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# Paris confab sees dangers in Wi-Fi

**E**lectro-hypersensitivity is a “major public health issue,” said a meeting of doctors and scientists in Paris Feb. 11. But others scoff at such claims, with critics labeling them “pseudo-science, quackery and hysteria.” Governments, schools and most media remain on the sidelines.

Christopher Taylor, Director of Radio Frequency and Wireless Components, Strategic Analytics, Newton, Mass., has expressed doubt about the dangers of Wi-Fi from consumer wireless equipment.

“Scientific literature published to date does not furnish any compelling data showing adverse effects,” he wrote in the December issue of the monthly *Ashland Town News*.

Taylor, who has a degree in physics and who has attended sessions at the Ashland, Mass., public library on electro-magnetic fields, quoted from the International Non-ionizing Radiation Protection Commission. He described it as an independent group of experts who evaluate the effects of non-ionizing radiation from cars, electric household wiring, computers, cellphones, wireless utility meters, Wi-Fi devices and Bluetooth headsets.

The World Health Organization has come to a similar conclusion and has posted it on its site. WHO concludes that “No adverse health effects have been established as being caused by mobile phone use.” The matter is still under investigation, WHO notes.

Taylor says the Federal Communication Commission imposes limits on the specific absorption rates of non-ionizing radiation from all wireless devices before allowing them to be sold. “The only proven physical mechanism for damage to the human body is heating,” he wrote in the *Ashland News*. A very high exposure to radiation would be needed to raise the temperature of the human body by even one degree, he said.

The replacement of 7,500 outdoor telephones pedestals in New York City with Wi-Fi terminals by Sidewalk Labs was discussed by CEO Dan Doctoroff Feb. 10 at the Center for Urban Science & Progress, in Brooklyn. No mention was made of possible dangers to the health of users and passersby. The terminals extend Wi-Fi capability up to 400 feet.

The hour-long program consisted of a 50-minute “academic lecture” by Doctoroff. Doctoroff spoke disparagingly of the current pay phone terminals, saying the only people who use them are “drug dealers.” Virtually everyone in the near future will have smart phones, he said.

A stout defense of booths appeared in the *New York Times* the next day under the headline, “During the Age of Mobile, Saving Stationary Relics on the Upper West Side.”

It quoted residents saying they still used the four remaining old-style phone booths. Intersection is the Google-founded company putting in the new Wi-Fi terminals, at a cost of about \$200 million.

Critics of the Wi-Fi terminals say they emit a dangerous level of electro-magnetic radiation. They are petitioning the New York Attorney General and New York State Dept. of Technology and Telecommunications, saying the terminals violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, New York City Human Rights Law and New York State Human Rights Law by subjecting passersby to unwanted and unhealthy radiation.

Another criticism of the new terminals is that they provide no privacy at all since users speak into a mic in the installations. There is no protection from rain, snow, wind and cold which the telephone booths provided for many years, residents also said. The nine-and-a-half foot terminals, which are about a foot thick, carry constantly-changing digital ads.

“What we are getting is 7,500 high-tech billboards,” said one resident. Doctoroff told the Feb. 10 session that the terminals will generate “hundreds of millions” of ad revenues each year so the city can provide additional services.

The terminals, called “elegant,” are just “a little bit” of what Sidewalk Labs intends to do to improve the “connectivity” of residents, said Doctoroff.

A goal of Sidewalk Labs is to improve the “quality of life” of residents, he said. One of the company’s tasks is to “bridge the gap” between the technologists and urban planners.

Families, which spend about \$9,000 yearly on their cars, should explore the possibility of sharing a car with another family, he said. That would result in a yearly savings of about \$4,500. The first SL terminal is already in operation at the corner of 15th st. and First ave. It was described in the Jan. 25 *New Yorker*.

EMF Safety Network says that “Wireless disrupts cellular communications, damages immune and nervous systems, desynchronizes brain and heart rhythms, and causes headaches, sleep problems, ringing in the ears, anxiety and a host of other health problems.” ○

— Jack O'Dwyer

# O'Dwyer's

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# Study: cost, convenience drive healthcare decisions

Americans now change physicians almost as regularly as they switch health insurers, according to new survey findings published this week by Finn Partners.

By Jon Gingerich

The U.S. healthcare system is currently characterized by increasing fragmentation, where patients, in a move to cut costs and maintain convenience, now exhibit a fleeting loyalty to prescription products and a distant relationship with physicians.

This was one of the key insights gleaned by findings in a recent national survey conducted by New York-based independent agency Finn Partners, which gauged the attitudes and behaviors of patients navigating today's healthcare landscape.

The Finn Futures survey shows that current insurance formularies and out-of-pocket costs could be influencing more consumer healthcare decisions than ever. Most Americans — 51 percent — now change their insurance plans at least every three years, and a similar number of consumers with health insurance — 45 percent — now

keep their primary care physician for only the same amount of time, even though respondents said they still regard their doctor as the single most trusted source of health information. Almost half of those polled — 46 percent — said they visit their primary care physician only once a year, though 55 percent now said they avoid a doctor's office altogether.

"For many people, there's no such thing as a primary care physician any more," Gil Bashe, Managing Partner of Finn Partners' health practice, told *O'Dwyer's*. "That means there's no central place where a record of our health information resides. One problem we're going to see is that more people's health concerns are not managed sooner because, in much the same way that the healthcare system has become fragmented, our personal health information has become fragmented as well."

Cost and convenience also prove increasing factors in determining what medicines patients now opt to buy. While a majority of respondents — three out of four — said they consult with either their doctor or pharmacist if they have questions about a prescription, the survey found that 43 percent of consumers now receive pharmacists' recommendations regarding alternatives to medications prescribed by their doctor, and nearly half of all respondents said they take their pharmacist's advice on those cost-effective alternatives.

Left to navigate the system without the regular guidance of a doctor or long-term insurers, patients and consumers arguably wield a diminished voice in today's healthcare landscape. For this reason, Bashe said the onus is on leaders in the pharmaceutical, policy and provider sectors to make collaborative strides in showcasing the value of healthcare services and products for patients. Improved communication efforts are paramount.

"The data should cause everyone to step back and see where things are going from a communications standpoint," Bashe said. "These sectors have to realize that they're not competing here, they're part of a collaborate resource, and they need to invite the consumer to participate in being part of that dynamic. As communicators, our job has always been to connect people with a common call to action."

Indeed, the survey indicated that education could play a major role in influencing consumer healthcare behavior. Nearly half of respondents in the Finn Futures survey said they were unaware that pharmaceutical companies offer co-pay cost-saving options for prescription medicine, such as savings cards, which aid the burden of out-of-pocket expenses. Only eight percent admitted visiting a medication's website.

"The biggest challenge for health insurance companies and providers is that many American consumers don't understand how the system works. They access the system only when they have a problem," Bashe said. "We've got to make the practice of seeing a doctor something important."

