotional connections to

target audiences is always our goal. rbb's Travel Practice develops breakout campaigns for hotel and cruise industry clients that spark new conversations and drive meaningful business results. Our deep hospitality experience comes from working across industry segments with global hotel brands, boutique resorts and developers to airlines, cruise lines and OTAs. From gaining share of voice, increasing bookings, enhancing reputations or all the above, rbb gets clients there faster and smarter.

rbb's recent "Seekender" campaign with client Hampton by Hilton earned every major industry award, including a Silver Anvil and Platinum Adrian. Initial program results showed the Seekender microsite drove a 226 percent jump in site visits. The campaign reached 64 million potential travelers, and significantly increased online mentions of Hampton, across all channels. Success metrics like these is why AMResorts, DHL Express, Hilton, Virgin Voyages and others choose rbb as their communications partner.

Specialty practices include consumer, entertainment, food, health, real estate and more. rbb's family of brands offers media relations, digital marketing, influencer engagement, creative/advertising and crisis management. With offices in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, New Jersey and Los Angeles, the firm also has international reach across 50 countries through its partnership in PROI Worldwide, the largest global network of communications agencies.

## TJM COMMUNICATIONS

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www.tjmcommunications.com

**Treva J. Marshall**, President

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

Since 2001, the agency has serviced international and domestic clients from its Orlando, Florida location and is a proud recipient of 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 inno-



**rbb Communications' VP Maite Velez-Couto (center-right) onstage at HSMIA Adrian Awards accepting Platinum for Best PR program, "Seekender," along with client from Hampton by Hilton.**

vation, 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, Westgate Park City Resort & Spa, Westgate Cocoa Beach Resort, along with other noted hotels, resorts and tourist attractions.

## TURNER

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www.turnerpr.com

**Christine Turner**, President  
**Mariana DiMartino**, Executive Vice President  
**Angela Berardino**, CSO  
**Leslie Rummel**, Senior Vice President

TURNER is an industry leading, communications agency specializing in travel and lifestyle brands. We partner with the world's best hotel, resort, destination, fashion, wellness and outdoor brands to help define their stories, and to share them far and wide.

TURNER lives and breathes our clients' cultures; our approach to integrated public relations, digital, content, and social media campaigns delivers bottom-line impact through powerful media exposure, influencer programs, brand partner-

ships and consumer engagement. With offices in New York, Chicago, Miami, Denver and Los Angeles, to best service our worldwide clients, the TURNER team works hard, gets results and gives back.

## WEBER SHANDWICK

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

**Alice Diaz**, Executive Vice President  
adiaz@webershandwick.com

The Weber Shandwick Travel & Lifestyle practice is the leading specialist in travel and tourism public relations. Our work consistently produces some of the biggest initiatives in the travel industry, garnering widespread attention, praise and accolades. Whether we are eclipsing the Great American Eclipse by charting a course to totality with Bonnie Tyler and Royal

Caribbean, making Mexico City a must-visit destination or driving year-round awareness for The Bahamas, we create programs that blend the right mix of paid, owned and earned results that stand out.

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. We specialize in tapping into cultural moments to influence through innovative storytelling, activations and compelling content.

Our deep travel expertise is complemented by an array of agency resources representing a variety of skillsets — strategists, creatives, media mavens, influencer specialists — that allow us to build teams that work in dynamic unison to deliver business results in a vastly changed media marketplace.

We inspire. We protect. We incite. We shape ideas to move travel and lifestyle businesses forward. And above all, we are committed to be "engaging always."

## WEILL

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www.geoffreyweill.com

**Geoffrey Weill**, President  
**Ann-Rebecca Laschever**, Executive Vice President  
**Mark Liebermann**, Senior Vice President

Continued on page 32



**Geoffrey Weill, President, and Ann-Rebecca Laschever EVP, of Geoffrey Weill Associates, stand with winners of a trip to London and The Milestone Hotel and Residences as part of a TODAY SHOW contest covering the Royal Wedding.**



## WEILL

Continued from page 31

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

Of our 30+ clients, more than 60% have been with us for more than 5 years, and 25% for more than ten. Clients don't stay if agencies don't produce and we are proud of our rate of customer retention. We also shy away from open-to-the-world RFPs — almost every client has hired us because of word-of-mouth and personal recommendation. Now that the days of campaigns limited to press-releases and press-tours are long over, we specialize in across-the-spectrum communications, ensuring every client's messages are transmitted via all print, electronic, broadcast, digital, influencer and social media. For several clients, we also handle their UK public relations.

More than half our clients are family-owned, including such iconic hotels as The Hassler Roma; the Baur au Lac in Zurich; The Royal Portfolio, South Africa; Soneva resorts in Thailand and the Maldives, Aqua Expeditions in Peru and Asia; Inkaterra in Peru; the Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen; Monastero Santa Rosa in Amalfi; the Regina Isabella in Ischia and Ashford Castle in Ireland & The Milestone in London, both

curated by Bea Tollman of Red Carnation; London Perfect and Paris Perfect; and Boston-based Adventure Women.

Clients recently coming under the WEILL spell include San Diego-based Classic Journeys; L'Heure Bleue Palais in Essaouira, Morocco; Medjet, Ovolo Hotels in Hong Kong and Australia; Relais Bernard Loiseau in Burgundy and England's long awaited Heckfield Place country-house hotel.

To celebrate the Royal Wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, WEILL engineered an on-air contest on NBC's TODAY show, bringing winners to London's Milestone Hotel which is situated across from Kensington Palace, home of the happy couple.

## WINGER MARKETING

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Chicago, IL 60602  
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info@wingermarketing.com  
www.wingermarketing.com

**Karolyn Raphael**, President  
**Alisa Bay**, PR Director  
**Maeve McNaughton**, Travel PR Director

Winger Marketing is a full-service, award-winning marketing agency with a focus on public relations. For more than 30 years, we have successfully worked with businesses in the travel and hospitality industry, non-profits and middle-market clients to meet their business goals through inspired public relations and integrated marketing campaigns. Expansive industry relationships and long-term partnerships with our clients



Senior team from The Zimmerman Agency includes (L to R): Kerry Anne Watson, Amanda Lewis, Carrie Zimmerman, Anna Peterson, Ivette Faulkner, Michelle Kelly.

contribute to our continuous success. Our custom marketing and PR solutions for businesses allow us to scale a marketing and PR program that is right for your company.

## ZAPWATER COMMUNICATIONS

118 North Peoria  
4th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60607  
312/943-0333  
www.zapwater.com

**David Zapata**, President & Founder  
**Jennifer Lake**, Senior Vice President

Zapwater Communications is a strategic communications 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 120+ industry awards for excellence many for our travel and destination clients.

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.

Our clients include a curated mix of destinations, hotels & re-

sorts and airlines including Visit Finland, Finnair, National Tourism Office of Serbia, La Paz Tourism, Fairmont Mayakoba, CASA Kimberly, Pacifica Hotels, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Glenapp Castle, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort and Casino, Coco Prive Private Island and La Sultana Signature Hotels.