The Finn Futures survey was conducted in November and polled 1,000 U.S. residents online. It was led by Research Director Christopher Lawrence, in Finn Partners' Washington, D.C. office. The data was presented globally in February, at the annual Health Israel conference in Tel Aviv. ○

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# External communications often ignored during litigation

Many U.S. companies that face litigation remain unprepared in providing a communications strategy outside the courtroom, according to a recent survey of senior level legal officers.

By Jon Gingerich

Few legal officers have an updated plan in place to adequately prepare for communications efforts outside of the courtroom, even though most acknowledge the many reputational effects a lawsuit can have among enthusiasts and stakeholders, according to a recent survey of senior legal officers released by B2B communications agency Greentarget.

Greentarget's 2016 Litigation Communications Survey found that an overwhelming majority — 86 percent — of respondents considered external communications important. Indeed, nearly the same number — 82 percent — reported that their organization had been involved in at least one high-profile litigation action during the last year.

However, only more than a third — 38 percent — claimed their organization has a recently revisited external communications plan in place to account for high-profile litigation, and about two-thirds of re-

spondents — 62 percent — said they either have no external communications plan, or rely on an outdated model that hasn't been revised since its inception.

Greentarget Senior Vice President Larry Larsen, who also heads the agency's crisis and litigation communications group, told *O'Dwyer's* that "the most surprising result was the stark contrast between the importance that the respondents ascribe external communications versus the actions they take to mitigate reputational risk in future situations."

"The fact is that most senior legal officers can name the top two or three lawsuits they never want their companies to face. Why not prepare for those eventualities?" Larsen told *O'Dwyer's*. "Ultimately, we believe that the legal function working in concert with the communications function and outside advisors should prepare for the most-likely contingencies. In today's litigious environ-

ments, it is not a matter of if a lawsuit will occur, but when."

Nearly 60 percent of respondents also characterized their organization's external communications plan during high-profile litigation as "conservative," and an overwhelming 80 percent cited fear of negative media coverage as a factor preventing them from becoming more aggressive in their communications efforts. While more than half of respondents — 60 percent — said their CEO was actively involved in high-profile litigation, only 15 percent said the company regularly seeks outside help when managing communications during high-profile litigation.

The survey, conducted by Greentarget's Research and Market Intelligence Group with online survey instrument Zarca, polled 73 senior legal officers of major corporations between October and November 2015. About three-quarters of respondents work for organizations accounting for at least \$500 million in annual revenue. ○

## PR services brief

### Cision enhances PR Edition platform

Chicago-based industry software giant Cision in February revealed several major upgrades to its PR platform, designed to improve efficiencies in engagement tracking for communicators and allow better content monitoring and access capabilities.

Cision Vice President of Product Management Natalia Dykij told *O'Dwyer's* that the newly unveiled features "will help communication professionals streamline their workflow and understand who is affecting their bottom line and brand reputation."

The upgrade, available on the Cision PR Edition platform, includes an expanded Twitter profile engagement feature, allowing users to access and record conversations made over that social networking service. An additional Google Analytics tracking feature lets users link accounts from that web analytics service directly to the platform, which can improve media outlet tracking by allowing users to analyze and measure traffic sources.

The upgrade also offers improved monitoring services, allowing users to integrate third-party content into Cision PR Edition, and showcases the company's newly expanded news monitoring offerings: Cision recently executed a licensing agreement with the Tribune Content Agency that now allows users to view in the company's signature PR platforms the entire text of more than 80 newspapers.

Premium services offerings, such as a "rapid response" feature that alerts client service teams to high-priority requests, and a daily, customizable news briefs feature, are also available.

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# Keeping food safety crises at bay

To maintain consumer confidence and trust, food and beverage companies are speaking out about the healthfulness of their products, as well as the integrity of supply chains and their commitments to animal care and environmental sustainability. That bond with consumers can dissipate in an instant with the emergence of a food safety concern. Here's how PR pros can work lock-step with operations counterparts to prevent safety compromises and keep brands' reputations intact.

By Stacey Stevens

In today's turbulent times, it's tempting for fully-grown, mature members of our food and beverage sector to shriek, turn and run the other direction when faced with the threat of their company or product being linked to a food safety issue.

Let's face it: in our industry, microbiological pathogens lurk around every drain, every ceiling tile that collects condensation and every box of ingredients unpacked in a restaurant kitchen.

Most of us practitioners of public relations don't claim to understand the finer distinctions between *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Clostridium botulinum* and *Escherichia coli*. So, how can we ensure our companies and clients stay out of the "tag, CDC says you're it" spotlight?

Dairy Forum 2016, a gathering of 1,100 food industry executives from around the globe, hosted by International Dairy Foods Association in January, explored this question in the session "Caution: Company Under Pressure," which I had the honor of moderating.

According to panel member Joe Levitt, Partner at Hogan Lovells and former Director of the FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, the single biggest problem is thinking this can't or won't happen to you.

Communicators: it's our job to get our companies and clients past that mindset, and once we do, the path to preparedness — and ideally prevention — is clear.

**Your QA team is reexamining and re-inventing its system from top to bottom.** There's no such thing as zero risk. And pledging to adopt the very highest food safety standards represents a major investment of time and resources.

At The Ice Cream Club, headquartered in Boynton Beach, FL, company owners watched the *Listeria* outbreaks linked to ice cream in 2015 with trepidation. But they didn't just watch, they sprang into action. They brought in outside auditors, instructing them, "We're not looking for a gold star; we want you to thoroughly review our facility for any areas of risk and opportunities to improve!" They installed new equipment, joined IDFA's *Listeria* Task Force, updated protocols and methodically retrained their employees. Importantly, they walked the production facility floor day-in-and-day-

out, visibly modeling the behaviors they wanted employees to follow. This was a critical success factor in helping employees acclimate to the dynamic new food safety culture.

**You're at the table when your leadership talks FSMA.** Communicators have pressing media interviews to conduct, content strategies to approve and executives to prep for the next earnings call. But the historic legislation that directed FDA to build a new system of food safety oversight — one focused on applying the best available science along with common sense, to prevent outbreaks of foodborne illness — must be part of our jobs too. Make sure you understand what your operations team is doing in light of the multi-year implementation of Food Safety Modernization Act regulations, and update your food safety and quality messaging and proof points accordingly. Then, take it upon yourself to make sure your quality assurance, supply chain management and science/regulatory experts appreciate the importance of reputation management, issues management and crisis communication to their efforts. And make sure your FSMA-compliant Recall Plan includes the communications plan and assets you'll need to deploy in order to properly notify customers and the public when necessary.

**You're building your reputation, every day and in every way.** The key to the success of any response-mode communication effort is that your stakeholders and the general public already know your name and enough about you to give you the benefit of the doubt when something negative surfaces. The best way for members of the food industry to ensure this is the case is to visibly engage in corporate social responsibility, responsible sourcing, nutrition, health and wellness and sustainability efforts. Make meaningful commitments and talk to the public — online and offline — about them in an authentic and passionate way.