## THE ZIMMERMAN AGENCY

1821 Miccosukee Commons  
Tallahassee, FL 32308  
850/668-2222  
www.zimmerman.com

**Carrie Zimmerman**, Founder/CEO  
**Kerry Anne Watson**, President

For more than three decades The Zimmerman Agency has been among the leading hospitality and travel public relations firms in North America. Today, the firm offers a highly creative and contemporary approach to public relations that includes the support of full-service social media, a 360-degree approach to digital channels, and proprietary analytics. The Zimmerman Agency teams employ a signature WOW! level of creativity, strategy and technology to deliver relevant and timely communications for public relations and social media clients. The firm generates measurable results through public relations for extraordinary travel clients including the country of Aruba, Park City, Utah, the southern Outer Banks, Hard Rock Hotels, the Kessler Collection and award-winning resorts and hotels from Hawaii's Waikoloa Village to Montego Bay, Jamaica. The firm's consumer division represent major brands including Cooper Tires, Firehouse Subs, Pilot Pens and Wonder Bread. ○



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

# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## TRAVEL AND TOURISM PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2017)	Firm	Net Fees (2017)
1. <b>Edelman</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$44,966,000</b>	23. <b>North 6th Agency, Inc.</b> , New York, NY	<b>\$481,431</b>
2. <b>Zimmerman Agency</b> , Tallahassee, FL	<b>11,700,000</b>	24. <b>MP&amp;F Strategic Communications</b> , Nashville, TN	<b>413,437</b>
3. <b>APCO Worldwide</b> , Washington, DC	<b>10,260,700</b>	25. <b>Hunter PR</b> , New York, NY	<b>400,000</b>
4. <b>Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI)</b> , New York, NY	<b>9,953,941</b>	26. <b>LaunchSquad</b> , San Francisco, CA	<b>220,000</b>
5. <b>NJF, an MMGY Global company</b> , New York, NY	<b>9,279,419</b>	27. <b>IW Group, Inc.</b> , West Hollywood, CA	<b>212,000</b>
6. <b>J Public Relations</b> , New York, NY	<b>8,493,561</b>	28. <b>Marketing Maven Public Relations</b> , Camarillo, CA	<b>211,745</b>
7. <b>Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company</b> , New York, NY	<b>7,963,228</b>	29. <b>Butler Associates, LLC</b> , New York, NY	<b>181,776</b>
8. <b>Lou Hammond Group</b> , New York, NY	<b>7,499,273</b>	30. <b>The Buzz Agency</b> , Delray Beach, FL	<b>165,493</b>
9. <b>Finn Partners</b> , New York, NY	<b>6,875,000</b>	31. <b>Bellmont Partners</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>151,857</b>
10. <b>Hawkins Int'l Public Relations</b> , New York, NY	<b>5,007,837</b>	32. <b>Gregory FCA</b> , Ardmore, PA	<b>151,000</b>
11. <b>French   West   Vaughan</b> , Raleigh, NC	<b>5,006,414</b>	33. <b>Stuntman PR</b> , New York, NY	<b>136,230</b>
12. <b>Quinn</b> , New York, NY	<b>4,388,357</b>	34. <b>BoardroomPR</b> , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	<b>100,000</b>
13. <b>Jackson Spalding</b> , Atlanta, GA	<b>3,768,638</b>	35. <b>Public Communications Inc.</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>98,000</b>
14. <b>rbb Communications</b> , Miami, FL	<b>3,033,573</b>	36. <b>Fish Consulting</b> , Hollywood, FL	<b>72,000</b>
15. <b>Coyne PR</b> , Parsippany, NJ	<b>2,700,000</b>	37. <b>BLAZE</b> , Santa Monica, CA	<b>38,520</b>
16. <b>5W Public Relations</b> , New York, NY	<b>2,500,000</b>	38. <b>Maccabee</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>37,485</b>
17. <b>Hemsworth Communications</b> , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	<b>1,448,299</b>	39. <b>Singer Associates, Inc.</b> , San Francisco, CA	<b>33,726</b>
18. <b>Padilla</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>1,332,934</b>	40. <b>The Power Group</b> , Dallas, TX	<b>21,550</b>
19. <b>360PR+</b> , Boston, MA	<b>1,251,553</b>	41. <b>Inkhouse</b> , Waltham, MA	<b>19,782</b>
20. <b>LANE</b> , Portland, OR	<b>1,060,309</b>	42. <b>Peppercomm</b> , New York, NY	<b>15,000</b>
21. <b>Tunheim</b> , Minneapolis, MN	<b>918,720</b>	43. <b>O'Malley Hansen Communications</b> , Chicago, IL	<b>6,000</b>
22. <b>Matter Communications</b> , Newburyport, MA	<b>694,745</b>		



# Multicultural PR: more than race, ethnic backgrounds

Multicultural communication is all about inclusion, and while multicultural communication strategies have been known to focus on a specific race or ethnic background, the practice of inclusion is a notion that transcends the obvious.

By David Perez

One are the days where brands communicated at their audiences as opposed to communicating with them. Brands must now tailor their messages to be part of the conversation with these diverse groups.

The groups identify themselves as a certain type of culture. These groups are becoming the new multicultural wave of communications. While we must not omit communicating strategies with diverse ethnic groups, we must also consider that multicultural communication is evolving.

## A targeted campaign

Where's my audience? If it were that simple, we would be able to flood our message across the many platforms and communicate with our audience. Multicultural communications has become more than pushing a message out to a certain demographic. Understanding that a language has become more than just speaking and writing Spanish or Cantonese. We must adjust our writing methods and strategies to relate to our many audiences.

For instance, when we communicate our message, the text, images and message must be different on social platforms. Thus, the messaging should be targeted to your audience and must relate to their identity, their culture.

Brands and agencies need to immerse themselves and understand the audience than the basic questions of how they think. Communicators must understand why their message needs to engage with their audience. Why should their audience care about the message? The simple "why" may not be so simple. As we begin to understand our cultural audience, we must immerse ourselves within the group. Targeted multicultural communications is evolving.

## The challenge

The next generation is become immune to marketing and advertising. They do not want to be talked at, but want to be involved in the message. For most brands and agencies, this challenge is an opportunity to use traditional tactics such as word of mouth. But how do we position our brand to communicate with our group?

Agencies are hiring younger and more diverse communicators. As the digital age moves faster and trends catch on faster, it is essential to stay active and continue learning about the industry. Bringing a younger and diverse group to brainstorming ses-

sions can spark new concepts. Encourage your team to think beyond ethnicity and language—think disruption!

## Cultural Millennials: the obvious strategy

Multicultural Americans are not only driving culture and language, but driving markets. How can communicators join in and become part of that culture? Presently, making up the largest population of the United States, Millennials will increase to more than 81 million by 2036. Currently, 42 percent of U.S. Millennials are African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic. With more than 92 percent of Millennials utilizing mobile phones to engaging with brands, mobile communication strategies have become more vital to strategy. Millennials focus on brand communication and customer service. It is a group that is growing and a group that will drive a message further. The obvious strategy is building a plan for your millennial group. We must go deeper than just a millennial strategy. What about those niche groups within Millennials?

## Cultural comms: the strategic strategy

As language continues to change, culture drives the biggest influence. Brands must build groups and areas to establish their own culture. Better yet, brands must adapt to the trends and be part of the conversation without forcefully marketing their brand into the culture. Communication must be organic. Culture is organic. Identity is the new multicultural communication.

Anticipating the next conversation may be difficult. But if we can drive the conversation with value and stories, our message will take off.

## The power of groups

Malcom Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* outlines how groups become powerful and the driving force to create change and spread infectious information. Finding these groups can be easy, but driving the message within the group may provoke a more challenging strategy.

This is how multicultural communication strategy is evolving. No longer are ethnic and language the only driving strategy, but cultural identity is inserted as the new approach. How can we get in front of our audience? Groups on Facebook, social meet-ups and likeminded conversations need to drive the strategy. People want to engage and be part of a specific community, they

want to be part of a culture, they want to belong.

Facebook has understood this model and has developed its platform to include 101 languages but most importantly, create groups, a form of inclusion. The average number of groups a user is connected to is 80. That is an immense number of groups one user partakes in. Joining the group is not enough. Speaking their language, learning their habits and understanding why people identify with their culture is important.

In recently-published book *The Power of Moments*, authors Chip and Dan Heath describe that moments of elevation are what drive people to remember. When we decide what our message is, we need to strategize how we want it delivered. This is where public relations professionals thrive. We create a moment that will drive the conversation and immerse itself within a group, a culture.

Multicultural has become cultural. It has become more than language and ethnic background communication. Inclusion and diversity should be considered the new norm in brand communication.

David Perez is based out of Marketing Maven's Los Angeles headquarters. He can be reached at [david@marketingmaven.com](mailto:david@marketingmaven.com). ○



David Perez

## PR news brief

### Brunswick takes TGI Fridays sale

Brunswick Group will handle the potential sale of the TGI Fridays restaurant chain, which owner Electra Private Equity investment firm has put on the auction block.

The potential divestment of the casual dining restaurant unit is part of London-based EPE's effort to maximize shareholder value, cash in on the strong equity market and simplify its corporate structure.

TGIF operates more than 900 restaurants in 60 countries. Its market valuation is in the \$200 million range.

EPE has retained Greenhill & Co. investment banker to shop TGIF and other investments including Hotter Shoes, Knight Square (property management) and Photobox (personalized products/gifts) operations.

The company stresses that it is not currently discussing the sale of any of its units, though it "has received expressions of interest from several parties."

Brunswick's Ammerance Ozioro represents EPE.



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# Internal strategies to restore employee trust

**Building trust within an organization and keeping employees engaged begins with effective, regular communication from the C-suite all the way down to anyone in a management function.**

By Sandi Sonnenfeld

In the wake of sexual harassment scandals and the subsequent #MeToo campaign, increased concerns regarding data privacy arising from the Facebook/Cambridge Analytica debacle and trust in government and corporate institutions at an all-time low, perhaps it's not surprising that employees are increasingly wary of the organizations they work for.

That problem is further compounded by the fact that human resources departments, which hold responsibility for ensuring a positive and safe corporate culture — including resolving employer-employee conflicts such as investigating and addressing sexual harassment and gender and racial discrimination claims — are now the least trusted of all corporate functions. Companies that opt to place the internal communications function under HR rather than with PR do a disservice both to their employees and HR itself, given that most HR professionals lack the appropriate experience in strategic communications planning, messaging development and the most effective ways to disseminate those messages.

## **Building trust is everyone's job**

Regardless of where internal communications sits, however, the responsibility for building trust by effectively and regularly communicating with employees begins with the C-suite and goes all the way down to anyone who supervises one or more workers. A workplace engagement study of employees at companies with one thousand or more workers revealed that 94 percent of employees want to hear more about what's going on from leadership; 86 percent would feel more engaged if they were more informed about company news and information; and 68 percent of executives believe they do a "good" job of communicating, though only 21 percent of employees agree.

To help executives improve how they communicate and keep employees more engaged, below are seven internal communications tips to keep in mind.

**Vary how you share information.** Baby Boomers are more likely to open an email than read something posted to the firm's Intranet, while Millennials will favor a text message over email, so develop different ways to deliver information to employees. If the news will significantly impact how the organization functions, what it does or marks a key milestone, consider having

the CEO leave a voicemail message on everyone's business phone or creating a brief video message that pops up when people turn their computers on in the morning. Bonuses or raises, like performance reviews, are best delivered individually by a worker's supervisor.

**Be inclusive.** One law firm I worked at developed an internal newsletter to keep its partners and associates abreast of cases won or deals signed, press coverage, awards and rankings earned and new client updates. Just one huge drawback: the newsletter wasn't shared with support staff, which were kept in the dark regarding the firm's achievements and how their individual tasks and responsibilities helped contribute to the bottom line. Restricting general information to certain people also creates a two-tiered system that fosters resentment and mistrust.

**Give employees a safe way to report harassment, fraud or other bad behaviors.** A key reason employees opt not to report bad behavior of colleagues or supervisors is fear they'll be viewed as disloyal or that HR will automatically side with the more senior person, resulting in further harassment or termination. One solution may be contracting with a qualified independent third party to serve as an ombudsperson. Another would be the creation of a report abuse tip line, where employees can report information anonymously. Both of these options work well, but only if leadership commits to follow up on complaints and investigates them thoroughly.

**Let staff know when the company faces a challenge or crisis.** This may seem counterintuitive, particularly for private companies which lack a mandate to publicly disclose if they have failed to meet forecasts or are under investigation by a regulatory agency. Yet employees sense when supervisors or leadership seem tense or take note when senior leadership suddenly seems to constantly be behind closed doors. If your company has encountered a setback, convey it openly to staff, as it will reduce dangerous speculation and uncertainty which could result in your best workers jumping ship or a leak to the press.

**Give staff skin in the game.** Granting employees a say in how the company operates boosts productivity and morale because they feel vested in the company's perfor-

mance. While most companies can't offer staff stock options or other monetary perks, they can still give staff some ownership.

**Announce all new hires, not just senior executives.** Not every hire warrants a press release or even a mention on the firm's website. The new employee's supervisor, however, should introduce the person via email or post an announcement on the company's Intranet, internal blog or social media site(s). Not only will it make the new staffer feel welcome, but it demonstrates the areas in which the company is growing or strategically maintaining or increasing support, which helps all employees better understand the company's larger goals.

## **Host in-person or virtual town halls.**

These forums allow employees to freely ask questions of the CEO or other designated senior leader. For larger organizations, perhaps town halls should be hosted by department or office so people don't feel intimidated asking a question before a large crowd. Some companies have better success with such town halls if people send in questions ahead of time and anonymously. This gives the CEO more time to prepare her answers, but also generally results in staffers asking tougher or more critical questions about the company's direction.

Nature abhors a vacuum, so when companies fail to communicate with their workers regularly, employees will fill in the missing information with rumor and gossip. A culture of transparency and openness generally reduces the risk of disgruntled workers taking their unhappiness to the media or expressing it online. Employees will also be more willing to stick with leadership during bad times if they have regularly been communicated with and recognized during good ones. Moreover, when employees themselves feel trusted, they're far more likely to trust the company in return.