**You have a plan in place, and you know when to pull the trigger.** Your crisis plan should be a living, breathing arsenal of strategies, checklists and tactics so you and your colleagues can respond without losing time to internal deliberations — "is this a four-alarm fire, or a three-alarm fire?" — when something hits. You're going to need

to marshal external resources quickly as well, so your plan should map out your network of legal, scientific, communications and operational advisors. And remember that scenario-based tabletop exercise that got cut from last year's budget? It certainly would have been helpful if the key players had gotten a practice session in before the playbook was put to use!

**Your third-party academic experts know you, and can speak to your track record.**

The list of third-party experts compiled by your summer intern isn't going to do much good in a crisis if you haven't built and maintained relationships with everyone on it. Invite scientific and academic experts to tour your facilities, make an effort to visit their institutions, and update them regularly on company events and milestones.

**You tap your industry associations and other support systems.** When your brand or company reputation is called into question, you're not alone. Industry associations such as IDFA have communication resources, and they employ technical experts who maintain strong relationships with federal regulators. They can advise you on preventive controls and communication strategies to shore up your prevention plan and are well equipped to buoy your team in the event of an escalated issue or crisis.

The stakes for food and beverage executives are higher than ever as the FDA becomes increasingly aggressive in using the criminal sections of the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act in the wake of food safety incidents. There have been more criminal prosecutions in the past five years of food company managers than in the prior two decades combined.

With a culture of food safety excellence and crisis preparedness in place, you may not avoid "tag, you're it" entirely, but you'll be in a much better position to get back-into-the-game, and back-to-business, as quickly as possible.

*Stacey Stevens leads the Issues and Crisis Navigation practice at FoodMinds, LLC in Chicago. ○*



Stacey Stevens





# HEALTH IS WHO WE ARE

What is health? It's what's on your plate, it's what's filling your glass, it's how we measure the way we feel. Today, health is the lens through which consumers view brands. As the definition of health expands, so too must the communications expertise on which you rely.

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# Real ingredients, real stories

Imagine stepping into a time machine and speaking with our 1976 selves, and the disbelief that would greet our tales of a future where unlikely upstarts, as opposed to reliable titans, are winning over consumers, where raw, unfiltered personality surpasses carefully groomed branding, and where big names have to rewrite their playbooks in attempts to stave off encroachment by rebels who resonate better with the masses. Sound like politics? I'm talking about food.

By Max Martens

Although the tides have been turning in the consumables world for a few years already, food marketers in 2016 find themselves in a similar situation as campaign managers struggling to figure out how to position their candidates for an electorate with dramatically different perspectives than generations prior. Instead of pulling a lever in a curtained booth, our “constituents” are voting with their wallets at grocery stores and restaurants. The scramble to connect with authenticity is just as real in either case.

We've all heard for some time now that Big Food is faltering, losing consumer trust and not adjusting fast enough to the new realities of shoppers' expectations. First, of course, that relates to foodstuffs themselves — the actual Product in the five Ps of the classic marketing mix. Do consumers today want convenient but nutritionally suspect packaged foods from the center of the store? Is there a place for artificial colors and preservatives anymore? Manufacturers seeing worrisome figures in their IRI reports have been tinkering with the formulas of classic products in hopes that a few changes to the ingredient list will keep their boxed and jarred category captains from becoming obsolete. And the virtual explosion of kale on restaurant menus is a sign that chains are trying desperately to appear relevant as out-of-home dining patterns are being shaken up like never before.

But then there are the other critical Ps: positioning and promotion. That's where we as communication professionals are challenged to take the foods our clients or employers give us to work with — no matter what's on the ingredient list — and figure out how to make them relatable to audiences. As with politics, there are plenty of missteps and surprising breakthroughs from which to learn.

I've been reminded of this over the last few weeks, as various food e-newsletters to which I subscribe were full of ads for KFC's new Nashville Hot Chicken. Curious, I clicked through to see how this industrialized version of a regional specialty was being touted. “Authentically Nashville! Also authentically hot. Also authentically chicken.” While I assume the copy was in-

tentionally trying to be humorous, it was also a bit ironic. Just like people who tell you they are cool really aren't, products that have to tell you they are authentic surely aren't. Some of the press coverage of KFC's launch corroborates that.

In a *Time* magazine article about this spicy poultry trend, *The Hot Chicken Cookbook* author Timothy Davis was quoted as saying, “Hot chicken is taking off, and while I'm proud of the food going elsewhere, I want the story of it [to] go with it.” How true that is, for cayenne-encrusted chicken and for a host of other foods. If the dish becomes so far removed from its source and its simplicity, it has lost most of what made it a phenomenon in the first place. (I won't even begin to imagine what Col. Harland Sanders would think of his company, in which the K once proudly stood for Kentucky, basing its new fortunes on a recipe from Tennessee.)

By contrast, two better examples of connecting with consumers via eyebrow-raising poultry “reinventions” come from the opposite end of the dining spectrum. A-list white tablecloth chefs Ludo Lefebvre and Thomas Keller in recent years have won new audiences for their personal versions of inexpensive, simple-but-sensational fried and roasted chicken (at Ludo Truck and Ad Hoc, respectively). Experiments with down-scaling by fine dining chefs are becoming more commonplace, partially a legacy of the recession and partially because diners' habits are changing. In the cases of Keller and Lefebvre, their experiments succeeded wildly because they came with a believable story of earnestness. They weren't trying to wink at trendy consumers and say, “I'm so famous that I can make something simple into something gourmet.” Rather, they tapped their roots, created approachable dishes and rang the cash register with a much larger public fan base — a successful marriage of product and positioning.

Going back to a political metaphor, just as when Ted Cruz used “New York values” as an impugnement against Donald Trump, foods' origin stories can connote a lot about how trustworthy and relatable they are. A recent victim of this hubris in the food world is the Chipotle restaurant chain. For

years they cast aspersions at their quick-service competitors for using ingredients that were from “big agriculture” and therefore, perhaps less wholesome. Chipotle built itself a tall pedestal from which to proclaim its support of sustainable sourcing practices — until those practices proved flawed and rampant media coverage of food-borne illness brought the brand back down to reality.

Knowing when to play the “local” vs. “locale” card is important. At PadillaCRT, we represent a variety of food and beverage marketing boards, and sometimes the sense of place that we aim to convey is the sense of consistency on the grocer's shelf. Locally grown may not be an asset when the nearby growing season for a particular fruit or vegetable is limited. For consumers and restaurateurs to have a reliable year-round supply of a particular product, sometimes it must be shipped in from elsewhere, and that's not necessarily an undesirable thing from a quality control standpoint (see also: Chipotle).

Locale is also the stronger of the messages when it's an inherent part of the product's mystique. For example, if you've never tasted a wine from the Rioja region of Spain, part of what you're initially buying is its connection to a vibrant culture and cuisine, without yet sipping to discover such nuances as acidity and tannins. In these cases, locally produced is obviously not the message that resonates best with consumers.

The net is, we food communicators are keeping on our toes more than ever to ensure what we say about our products is on the currently acceptable scale of the mass vs. the personal. We can't rest on old notions that certain products or brands inevitably mean a certain thing to consumers, lest we find ourselves in a Clinton/Sanders-esque challenge to be the most authentic food candidate.