The current situation offers PR executives working in-house as well as external agencies new opportunities to reach out to senior leadership about developing an effective internal communications program that can help build or restore employee trust. To do so, however, make sure you do a little trust building of your own by establishing good rapport with your or your client's HR department.

*Sandi Sonnenfeld is Associate Vice President of Impact PR & Communications. ○*



Sandi Sonnenfeld

# Communicating innovation in global health markets

The guidelines constituting ethical communications aren't necessarily the same worldwide, requiring a local understanding of various cultures and markets in which agencies reside while continuing to innovate in regards to how we share stories and information.

By Jonathan Wilson

Throughout the world, healthcare communicators are bound by standards of conduct. While many of these standards are enforced by regulatory bodies or industry groups, for most of us, they're also governed by our universal ethical compass, stemming from a passion that drives us to seek better health outcomes through our work.

As President of the largest global network of independent health communications agencies, a reoccurring topic of discussion has become the interesting differences between healthcare communications across the different regions and countries where we have a presence, including the legal, regulatory and moral guidelines in each market. While we all agree that we need to make sure we're communicating ethically and accurately, the guidelines for this — both written and unspoken — are not the same across the world.

Most know that legal standards for health communications vary widely from one region or country to the next; however, fewer appreciate the tremendous value provided by a local understanding of the culture and market, specifically as it pertains to healthcare, including the unspoken rules pertain-

ing to what is appropriate or expected.

It's a more exciting time than ever to be involved in healthcare communications. Over the course of the past 20 years, there's been a massive transformation in the pharmaceutical and biotherapeutic industry. There's been a shift in how companies are thinking about R&D such that their pipelines, which used to be filled with treatments that were incremental improvements or me too drugs, are now focused on innovation, through new therapeutic categories, treatments for previously untreatable disease areas and other paradigm-shifting classes.

With the uptick in cutting-edge science, the science stories we're asked to tell are also becoming more nuanced and more complex, requiring us to be innovative alongside our pharmaceutical partners. In particular, I've seen that a structure of independent healthcare communications agencies is best able to provide the expertise in the local market through a healthcare lens that is so essential to successfully communicating the value of innovative new products — by possessing that intuitive knowledge of the healthcare customs, laws and trends in any given market, you can ensure communications programs are tailored to fit, ultimately

ensuring that patients, doctors and payers are able to make informed decisions that lead to improved global health outcomes.

I recently had the pleasure of hosting representatives from each of our global partner agencies in New York for GLOBAL-HealthPR's 2018 Annual General Meeting. Throughout the week's conversations focused on sharing knowledge, best practices and ideas, one key topic was the pharmaceutical marketing rules in each country, which we've compiled into "The Global Guide to Pharma Marketing Codes."



Jonathan Wilson

As we discussed the differences between markets that can still surprise us — despite working together for over 17 years — we all agreed that, when there's true innovation to communicate, it's much easier to tell a powerful value story that can make a difference in the lives of patients, caregivers and their families.

*Jonathan Wilson is President of GLOBAL-HealthPR and President & CEO of Spectrum. ○*

## People in PR

### Rogers & Cowan's Bloch dies at 78

Paul Bloch, who was chairman of Hollywood PR powerhouse Rogers & Cowan, died May 25 after a long illness. He was 78.

After a stint in the army, Bloch joined R&C in its mailroom in 1961. Mentored by founders Henry Rogers and Warren Cowan, Bloch served an array of stars including Tom Cruise, Eddie Murphy, Sylvester Stallone, Priscilla Presley, David & Victoria Beckham, Kevin Costner, Danny Glover, John Travolta and Sharon Stone.

Bloch, a Brooklyn native who moved to Los Angeles as a child and graduated from UCLA, was promoted to head of R&C's music division in 1975, which represented



Paul Bloch

The Beach Boys, Julio Iglesias and The Bee Gees. ○

### Brooks is new tech lead at Finn Partners

Jodi Brooks, former Chair of Burson-Marsteller's U.S. technology operations, has moved to Finn Partners, where she's been named leader of the global independent agency's tech practice.

Brooks succeeds Sabrina Horn, who now becomes a Senior Advisor.

Brooks joined B-M in 2013, previously serving as Managing Director of the agency's technology practice before she was appointed to lead its U.S. operation in 2016. Brooks was previously stationed at Weber Shandwick, where she held the title of Senior Vice President. ○



Jodi Brooks

### FH makes Murphy Chief Prac. Officer

Janise Murphy, a FleishmanHillard Senior Partner who was previously regional President of the Omnicom PR unit's southern U.S. region, has been appointed Chief Practice Officer.

It's a new role at the agency, intended to help the global PR powerhouse identify strengths and new areas of innovation and bring them to scale.

Murphy, who joined FH in 1990, initially held a post at the agency in D.C. before moving to Dallas to found FleishmanHillard Texas. She served as General Manager of that office until 1999. She began her career at Burson-Marsteller in Chicago, where she was a Senior Account Executive. ○



Janise Murphy



# O'Dwyer's guide to INTERNATIONAL PR



**Feintuch Communications senior team leaders (L to R) Doug Wright, Henry Feintuch, Richard Roher, Rick Anderson.**

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Since 2003, New York City-based 5W Public Relations (5WPR) has worked with widely known and emerging brands, corporations and high-profile individuals. Our practice areas include Consumer Products & Brands, Food & Beverage, Health & Wellness, Beauty, Apparel & Accessories, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Entertainment & Sports, Corporate, Technology, Public Affairs & Government Relations, Nonprofit, Crisis Communications, Events and Digital & Social Media. We have a 360-degree approach to PR, social media, branding and digital marketing that delivers game-changing results to our clients.

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**Henry Feintuch**, President  
**Richard Anderson**, Senior Managing Director  
**Doug Wright**, Senior Account Director

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Our JumpStart Global Advisors subsidiary provides a blended set of business services that allow them to enter the market quickly and efficiently — everything from market assessment and strategy, busi-

ness establishment, legal/financial/accounting/HR and back-office support to recruitment, sales/distribution/channel and partnership development. In addition, for U.S. companies seeking to enter world markets, our global network — the PR World Alliance — is ready to assist. The network of best-of-breed independent consultancies is particularly adept at coordinating market entry public relations programs in our 15 member nations — and 109 countries globally through our membership in the network.

## GLOBALHEALTHPR

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**Jonathan Wilson**, President  
**Tim Goddard**, Executive Vice President



GLOBALHealthPR is the largest independent health and science communications agency partnership worldwide, providing on-the-ground insights and implementation driven by the top health-focused agencies in their regions. Operations are centralized in New York at the global headquarters and Americas Hub, with partner agencies in more than 40 countries. All partner firms are independently owned and operated, choosing to work together based



**Representatives from GLOBALHealthPR partner agencies at the 2018 Annual General Meeting in New York, NY.**





**Hunter helped client McIlhenny Company celebrate its 150th anniversary by throwing TABASCO Global Kitchen parties around the globe in NYC, London, and Dubai. Inspired by the bustling food halls and night markets around the world, the popup birthday parties showcase how the famous sauce has come to be a flavorful addition to dishes and drinks around the world. Shown here is TABASCO CEO and 5th Generation Family Member Tony Simmons toasting to 150 years of flavouring the world in London.**

on a shared belief in insight-driven strategies, commitment to collaboration and specialization in strategic healthcare communications — providing clients the best possible counsel, quick and creative thinking and flawless execution.

Together, GLOBALHealthPR consists of more than 600 health-specialist communications professionals including researchers and medical advisors. Collectively GLOBALHealthPR has worked with two thirds of the world's 50 leading pharmaceutical brands.

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**Grace Leong, CEO**  
**Alexandra Conway, Managing Director, UK Office**  
**Samara Farber Mormar, Executive Vice President, Business Development**

Hunter is an award-winning consumer products and services marketing communications firm with offices in New York, Toronto, and London, staff based across the US

and international affiliate partners extending our reach around the globe.

Founded in 1989, Hunter PR has grown to be one of North America's most recognized and resourced firms providing strategic communications counsel and services to major consumer brands, products and services. Our mission is "earning it," from consumer attention, to long term client relationships, to our talented staff's dedication, we

strive to earn it every day.

With a broad range of expertise in many industries, the firm is best known for its work in the food and beverage, health and beauty, and home and lifestyle sectors. Hunter PR offers a suite of global services including a combination of communications strategies & architectures, creative campaigns & content partnerships, content creation & toolkits, and market counsel & executional support. Hunter's global offerings aim to unite marketers around the world to speak the same brand language but in their own native tongues and cultural vernaculars. The output of these efforts is to maintain consistency, control messaging, and maximize resources for our clients.

## PEPPERCOMM

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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**  
**Mike Friedin, Chief Digital Officer**

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel

communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses customer insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including *The Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Mid-sized Agency of the Year. The agency has been listed as one of *Fortune's* 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

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For more information, visit [www.peppercomm.com](http://www.peppercomm.com).

## PROI WORLDWIDE

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— Continued on page 40



**PROI's Global Summit was held from May 2-5 in Lisbon, Portugal.**



## PROI WORLDWIDE

Continued from page 39

**Lisa Ross**, Vice-Chair, Americas, Miami (rbb Communications)  
**Kaija Pohjala**, Vice-Chair, EMEA Region, Helsinki (COCOMMS)  
**Henning Sverdrup**, Vice-Chair, EMEA Region, Oslo (Slager)  
**Lena Soh-Ng**, Vice-Chair, APAC Region, Singapore (Huntington Communications)  
**Angela Scaffidi**, Vice-Chair, APAC Region, Melbourne (SenateSHJ Australia)  
**Allard W. van Veen**, APR, FCPRS, LM, Founding Partner, Corporate Secretary + Global Mng. Dir.  
**Jean Leopold Schuybroek**, Director, Global Dev., Brussels

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**Misha Cook**, Director, Communications and Meetings, mcook@proi.com

Founded in Europe in 1970 and incorporated in the US in 1994, PROI Worldwide is rated the world's largest partnership of integrated independent communications agencies both by revenue and reach through more than 75+ agencies operating from 135+ of-

fices in 50+ countries. Its 5,450+ staff service 8,215+ clients. PROI Worldwide's 2017 net fee income of US\$ 868+ MILLION places it 5th largest among global holding companies, behind WPP, Interpublic, Omnicom and DJE Holdings. Among multi-nationals, PROI is rated second largest, ahead of Weber Shandwick, FleishmanHillard, Ketchum, Burson-Marsteller, MSL, H & K Strategies and Ogilvy PR Worldwide.

Each PROI Worldwide agency ranges in size from 15 to 500+ consultants, depending on their breadth of services and location. In the Americas, PROI Agencies include Finn Partners (New York), G&S Business Communications (New York), Jackson Spalding (Atlanta), rbb (Miami), RF|Binder (New York), 360PR+ (Boston), Falls Communications (Cleveland), Lambert Edwards & Associates (Michigan), Jones PR (Kansas City), Crenshaw Communications (New York), GroundFloor Media (Denver), MPRM (Los Angeles), c+c (Seattle-Portland), The Vandiver Group (St. Louis), Walker Sands (Chicago), Brown & Cohen (Toronto) and Imagem Corporativa (Sao Paulo-Rio de Janeiro-Brasilia).

Globally, PROI Worldwide has offices in most European countries, The Middle East, Africa, and Asia

Pacific and includes some of the largest and leading Agencies in each Region.

When you retain a local PROI Worldwide agency: They will help you localize a communications program and help you to recognize, prioritize and address differences in culture, custom, values and social mores as the campaign is developed beyond your local market.

Our local PROI Partners drive their own business based on proven local competence in their respective markets. Competence is not centralized at regional or global offices as can often be the case within multinationals.

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PR World Alliance, headquartered in Canada, is an international network of premier independent communication consultancies. Member firms are carefully selected and represent established, respected and accomplished firms with a solid reputation for producing superior results for clients.

The key difference between PR World Alliance and other international groups is its individual and collective commitment to professionalism, integrity and the highest ethical standards. It is also the assurance that all client campaigns are overseen by the owners and senior practitioners of partner firms — from the smallest single country project to the most complex multinational campaigns.

The organization encompasses public and investor relations companies and offices in North America and Europe with offices and joint venture partners in numerous markets. The network continues to seek new members in strategic lo-

cations.

PR World Alliance provides clients with an extensive depth of knowledge in individual countries as well as a solid understanding of the dynamic multi-national marketplace. Members can be engaged for support of an individual event, an ongoing retainer relationship or a pan-continent campaign. Our membership in thenetworkone connects us to 1,000 additional independent agencies in 109 countries.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS BOUTIQUES INTERNATIONAL

New York, NY  
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PR Boutiques International is an international network of small public relations firms led by highly experienced professionals. Network firms, which offer a comprehensive range of services, are carefully selected for membership. The network was founded in 2008 by boutique agency owners who realized that the strength and service differentiation they all had in common was the hands-on experience they offer clients from top-grade professionals (including themselves). The network has offices in 45 locations around the world to meet clients' needs for international service.

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The Public Relations Global Network (PRGN) is "The World's Local Agency." More than 1,000 clients across six continents depend on the combined local resources of PRGN to deliver targeted public relations campaigns in more than 80 markets around the world. With revenues of more than \$110 million (USD), PRGN is among the world's top four public relations networks. PRGN harnesses the resources of 51 independent public relations firms and more than 1,000 communications professionals. Visit PRGN online at: [www.prgn.com](http://www.prgn.com).

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**Mark Owens**, CEO

Meet Rogers & Cowan. The Agency with global reach and connectivity, with locations in London, New York, LA and access to over 40 agency offices in over 100 countries. Where storytelling combines data, digital, experiential, brand and talent for a connected journey, limited only by the imagination.

Rogers & Cowan helps its clients become relevant in the cultural conversation, no matter what the culture. We're the agency that crafted a collaboration for H&M with international sensation The Weekend, garnered more than 1.48 billion impressions for Elton John's "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" international tour and consistently covers international festivals and markets around the world including recent work with the Saudi Film Council to establish a presence at Cannes.

Rogers & Cowan is at the forefront of leading brands and consumers on the journey to modern storytelling. Breaking stories is what we do. Breaking new ground is who we are.