Max Martens is Vice President at PadillaCRT. ○



Max Martens



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## CERTIFICATIONS:



# Boost your brand with social media 'spokescreatures'

Many companies hire a spokesperson to tell a brand or company's story. Why? Because customers are more likely to forge a connection with people. But there's another way to interact with customers and engage them: using an animated brand mascot in the digital world.

By Rafael Sangiovanni

We call these mascots "spokescreatures." These animated characters, talking products and other non-human brand ambassadors offer a great way to deliver a company message and can tell a more powerful brand story. They also can attract new fans to a product or brand through social media. In this always-on, socially-driven era we're living in, it's a great way for brands to create an authentic experience with their customers.

There's a fascinating reason for this: People want to buy into a story that they believe in. This happens all the time when we create a spokescreature. People like to play along with the illusion that they are talking to a character, as long as the interaction is authentic, unique, and entertaining or educational.

To increase chances for success, the following strategies and best practices for creating and managing a spokescreature have come from direct experience with spokescreatures like the Mrs. Butterworth's bottle, Vlasic Stork or Manatee Lagoon's Mia the Manatee.

## Creating a spokescreature story

Brand engagement and loyalty are about relationships, and people have relationships with those who earn their trust and engage. Spokescreatures serve as a good bridge or stand-in for capturing the spirit of a brand or company and to establish rapport. In addition, spokescreatures can interact in real-time, 24/7, providing a more immediate experience than a traditional spokesperson.

Companies that invest the time and resources to develop a fully realized spokescreature gain more control and influence on their message. The key here is to set yourself to follow through on social media's most valued quality: Authenticity. In this case, the goal is to be genuine to a spokescreature's personality, character and brand story.

Through that, spokescreatures then allow companies to tell their brand story with personality and interact in a fun way.

Mrs. Butterworth's is a great example. She's a legacy mascot, having been around since the '60s, and her sweet, motherly personality — with just a hint of cheekiness — is a major selling point to the brand experience. At the same time, she's very aware that she's a bottle of syrup and not a person, and that leads to really fun, engaging content marketing opportunities.

## Provide authenticity, avoid self-promotion

Even though they both represent Pinnacle Food Inc. products, spokescreatures for Mrs.

Butterworth's and Vlasic have different goals and online audiences. Mrs. Butterworth's is a grandmotherly character who is all about family togetherness, cute pancakes and celebrating the imaginative mom. In contrast, people who eat pickles focus more on snacking than sharing mealtime with their families, and that experience is attuned to the Vlasic Stork's witty, sarcastic personality.

Capitalizing on personalized experiences can make your message resonate even more. For example, rbb Communication's Team Vlasic contest identified four types of pickle eater personalities (e.g., "Grill Master" and "Expert Eater"). Four winners were each celebrated with a dedicated content tab on Facebook and gifted a year's worth of Vlasic pickles.

Successful spokescreatures create an authentic experience, and generally promote a product more indirectly. This reinforces loyalty and creates an engaging experience for customers.

## Create a character that stays on message

It's important to develop a complete profile — including the story and history of the character — to give them depth. The closest analogy is all the preparation an actor makes to get into character.

Staying true to the brand and staying in character at all times remains essential. Spokescreatures enjoy a little more leeway than traditional spokespeople; they speak from the first person, they can share an opinion and can talk about their likes and dislikes. Even so, spokescreatures need to follow defined parameters. What can they say and not say in the moment?

Despite their lighthearted personalities, spokescreatures also carry a lot responsibility. Community management remains one of their most crucial roles. Customers need to feel like someone is there at the keyboard responding to them individually, and that that someone is "really" the spokescreature. As such, there are no canned responses. When someone gets a response within five minutes and it's in character — they know someone is putting in the effort and will buy into the narrative. It's also a post on a very public thread, so it's really worth the effort to do it right.

## Complete the picture

Spokescreatures should be three dimensional in all aspects — tone, "voice," how they interact and their appearance. The same way you build a brand profile, you create the look for your spokescreature. This should include

the poses they can take, the way they can interact with an image or move on a page. Similar to creating a logo that can be used in multiple situations, it's important to generate different iterations of the character. You want to create enough flexibility to have that spokescreature easily represented in different scenarios and to allow for as many content marketing opportunities as possible.



Rafael Sangiovanni

## Believe in the ability to suspend disbelief

A certain aspect of human psychology and behavior plays right into the success of a spokescreature. Earlier I mentioned the idea that people want to buy into a story that they believe in. With the right execution, it's pretty amazing how often, and how quickly, people will play along interacting with a spokescreature.

Take Manatee Lagoon's Mia the Manatee. She represents the Manatee Lagoon in South Florida, an educational eco-center created by Florida Power & Light Company. She tells the story of Manatee Lagoon from the perspective of a manatee, which captures the spirit of FPL's eco-minded effort and showcases the benefits to manatees in a very personalized way. Through this, Mia can reach different audiences, including educators and other people interested in ecology, and interacts in real-time with a giddy enthusiasm.

## Handling customer service

It's also important to set some parameters for a spokescreature. Some social media posts will fall outside the realm of their expertise.

We recommend enrolling your customer service team to step-in and help address customer issues. Think of the spokescreature as a quarterback in that instance. This serves two purposes: It ensures customers get help, and it keeps the spokescreatures' role and personality intact.

## When it's right, it has might

There is no blanket, one-size-fits-all for this strategy. A spokescreature needs to fit with your brand. But when a well-developed and highly interactive spokescreature suits a brand or company, it can give your customers a great experience that keeps them coming back for more.

Rafael Sangiovanni is Digital and Social Media Producer at rbb Communications in Miami, Florida. ○



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# Making sense of personalized nutrition

**As more become conscious of the connection between the food we eat and health, it's not surprising that personalized nutrition is piquing consumer interest. While this concept has been discussed in the medical community for decades, it's finally gaining broad notice among consumers.**

By Jeannie Houchins

Following the announcement of the 2015 U.S. Dietary Guidelines, which provided sweeping guidelines and population-level guidance about what to eat, some consumers are seeking assistance elsewhere, based on personal data from emerging tools.

Being a registered dietitian and a public relations professional who bridges the science of nutrition and the art of communication, I have a unique opportunity to see how both worlds work together in creating awareness and educating the public.

In the past few years, the rise of wearable technology and mobile apps has dominated conversations and share of spend. With these accessible forms of health tracking, personal data mining, and an increase in wellness messaging, the way we communicate with consumers is rapidly evolving from mass communicating to one-on-one touchpoints.

Before diving into the core of personalized nutrition, let's start from the beginning. What exactly is personalized nutrition? To the medical community, it means nutrigenomics: how foods affect a person's genes. To marketers, those in the communication fields, and even consumers, it means having a food and nutrition regime tailored to them, their disease state, or their health goal.