**Spectrum gathered in Washington, DC for the 2017 Holiday Party.**

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**Jonathan Wilson**, President & CEO

Spectrum is both one of the nation's leading health and science communications agencies and proudly independent. While many agencies have a dedicated health-care practice, Spectrum's sole focus on science and storytelling is further specialized to deliver the most relevant strategies and counsel with five unique specialties: biotech, biopharma, consumer science, health tech and public affairs.

Spectrum is the founder, US partner, Americas hub and chair of GLOBALHealthPR, the largest independent health and science communications agency partnership worldwide. This one-of-a-kind network of firms all specializing in health drives strong global strategy

as well as deep local expertise, ensuring each client who works with GLOBALHealthPR gets an "A" team from every local market.

Through the GLOBALHealthPR network, Spectrum is able to support clients with seamlessly integrated global communications campaigns. Spectrum also employs an integrated model for account teams, with digital and creative experts, scientists and precision communications specialists embedded to deliver fully integrated strategic solutions that meet clients' business goals.

This year, Spectrum was named "Top Millennial Company" and "50 Fastest Growing" by *The Washington Business Journal* and a "Best Agency to Work For" by *The Holmes Report*.

## WORLD COM PUBLIC RELATIONS GROUP

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Worldcom Public Relations Group, celebrating its 30th anniversary, utilizes a trusted global partnership of independent firms to help clients create the perfect solution to any PR challenge or opportunity, regardless of geography, industry or discipline required. Worldcom's independently owned public relations firms boast 143 offices in 115 cities on six continents, 2,000+ total employees, and combined revenues of more than US\$288 million. The average tenure of Worldcom partners is 13 years. Established in 1988, the group was formed so that the strongest, most capable independent firms could deliver immediate impact and sustained value through the intelligent use of communications — wherever in the world a client needs support. Partners serve national, international and multinational clients, while retaining the flexibility and client-service focus inherent in independent agencies. Through Worldcom, clients have on-demand access to in-depth communications expertise from professionals who understand the language, culture and customs of the geographic areas in which they operate. Learn more at [www.worldcomgroup.com](http://www.worldcomgroup.com) or call Todd Lynch at 1-800-955-9675. ○



# New NFL kneeling policy; a PR punt too late

By Fraser Seitel

I love Steve Kerr; I really do. The outspokenly liberal, anti-Trumpian coach of the National Basketball Association's Golden State Warriors possesses a rare plainspoken wisdom, honed by physical pain and personal tragedy. When Steve Kerr talks, people properly listen.



**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*.

But in admonishing the National Football League for its just-announced, revised policy to fine teams whose players take a knee during the national anthem, Coach Kerr misses the point.

"It's just typical of the NFL," Kerr said of the NFL's revised policy, "Basically just trying to use the anthem as fake patriotism, nationalism, scaring people. Our leadership in the NBA understands that the NFL players were kneeling to protest police brutality, to protest racial inequality. They weren't disrespecting the flag."

Nah, Sorry Steve, but in this case, you're way off. The NFL's new policy, in fact, moves precisely in the direction that any smart public relations advisor would suggest. The problem is, it comes two years too late.

The time to confront the issue of what to do about players taking a knee during the anthem should have been confronted the day soon-to be-disenfranchised quarterback Colin Kaepernick first assumed the position during San Francisco 49ers 2016 preseason games.

But NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and the bumbling billionaires who own the 32 NFL teams couldn't quite get their act together in terms of what to do about the Kaepernick protest.

So, Commissioner Goodell — who must have been a kicker in high school because he's always punting! — did just that. He punted the pigskin down the road by wishy-washily declaring that players "should" stand for the anthem, and that it would be left to each team to handle its kneeling players however they deemed appropriate.

Predictably, some players rebelled, some owners complained, others rolled over and President Trump got into the act by squawking vociferously. All of which led to the fateful day of September 24, 2017 — forever to be known as "dark Sunday" in NFL history — when 200 NFL players sat or kneeled before their games for all the world to see.

Just as it had fumbled sexual harassment and concussion brain damage scandals before this, so, too, in the Kaepernick case, the NFL's crisis management ineptitude resulted in planting the league knee-deep in a kneeling crisis.

What the league should have done at the time is what Mr. Kerr's NBA did; that is, meet with the players, suggest to them that protesting the national anthem would send the absolute wrong message — whether rightly or wrongly — to the people who pay for their inflated salaries and jointly agree to mandate that every player "must" stand when the American flag is raised.

Meanwhile, the league would contribute to and speak out for racial equality in multiple forums. League leaders LeBron James, Chris Paul, Steph Curry and their colleagues quickly fell in line behind the policy. And the NBA and its public rela-

tions-savvy Commissioner Adam Silver shimmied right by the controversy.

Not so the NFL, which finds itself still mired in crisis two excruciating years later. So much so that as soon as Commissioner Goodell had announced the new kneeling policy, the NFL Players Association criticized it for not taking the players' views into consideration and threatened to challenge it in court.

And if that wasn't enough, Chris Johnson, clueless co-owner of the hapless New York Jets, announced that even though he voted for the new rule to penalize kneeling players — rather than making objecting players stand in the tunnel during the anthem — "If somebody [on the Jets] takes a knee, that fine will be borne by the organization, by me, not the players. I never want to put restrictions on the speech of our players."

Oy, oy, oy.

Although his overall take on the NFL's new policy was fundamentally flawed, Steve Kerr did say one thing, in summarizing the league's history of crisis management, with which no one can quibble.

Concluded the coach, "That's how the NFL has conducted their business. It's idiotic." ○

## Small businesses to boost Facebook investments in 2018

Despite suffering from a massive trust setback in the last year, small businesses still recognize social media's value as a marketing tool and its ability to engage and successfully reach audiences.

As a result, a recent survey by business news site The Manifest found that nearly all small businesses said they plan to ramp up their paid social media investments this year.

The Manifest survey found that 92 percent of small businesses said they'll invest more time and money in social media in 2018.

Facebook will take the lion's share of this investment, according to the survey, cited by 58 percent of respondents, more than any other platform, followed by YouTube (39 percent), Instagram (39 percent) and Twitter (32 percent).

Business owners said engagement is the most important metric they use for track-

ing the success of their small social media efforts (20 percent), followed by audience growth (18 percent), clicks (16 percent), leads/conversion (15 percent) and reach (12 percent).

The survey also found that the larger a company is, the more likely it is to invest in social media: nearly three-fourths (74 percent) of businesses with more than 51 employees said they use paid social advertising, compared to 30 percent of businesses staffing only one employee. While just under half of all small businesses (46 percent) said they use paid social advertising, 85 percent of businesses with more than 51 employees admitted to investing in social media ad spend.

The Manifest's "2018 Small Business Survey" polled more than 350 U.S. business owners and managers whose operations have fewer than 500 employees. The survey was conducted at the end of Q1 this year. ○

# Independent or employed?

By Richard Goldstein

**W**ith the rise of independent contractors in the new, shared economy, distinctions between employees and contractors are increasingly blurred these days, especially at PR firms. The tax implications of misclassification can be significant, and the U.S. Department of Labor and even some states are now weighing in on employee classification.