Since the completion of the human genome mapping in 2003, direct-to-consumer genetic testing companies, such as 23andMe, use biometrics to provide consumers with

detailed reports on nutrient deficiencies and other potential conditions that would impact their health (e.g., caffeine consumption, lactose intolerance, etc.). While this testing sounds attractive at first blush, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics states that this is still an emerging field. Additional training for dietitians and enhanced regulation must be in place before this method of nutrition counseling can enter the mainstream.

From a practitioner's standpoint, this type of testing does not provide a comprehensive recommendation on how to build and sustain a healthful lifestyle — namely meal planning, exercise and sleep. And, without properly communicating how to use the information these tests provide, consumers will continue to be frustrated by deciphering their health needs.

## Personalized and private

Receiving real-time data on health measurements is one benefit of tracking. The information is unique and delivered to a wearable device or mobile phone — no blanket ranges of numbers, only exact numbers. But, a challenge hindering the widespread adoption of personalized nutrition is how to best protect people's privacy. For most apps, personal information must be entered for tailored health outcomes. And, for direct-to-consumer genetic testing, laws on how to protect genetic material have not caught up to the potential ramifications on the security and release of the data. Despite some of these concerns, researchers still see the value in studying the viability of personalized nutrition as the next generation of disease prevention measures.

## Searching for answers

One of the largest initiatives funded by the European Food Information Council is Food4me.org, a four-year research project currently in progress with eight European Union nations. At the helm of the project is Professor Mike Gibney of the Institute of Food and Health, University College Dublin, who manages a consortium of experts in a variety of fields including biological sciences, consumer studies, marketing, IT and technology, ethical and legal industries, and communication fields. Linking these industries to one study allows for better understanding to how consumers view and use personalized nutrition. The researchers

aim to establish best practices for communicating personalized nutrition. The findings of this research will set the benchmark for practitioners, educators, and communication professionals on how to use nutrigenomics information to best help their audiences in achieving their health goals.

## Personalized nutrition in practice

Even without having genetic material to guide a personalized nutrition plan, there is absolute power for consumers to know that they have control of their health and, more importantly, their data. They have the option of deciding which tools to use that will suit their health needs. Companies like ShopWell and Ingredient1 offer two different models of communicating success that meets consumers' needs. ShopWell uses mobile product scans and enlists registered dietitians to score and recommend products that fit the user's needs.



Jeannie Houchins

This model allows the user to work within the guardrails of a ranking system. On the other hand, Ingredient1 allows consumers to create their food identity so they can discover foods that suit their regime, ultimately enabling them to customize their food and nutrition needs. Two different apps, two different ways of communicating personalized nutrition.

Attracting general consumers is already gaining momentum, but one company is looking forward and speaking to pregnant women with an eye on impacting the future generation in the womb. Nutrino, powered by IBM Watson, is merging personalized nutrition and artificial intelligence to help moms-to-be with decisions that matter outside of the doctor's office. One-on-one communication that extends outside of the healthcare office provides comfort and support for women with a lot on their minds.

For consumers to fully embrace personalized nutrition, the tools and research must work together. If these tools are truly effective, one-to-one communication will soon overpower advice en masse. Ultimately, if the science can influence the consumer to initiate change while using technology to improve or maintain their health and create value, then the communication will produce the desired outcomes for all parties — researchers, health care professional, technology and, ultimately, the consumer.

Registered dietitian Jeannie Houchins represents food and nutrition clients at inVentiv Health company Allidura Consumer. ○

## PR news brief

### Abernathy MacGregor aids Wounded Warrior Project

Wounded Warrior Project, the veterans' aid organization under scrutiny for lavish spending, has engaged Abernathy MacGregor Group for PR counsel.

The *New York Times* Jan. 28 covered the organization's evolution from a "basement operation handing out backpacks" to a "fund-raising giant, taking in more than \$372 million in 2015." The paper's reporting on WWP's spending of millions of dollars on travel, dinners, hotels and conferences raised eyebrows for an organization that was previously unimpeachable in the public eye. Other media followed, including a three-part CBS series.

WWP's board said in a statement Feb. 1 that it "takes very seriously the concerns that have been raised in recent days" and is retaining independent advisors for a financial and policy review. "We remain steadfast in our commitment to our warriors and supporters and will ensure that the organization is effectively fulfilling this important mission," the group said.



# How purpose builds consumer trust

When it comes to food and social responsibility, few issues today remain so personal yet so complex. Consumers care deeply about how and where their food is made, and by whom. Manufacturers have been assigned increasing responsibility in creating products that not only taste great, but are also crafted with purpose. Sophisticated consumers are carefully choosing how to stock their pantry, with products from thoughtful, inspiring brands they trust. The question is: how do brands build that trust?

By Atalanta Rafferty

As consumers' needs evolve, food companies are now deeply challenged to answer a growing number of questions: How are we supporting the communities that provide us our ingredients? What is our purpose? What impact are we having on people and on the planet? The answers must go beyond profit, and consider how any given food product can provide a meaningful impact on the world, and the people within it. Perhaps even more challenging is crafting the story of purpose to consumers, communicating a mission and vision that are both genuine and authentic, but also tangible.

## The issues at hand

Today, consumers have two primary concerns: the safety and health impact of the products they consume. They want to be able to see exactly what they're eating, and how it will impact their health. According to the "Nutritional Labeling and Clean Labels" study by Packaged Facts, 87 percent of customers analyze nutrition labels, with a significant number of Americans separately seeking out general nutritional guidelines and information. Additionally, 67 percent of American consumers preferred to buy groceries that have simple and few ingredients.

As a result of this sprouting desire, food companies of all shapes and sizes are responding with claims like "GMO-free" and "Zero Trans Fat" on labels, spending billions on advertising that tout cleaner labels, "antibiotic-free" foods or removal of all artificial preservatives and colors in their products. The smartest brands know that they must go one step further, providing substantial evidence and proof that their products are not only safe, but can have measurable, tangible impact on a person's everyday nutrition goals.

Consumers are also paying more attention to the impact brands have on the environment, considering the use of land and natural resources, and contributions to reducing pollution and food waste. Thanks to the 2010 Mintel report, we've known for some time that consumers are more likely to spend money on products produced with environmental responsibility in mind. Survey results said that 35 percent of shoppers

would pay more for environmentally friendly products, according to 2015 research on green living from Mintel. More recently, a 2015 study from the Center of Food Integrity showed that 60 percent of consumers are seeking information on environmental impact on brand websites and on packaging. Other hot button topics related to company's CSR practices, such as animal welfare and labor and human rights, are also key factors given considerable consideration prior to purchase.

These results support what is referred to as "strategic CSR," where consumers or employees may reward companies for their CSR activities by paying high prices or accepting lower wages for their CSR activities. Today, the economic climate is such that investors are backing smaller, socially responsible companies, in light of consumers seeking out products with sustainable, environmentally sound products and policies.

## Making it matter

Beyond identifying the impact of any given brand, a much more difficult task is effectively communicating the message. That's where PR comes in, as a star player in building consumer trust. Now more than ever, we as public relations professionals are needed to ensure that a brand's mission is meaningful, as consumers seek out strong, authentic messages that outrun traditional advertising tactics. Our recent work with food and beverage clients have confirmed the three clear contributors that are key to making an impact on consumer perception, and to truly win consumer trust.

**Make the impact clear.** Today, being lauded as a "trusted brand" or "brand with purpose" among industry experts and consumers is considered the holy grail of marketing. That said, the number of brands that effectively convey their impact is, sadly, far and few in between. Many have struggled with how exactly to convey their message to consumers — and while a brand may have all the tools for claiming health and sustainability impact, crafting the cohesive story is what's truly important. As storytelling experts, public relations professionals must tackle this task, by building a brand narrative that is clear, concise and quantifiable.

Don't muddy the waters with details—pick those core over-arching themes that will convey something "real" to consumers, without being overly complex or verbose. A great rule we live by at RF|Binder is being able to answer in no more than three short sentences — ideally in one sentence — what a company does to better this earth, and the people on it.

## Start a conversation.

The medium is just as important as the message. Consumers, particularly Millennials, are placing less and less trust in messages that come straight from brands via advertising or paid mentions. Instead, they seek out the opinion of their peers and relatable, aspirational influencers to find brands they should believe in. The power of third-party influencers and advocates has never been so strong, and it is essential that any brand leverage influencers to create an authentic, organic conversation, that feels natural and unforced. Opening up an organic, meaningful conversation with third-party advocates is essential to unlocking powerful brand trust and recognition among consumers.

**Don't just say it, show it.** Once a mission is crafted, and core messaging pillars are designated, it's essential to ensure the message is in some way present across all events, activities, packaging, websites, platforms, etc. In fact, PR professionals must take a message, and turn it into a "look" or a "feeling" — the message should have a physical, visible, and transient pulse across all communications tactics and platforms, in order to truly convey the mission the core defining factor of the brand's essence.

It's an exciting time in the food industry for PR professionals, where we have the power to help brands combine profit with purpose, creating a message that truly inspires trust and advocacy from consumers. Hopefully, we'll be able to help solve some of the world's biggest problems along the way.

*Atalanta Rafferty is Executive Managing Director at RF|Binder. ○*



Atalanta Rafferty

# How hotels are staying ahead of the F&B game

**Travelers today are eager to connect with destinations through food. The result? Hotels are now offering innovative programs that are propelling the hospitality industry to new culinary heights.**

By Adrienne Jordan

According to Skift's "Megatrends Defining Travel in 2016" report, food is identified as a leading hook for travel. Local cuisine provides a direct connection to the history of a region, and travelers are eager to take part in immersive food and beverage programming offered at hotels worldwide. In doing so, consumers drive hotels to provide innovative programs that reflect the destination or city. Some of the 2016 F&B hot programs include in-room dining programs targeted at providing restaurant quality service, direct experiences between chefs and consumers, and innovative and sophisticated cocktail programs.

## Cutting edge in-room dining

Hotels are changing the way they approach room service. At the Thompson Chicago, the restaurant and hotel work in tandem. The James Beard Award-winning Nico Osteria opened in the Thompson Chicago's hotel in December 2014. More than a year later, there are still weeks-long waiting lists for the Italian restaurant, which offers 100 percent of the pasta made in-house. This prompted a revamped room service program that debuted this past fall. "Chefs are oftentimes hesitant to offer full restaurant menus for in-room dining orders because food may not travel well," said Steve Shern, General Manager Thompson Chicago. "The Thompson Chicago is a boutique hotel, so the process is expedited compared to larger scale properties."

Where many hotels offer only a limited menu for in-room dining, guests can now order the full restaurant menu from the comfort of their rooms. "Our desire is to make a change that sets a new expectation that guests may not even know to anticipate," said Shern. Whether you order a full course like the Melted Leek Triangolini or a Pear Crema desert, you will be treated to in-room tableside restaurant quality service. The server will set up colorful placemats on the table inside the room, along with salt and pepper shakers, fresh bread and lime and lemon on small plates. There are also pistachio macaroons added to every entrée as a pre-desert item.

## Getting close to the chef

The hotel food & beverage industry recognizes the desire for guest-chef interaction. At the Grand Residences Riviera Cancun, the Chef's Table is an exclusive dining experience offered with the resort's Executive Chef, Yann Michel Cozic. Diners can venture "behind the swinging doors" of the Grand Residences kitchen to watch Chef Cozic prepare multi-course meals with wine pairings selected for each course. Guests are able to experience an up close and personal meal with the chef and receive an autographed copy of the menu afterwards as a memento.

Relais & Chateaux properties are designated as such by having top notch restaurants inside their hotels. At the Winvian Farm, a Relais & Chateaux resort in Connecticut, The Restaurant at Winvian Farm sources ingredients directly from the onsite organic farm, which grows fruit and veggies year round. Guests are invited into the garden with the chef for tours and can peruse the plants on their own. As the property serves organic vegetables as 75 percent of the food, guests are able to pick their own vegetables and fruit and bring them to the chef to put in their meals.



**The Gold Coast Burger at James Beard Award-winning restaurant Nico Osteria, located in the Thompson Chicago hotel.**

## Advancing beverage programs

Consumers have a growing appreciation towards sustainability in hotel properties. At the Hilton San Francisco, there is a newly incorporated water system to make guests' hydration more sustainable. The hotel provides FloWater Refill Stations so that guests can have access to purified, crisp and chilled water instead of opting for plastic bottled

water that is left in the rooms. Ice machines are no longer needed with this system, as the FloWater Refill dispenses optimally chilled water. It also provides a hot water option at the touch of a button. The unit tallies how many plastic bottles have been saved from the landfill with each refill, so guests experience how the hotel is helping with green initiatives.

Hands-on beverage learning has been a positive addition to the Costa Rica Marriott San Jose. The hotel is set on a thirty-acre coffee plantation and incorporates its beans directly from the property's plantation into unique coffee-themed programming. The "Café Chorreado" option allows guests to experience making coffee in the traditional Costa Rican way through drip process. The property uses dark roast but offers coffee from different regions of Costa Rica. With the "Coffee Curator" program, the property features an onsite coffee curator at the Casa del Café that hosts latte design classes and demonstrates how to best harvest coffee at home.

## Cocktail ingenuities

Cocktail carts are proving to be a trendy addition to hotel food and beverage programs. The Gwen hotel in Chicago offers a mixology happy hour, featuring a Prohibition Porter cocktail experience. The experience provides guests with perfectly crafted classic cocktails, created with fresh, high-quality ingredients, presented in attractive glassware from a vintage-inspired portable bar cart. When guests reserve the Prohibition Porter, they have their own bartender for 30 minutes to serve up to four drinks of their choice. The Porter can be arranged in the lobby, to their suite, guestroom terrace, or meeting room. "Guests love it," said General Manager, Kim Corrigan. "The Prohibition Porter is certainly an eye catcher. Anytime it's being used in the lobby, people stop and ask about it. It has definitely been the best way to create buzz."