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

## Tax advantages

PR firms often prefer to classify workers as independent contractors. Employers are obligated to pay the employer portion of FICA taxes for employees, but not for independent contractors. They

must also withhold income taxes from employee pay, but not from independent contractors. Independent contractors do not have to be included in employee benefit plans or receive compensation for “family leave” among other examples.

There are other obligations associated with employees that make independent contractors appealing to business, but they draw attention to taxing authorities.

## Useful questions

IRS guidelines say that no single factor typically determines whether a worker should be classified as an employee or independent contractor. Instead, the decision hinges on an “economic realities” test that attempts to distinguish workers who are economically dependent on an employer from those in business for themselves and, therefore, not economically dependent.

The following are some of the issues that can help make the employee independent determination:

**Is the work performed by the worker an integral part of your business?** The more integral the work, the more likely the worker is economically dependent on the firm and is most likely an employee. The work can be considered integral even if it's one step in a process, performed away from your business location, or performed by multiple individuals.

For example, your PR firm may be serving the New York City marketplace and, therefore, you rent office space in town. You're

also expanding in the California market and just secured a new client. Rather than renting office space and hiring employees in California, you decide to engage a freelance person to assist in servicing the CA client.

**Does the freelance person's opportunity for profit or loss depend on his or her managerial skill?** A key word here is “managerial.” An independent contractor demonstrates managerial skill by, for example, deciding whether to hire employees or other freelance, or purchase equipment. A worker (employee) in a business for him/herself also faces the possibility of a financial loss.

**Has the worker invested in the work?** A truly independent contractor will invest in his or her business, the investment will go beyond simply purchasing equipment to perform the servicing of clients.

**What role do the worker's skills and imitative play?** Just because workers are technically proficient at a task does not mean they're independent contractors. However, skilled workers who demonstrate initiative to operate as an independent business may be. Operating as an independent business generally means that the worker exercises business judgement, is in open market competition with other PR firms and isn't economically dependent on an employer.

**Is the relationship between the worker and your PR firm permanent or indefinite?** Many at-will employees are considered permanent or indefinitely employed, rather than employed on a project or contract basis.

**What is the nature and degree of your control versus the worker's?** A truly independent contractor will exert control over a meaningful part of the work and relationship with an employer. Indeed, it's almost impossible for PR firms — due to client demands or regulations — to prevent contractors from exerting control over the work and relationship.

## Possible penalties

The question of proper classification becomes urgent for employer PR firms due to potentially harsh tax penalties associated with misclassification. Costs can be steep and may include back taxes and interest. In New York, the failure to secure worker's compensation insurance, as an example, can be extremely high if there's a misclassification. In most cases, I recommend that this insurance be purchased although a worker is considered an “independent contractor.”

## Potential tax issues

This section will review some important

tax issues that can be faced by you or your agency.

## Above-the-line charitable deductions

Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX) have introduced the “Charitable Giving Tax Deduction Act,” a bipartisan bill that would make charitable tax deductions “above-the-line” such that all taxpayers would be able to write off charitable donations without limitation if they choose to itemize.

The proposed legislation would address concerns that changes made by “TCJA” will result in fewer taxpayers itemizing deductions, reducing the tax incentive to make charitable contributions. These changes include — for tax years beginning after 2017 and before 2026 — significantly increased standard deductions and new limitations on deductions for state and local taxes and for mortgage interest.

## Booster club donations

Many of us donate to a booster club for our alma mater or local school you otherwise root for. Under pre TCJA law, you may have donated money to a college or other program entitling you to buy tickets at an athletic event and receive preferred seating. As a result, you were entitled to deduct 80 percent of the cost of the donation. However, that part of the payment for the cost of actual tickets was not deductible. The new tax law repeals this write-off.

However, there's nothing in the new tax law to prevent you from donating to a booster club that benefits the college athletics program. If you do not receive a benefit in return, the donation will be deductible assuming you itemize deductions. If you want preferred seating, just buy them! No deduction is available, but you will have great seats! ○

## PR news brief

### AbMac helps JAB pick up Pret

Abernathy MacGregor is handling JAB Holding Co.'s \$2 billion acquisition of Pret A Manger, the London-based sandwich shop chain, from Bridgepoint private equity firm.

Germany's JAB has controlling stakes in Jacobs Douwe Egberts, the world's No. 1 coffee company; Keurig Green Mountain/Dr Pepper Snapple; Peet's Coffee & Tea, Panera Bread, Caribou Coffee and Krispy Kreme Doughnuts.

Pret, which sells freshly prepared sandwiches, salads and wraps via 530 locations in the UK, US, France and China, generated \$1.2 billion in sales last year.

The *Financial Times* reports the Pret deal bolsters deal-hungry JAB's challenge to Nestle in the global coffee-related market.

Abernathy MacGregor's Tom Johnson and Pat Tucker handle JAB Holding.

France's Havas owns Abernathy MacGregor.



## Digital group offers rules for political ads

**T**he Digital Advertising Alliance, an independent non-profit organization led by advertising and marketing trade associations, has issued a new series of rules intended to ensure a greater level of transparency in digital political ads.

The rules include a special icon used to identify digital political ads, and also require a link to the advertiser's name and contact information, as well as to a government database containing the advertiser's contribution or expenditure records. The "Politica-Ad" icon is similar in size and appearance to the "AdChoices" logo that is currently used to give consumers information about other advertisers.

According to DAA Executive Director Lou Mastria, the purpose of the rules is "to make sure that consumers understand who is bringing an ad to them." The organization will encourage compliance with the rules through the Council of Better Business Bureaus and the Data & Marketing Association, both of which are DAA founding members.

The rules come as the debate over political ads accelerates in Washington. The Federal Election Commission is looking into regulations requiring disclaimers identifying the sponsors of digital ads. Sens. Mark Warner (D-VA) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) have introduced the Honest Ads Act, which would expand the rules currently in place for TV and radio ads to digital advertising.

Other members of the DAA include the Association of National Advertisers, the Interactive Advertising Bureau and the American Advertising Federation. ○

## Gun group gets lobbying support

**G**un trade group the National Shooting Sports Foundation has retained D.C. lobbying firm Hollier & Associates for Capitol Hill advocacy work on banking issues as they affect the firearms industry.

A smaller and lesser-known outfit than the National Rifle Association, the NSSF represents firearms manufacturers, distributors and dealers, as well as shooting ranges and organizations, comprising a total membership of about 11,000. The Newtown, CT-based trade group, which was founded in 1961, sponsors the annual SHOT (Shooting Hunting and Outdoor Trade) event, currently one of the largest trade shows in the US.

NSSF has tapped Hollier in response to "discriminatory banking actions against [the] firearms industry," according to lobbying registration documents filed with Congress in May.

The retainer comes as the financial sector has emerged as an unlikely voice in the nation's current gun debate, with some banks putting distance between themselves and firearms manufacturers and retailers in the wake of the February shooting in Parkland, Fla, which killed 17 and now counts as the deadliest high school shooting in U.S. history.

Citigroup in March announced it would bar its business clients from selling guns to customers who haven't passed a background check and are under 21, and would refuse to do business with companies selling high-capacity magazines and bump stocks.

Following in Citigroup's footsteps, Bank of America in April said it would no longer finance manufacturers that make "military-style firearms" for "non-law enforcement, non-military use."

That financial services giant seemed to walk back on its pledge weeks later, however, after it agreed in May to provide more than \$43 million in financing to firearms manufacturer Remington



Outdoor Co., which is currently climbing its way out of bankruptcy and manufactures rifles with the very semiautomatic designs the bank said it would no longer finance.

BlackRock, the world's largest investment company, recently unveiled a series of new products allowing clients to avoid investing in funds involving companies that sell or manufacture firearms.

An April 30 *Wall Street Journal* report illustrated how banks and credit card companies are also currently exploring ways to identify gun purchases in their payment systems, including the possibility of implementing a special purchase code for gun retailers, in the same way that similar codes are currently used to track purchases made at restaurants and department stores.

Managing the NSSF account is Hollier President Will Hollier, formerly Chief of Staff and Legislative Director to Senator and Senate Banking Committee Chairman Mike Crapo (R-Idaho). ○

## APCO adds ex-State Dept. hand

**A**PCO Worldwide has named Prashanth Rajan, a State Dept. veteran, as Director in its public affairs practice.

Rajan, who did tours of duty of India and Pakistan during his seven years of foreign service officer experience, focused on crisis communications, political risk analysis and immigration policy.

Most recently, Rajan worked at KPMG Consulting, advising clients on strategy, crisis management, workforce planning and corporate transformation.

Evan Kraus, APCO Global President, expects clients will benefit from Rajan's ability to "develop strategies to cope with the most difficult geopolitical and business challenges." ○

## Obama press sec. flies United

**J**osh Earnest, who was President Obama's Press Secretary, is joining United Airlines as Senior VP and Chief Communications Officer.

He joined the Obama team in 2007 as Iowa Communications Director, after serving as spokesperson for Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack's short-lived presidential run. After eight years in the White House, Earnest was promoted to press secretary in 2014.

Most recently, he worked as a political analyst at NBC News and MSNBC.

Oscar Munoz, CEO of United, called Earnest a "proven leader and world-class communications strategies who has thrived when the stakes are the highest and the margin for error is the smallest." ○



Josh Earnest

## Brunswick positions Abu Dhabi on World's Stage

**B**runswick Group is working with Abu Dhabi, which is the richest part and capital of the United Arab Emirates, to better position it on the world's stage.

The informal agreement with Abu Dhabi's General Secretariat of the Executive Council calls for a multi-market effort to understand the emirate's international reputation.

Brunswick is working to align the communications messages among various governmental entities, develop a story/narrative tailored to targeted markets and build relationships with media, including US outlets.

The effort includes running focus groups in Washington and London as well as national surveys in the US and UK.

The UAE, which is composed of seven emirates, has close ties with Saudi Arabia and is key driver in the Arab boycott of Qatar for its alleged ties with Iran. ○

## Oman appoints Akin Gump over steel tariffs

**L**aw and lobbying giant Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld will represent Oman's Ministry of Commerce and Industry as the Arabian Peninsula country seeks an exemption from President Trump's recently-imposed steel tariffs.

Trump in March slapped a 25 percent tariff on steel imports and a 10 percent tariff on aluminum imports as part of a series of tariffs on imported goods. The move drew rebukes from China as well as resounding criticism from Trump's fellow conservatives.

The order, which went into effect March 23, currently exempts

Canada and Mexico and allows the possibility of future exemptions to other countries as well.

Akin Gump will provide the Omani government counsel regarding its efforts to obtain an exemption from these tariffs, and will conduct outreach to U.S. officials for the same purpose, according to documents filed with the Justice Department in May.

Oman, whose economy is derived primarily from oil, tourism and the fish trade, has made strides to bolster its steel and aluminum sector in recent years. Turkey, one of Europe's top steel pipe producers, and Ukraine are among the other nations that have recently hired stateside lobbying support in the hopes that they too could be exempted from Trump's steel tariffs policy.

Oman's pact, which was signed in April, runs until July and fetches Akin Gump \$120,000. ○

## BGR signs Somalia

**B**GR Government Affairs has inked a \$35,000 monthly pact to represent war-torn Somalia before the Trump Administration, Congress, media and policy community.

The White House has stepped up drone strikes in Somalia, which does not have a functional government, according to the May 9 Politico. It reported that US Special Ops and CIA forces have teamed with local warlords to fight ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliates in Somalia.

BGR is the firm of former Mississippi Governor and Republican National Committee chairman Haley Barbour. The firm's contract with Somalia began May 1 and runs through 2019.

BGR joins another well-connected Republican, ex-New York Senator Al D'Amato, on the Somalia lobbying team.

D'Amato's Park Strategies signed a \$10,000 monthly contract with Somalia last November to assess "relevant policy, economic, and security developments that have implications for the relationship with the Somali Republic and the US." ○

### FARA News



## NEW FOREIGN AGENTS REGISTRATION ACT FILINGS

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

**The Fratelli Group**, Washington, D.C., **registered May 4, 2018 for B&S Europe** (Contractor for the Delegation of the European Union to the US), Brussels Belgium, to provide advocacy training for US business leaders on the benefits of strong US-EU relations.

**MHz Networks LLC**, Virginia, **registered May 18, 2018 for France Media Monde for France 24**, Issy-les-Moulineaux, France, regarding development of a platform and over the top and television distribution services in the US and Canada.

**Daniel J. Edelman, Inc.**, Chicago, IL, **registered Apr. 27, 2018 for Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Growth**, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, regarding investment attraction and export promotion programs in global markets.

### Lobbying News



## NEW LOBBYING DISCLOSURE ACT FILINGS

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

**Steptoe & Johnson LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered May 29, 2018 for DisposeRx, Inc.**, Sanford, NC, regarding issues and legislation related to combating the opioid epidemic.

**Cove Strategies**, Alexandria, VA, **registered May 29, 2018 for Seasonal Employment Alliance**, Leesburg, VA, regarding increase of the H2-B visa cap and permanent reform of the H2-B program.

**Thorn Run Partners**, Washington, D.C., **registered May 22, 2018 for Alliance for Drone Innovation**, Washington, D.C., regarding issues related to recreational and commercial drone use.

**Nossaman LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered May 18, 2018 for Fair FARA Coalition**, Washington, D.C., regarding proposals to amend the Foreign Agent Registration Act.



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Employees: 19. Founded: 2009.

**Agency Statement:** With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Marketing Maven's integration of PR, SEO and social media marketing helps provide a competitive edge to their clients. Marketing Maven helps businesses grow their revenues by developing campaigns that engage a target audience, generate sales then utilize advanced metrics to measure ROI. Their services aid national marketing campaigns and product launches with reputation management, organic SEO tracking, competitive analysis reports, key influencer identification and online product reviews to help increase revenue. Hispanic marketing is also a core competency for Marketing Maven, not only focusing on Spanish language media relations, but assisting clients with culturally relevant content for various marketing channels. Visit [www.marketingmavenpr.com](http://www.marketingmavenpr.com) for more information.

Lindsey Carnett, CEO & pres.; Phil Rarick, COO; Natalie Rucker, VP, business dev.; John Krisiukenas, mng. dir., NY

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