Several of ARIA's restaurants feature spirit carts, which bring guests tableside liquors. The vintage rum cart originated at the ARIA New York inside the Carbone restaurant. The cart offers rare rums with a historic twist, like the Black Tot British Royal Naval Rum, the last rum ration ever issued aboard ships of the British Royal Navy. There is an absinthe cart at the Las Vegas ARIA restaurant, Sage. The spirit is often served by slowly dripping over a sugar cube, on the rocks with cold water, or lit on fire and poured over ice. ○



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# Marketing functional ingredients

How to navigate today's regulatory environment when executing PR campaigns for food and beverage brands that contain health claims.

By Lindsey Carnett

Since the rise of natural stores like Whole Foods and an increased awareness surrounding allergens and non-GMOs, marketing food and beverage items has become more challenging. From the disclaimers to sampling protocol, a simple product launch isn't as basic as it used to be.

## Health claims are serious

As the former marketing director for a global nutritional supplement brand, I spent hours on the phone with FDA and FTC attorneys reviewing structure and function claims tied back to published double-blind placebo controlled university studies as they related to product packaging, website copy, social media copy, messaging in national advertisements, even in press releases and pitch letters to media.

When launching a PR campaign for a brand with functional ingredients, request the list of approved claims, approved messaging, the full published clinical study and the supplement facts panel.

## Pay close attention to the new rules

Today the regulatory environment is far stricter, especially when it comes to social media content from a compliance standpoint, as well as sending product samples to bloggers for review, requesting the ap-

propriate disclosures be adhered to by your contacts.

It was recently reported that the FDA is investigating the health claims and benefits of many nutritional bars, asking some manufacturers to remove misleading claims from their packaging. This means having a crisis communications plan in place is a must when launching any consumable, especially when health claims are in the mix. This doesn't just mean a phone tree. This is a designated hashtag for each terrible scenario you can think of so you own the conversation, pre-drafted social media posts, pre-recorded voicemail recordings, the skeleton of a press release, pre-drafted statements for the website and pre-drafted emails for key customers, including retailers who might be negatively affected.

## Know your role

It's important, as a PR professional in the field of functional foods and beverages, to manage expectations with clients in terms of lead-time for social media content, messaging strategies and disclosures with media receiving product to sample. Ideally, the client should have their legal counsel review blog posts, pitch letters, press releases and social media content and ads to ensure

the product claims are in compliance.

Will this slow down the process? Yes. This simply means you'll have to work a month ahead, depending on how quickly your client's regulatory department can provide approvals. It's better for your agency and for the client to be safe than sorry.

## Pre-approved social media responses

Worried about the one-hour consumer expectation for social media response times? Develop a series of frequently asked consumer questions and pre-approved responses. If there's a question that is too out of the ordinary, you will need to check with your client's designated customer service agent or legal to develop the most appropriate response in a timely fashion.

## Greater competition, differentiation

In 2016, it's predicted that manufacturers will focus on producing foods and beverages that are deemed natural, healthy and clean, containing free from ingredients and benefiting from a non-GMO make-up. With so many different options, tastes and brands available, it is hard to remember a time when the nutrition industry was so competitive.

As of June 2015, more than 1,000 types of nutrition bars were on sale with growth in the category attributed to the consumer's desire for a nutritional and fulfilling bar shaped snack alternative. The US food and nutritional bar market is projected to reach near \$8.3 billion in 2016.

## What's next?

With new products, tastes and shapes released on a regular basis, products need to combine nutritional value and excellence to steal the attention of an increasingly health conscious, active consumer. This is both exciting and daunting for PR professionals.

There is room for creativity, new marketing tactics and consumer education surrounding the branded ingredients foods and beverage manufacturers are using to differentiate themselves from the competition. Just don't forget to do your homework by paying close attention to the science, working with the legal dept. surrounding the claims and bringing your best marketing tactics for the next award-winning new product launches.

Lindsey Carnett is CEO and President of Marketing Maven. ○



Lindsey Carnett

# Social media, Internet radio ads surge

By Jon Gingerich

Digital media growth pushed U.S. advertising market revenues during January and for the year, according to a February report released by the Standard Media Index, the industry standard for ad spend data.

Overall, U.S. advertising market revenues climbed four percent in January compared to the same period the year prior. The biggest winner for ad spends was digital media, which surged 16 percent year-over-year, according to SMI data, and now accounts for 27 percent of all ad spending.

Inside the digital media market the numbers were even more promising: ad revenues for Internet radio increased 29 percent over the year, investment in video sites was up 39 percent and social media ad spends were up 56 percent.

Broadcast TV ad revenues also grew by 9 percent. The SMI report cites the American

Football Conference Championship Game between the New England Patriots and Denver Broncos — which received more than 53 million viewers, the second largest viewership for that event in nearly 40 years — as partially responsible for this ad growth.

The top growth categories for the year, according to the SMI, were prescription pharmaceuticals (35 percent), consumer electronics (30 percent) and beauty/grooming (15 percent).

Traditional radio ad volume, however, continued to decline, falling 16 percent in January from the year prior, according to SMI data. Cable TV advertising was also down, revealing a three percent decline for the month. And while TV ad revenues grew, the medium's total market share reveals a two percent drop from the year prior, at 59 percent, compared to 61 percent in January 2015. ○



# Brands lessons from Super Bowl 50

An analysis of social media activity during Super Bowl Sunday that focused on food and beverage brands can provide communicators with insight into what messages resonate with consumers.

By Michelle Vangel

Football is the epicenter of Super Bowl Sunday, but tens of millions of Americans look forward to other parts of the big day.

While 112 million people watched the Denver Broncos beat the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50, only about 5.4 million Facebook users identified themselves as fans of those teams, according to 2015 data. For many, Super Bowl Sunday is about getting together with friends and family to enjoy creative commercials, star-studded halftime shows and snacks that pose serious setbacks to those New Year's Resolutions.

Tens of millions of people broadcast what each part of Super Bowl Sunday means to them on social channels. For brands tuning in, that means an opportunity to leverage the power of social data to better understand the hearts and minds of target audiences.

Cision's Global Insights team analyzed social conversations on Super Bowl Sunday about food and beverage brands, synthesizing and interpreting millions of posts from Twitter, Facebook, forums and other sources to better understand how people responded to commercials and what resonated with consumers.

Though this analysis specifically focuses on the food and beverage industry during the Super Bowl, the insights benefit brands of all types even with the big game in the rear-view.

## Mainstays get people talking

The Super Bowl may be the only time when a communications team can pitch spending \$167,000 per second without getting laughed out of a boardroom. If you do pitch, you'd better be sure to justify the \$5 million investment for a 30-second commercial with quantifiable results.

Though tying sales data directly to one Super Bowl ad often takes time, social media listening tools allow brands to measure their share of voice against all other advertisers, competitors and all brands mentioned.

Doritos and Budweiser emerged as Super Bowl 50's share-of-voice titans, controlling 31 percent and 21 percent of the food and beverage share of voice, respectively. When compared to just their competitors, the brands further separated themselves. Budweiser controlled 43 percent of share of voice for all beer brands. Doritos achieved 61 percent of all discussion among snack brands.

Doritos dominated share of voice with its

final Crash the Super Bowl Contest, which since 2006 has aired a fan-made commercial during the Super Bowl. This contest has the added bonus of driving results even before the big game, as people can check out the contenders ahead of time. Instead of a couple 30-second spots, Doritos gets dozens that people enjoy watching and get invested in before the game.

Budweiser, on the other hand, has long ridden Clydesdales to Super Bowl success, even in recent years, where the company added a mischievous puppy to its stories.

Experience wasn't the only path to generating social chatter. A Super Bowl newcomer, Avocados from Mexico, generated the third-largest share of voice — 10 percent — beating out Super Bowl veterans like Mountain Dew, Pepsi and Coca-Cola.

## Volume isn't everything

Yes, brands did a great job of getting people talking, but discussion volume alone doesn't

adequately portray impact.

For example, Doritos, despite earning the largest share of voice, received mixed reaction to its spot, which showed a soon-to-be father at an ultrasound munching Doritos only to discover that his unborn child instinctively wants some of the chips.

"The ad was more contentious in topic than Frito-Lay may have realized, but the reaction ultimately leaned positive in tone and got people talking," said Cision Senior Insights Analyst Caitlin Jamali.

While this insight shows how sensitive audiences can be around certain issues, Budweiser could learn from its messaging just how much people love its Clydesdales.

The hairy-hooved horses didn't fit the theme of its first commercial that featured Helen Mirren admonishing those who drink

and drive. The second was an aggressive commercial that told the story of what Budweiser is by showing what it is not. As an aggressive beat played over images of teams celebrating, people partying and industrial machinery cracking grains, phrases like "Not Sipped," "Not Following" and "Not A Hobby" appeared on screen. Though powerful, the ad featured only a few seconds of the iconic Clydesdales at the beginning and end.

"While discussion for Budweiser drove the second-highest share of voice of the competitive set, buzz leaned negative in tone as viewers were disappointed that the horses did not play a prominent role in the advertising," Jamali said.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Butterfinger yielded less than 1 percent of overall share, but still enjoyed success with its "Bolder than bold" commercial that featured a bull rider parachuting from an airplane and eating a candy bar.

"Butterfinger drove the highest social net sentiment score of the Super Bowl commercials analyzed," Jamali said. "It received praise for being funny and was noted as a favorite."

## Lessons from the Super Bowl

Key insights from social discussion of these and the dozens of other commercials from Super Bowl Sunday include the notion of reaching people amidst a sea of competition.

"Ultimately, light-hearted ads that are uncontentious in topic resonate as viewers do not have to read deeply into an idea and can enjoy situational humor," Jamali said.

Though situational humor can provide a significant impact, brands need to consider the timing, overall theme and perception of their brand. Failing to tailor communication will ultimately result in failure.

For example, Budweiser broadcast an important message about drinking responsibly. It managed to keep the mood as light as possible without undoing the intent of its message. Had it made light of the situation, it would have faced backlash.

Social analysis is an important tool in the brand's use to create relevant content that resonates with key audiences, to inform messaging and content strategy, and to understand results. That's true not just for Super Bowl Sunday, but every day.

Michelle Vangel is Vice President of Insight Solutions at Cision. ○



Michelle Vangel



# Where diet fads meet dietary advice

The newly released 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans outlines in great detail how people can improve their overall eating patterns. While their instructions inform the thinking and direction for marketers and food manufacturers alike, consumer food trends, diet preferences and purchase drivers are just as important to consider.

By Jenna A. Bell

With the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans making recommendations reminiscent of years past — including reducing saturated fat and sugar, balancing calorie intake and choosing a variety of nutrient dense foods — consumers remain drawn to more specific diet and nutrition plans such as Paleo or gluten-free. These trending diets are likely to have a greater impact on brands.

For the fourth year, the annual “What’s Trending in Nutrition” survey from Pollock Communications and *Today’s Dietitian* gives marketers and manufacturers an update on what consumers will be putting in their shopping carts and on their plates this upcoming year.

Who knows what’s trending in nutrition? With their ears to the ground, the gatekeepers for all things food and nutrition — registered dietitian nutritionists — are pros at forecasting nutrition trends. “Registered dietitian nutritionists are the top food and nutrition experts for consumers, brands and the media,” said Louise Pollock, Founder and President of Pollock Communications. “Any health and wellness marketing team would benefit from their insights on consumer behavior and habits.”

The 2016 survey, conducted by the nutrition trade magazine *Today’s Dietitian*

and Pollock Communications, shows some trends that are guiding consumers from the store to the plate — with seeds as a leading superfood, ancient grains staying strong and kale faltering in its MVP status, while certain product claims and a new position on fat emerge.

Whether they’re in, out, or staying the course, here’s what you should know in 2016:

## Clean eating is where it’s at

According to the survey, RDNs agree that more consumers will base their purchasing decisions on “clean eating.” Gluten-free and Paleo diets will still be popular, but the nutrition pros tell us that consumers will move towards “clean” versus caveman.

## The influencer award goes to ...

The stars! Most RDs said they believe that nutrition trends start with celebrities, with 33 percent citing them as the initiator of food and eating fads.

## Shopping for free

When it comes to the messages and claims that impact shopping decisions, consumers in 2016 will look for “free.” Claims like “GMO-free” and “antibiotic-free” will prompt purchases, as will “additive-free” and “locally sourced.” The question is whether these characteristics actually drive healthier purchases. While consumers may

look for GMO-free or other “free-from” claims on the label, it doesn’t mean it always leads to healthier, more nutritious options.

## Healthy eating in the digital age

When it comes to getting nutrition information, the RDNs cited blogs, social media and TV, in that order. What’s more, 71 percent believe more consumers will use technology to help improve their diet in 2016, likely tracking their food intake or activity with smartphone apps or wearables like MyFitnessPal, LoseIt and Fitbit, among others. While the Internet and new technology can provide a wealth of nutrition information, nearly two-thirds of RDNs are concerned that consumers are also getting wrong and potentially harmful nutrition information from blogs and social media. When sharing nutrition facts and news, look to the experts for a credibility factor.

## Taste still a leading factor

With diet trends constantly shifting, when it comes to deciding what to eat, RDNs say that taste and convenience are consumers’ most important considerations. Nearly all responded that convenience and taste are important or very important when it comes to deciding what to eat — while healthfulness is not the deciding factor according to half of the respondents. Even when making healthy choices, RDNs know that taste and convenience can be deal breakers.

The 2015-2020 DGAs can guide brands looking to fit a healthy profile — but gone are the simple recommendations of a standard “three square meals a day.” With nutrition information and new diet trends spreading as fast as a YouTube video about babies, brands need to be equally aware of the latest must-have foods and consumer preferences. Food trends, as predicted by the food experts themselves, registered dietitian nutritionists, direct brands to what consumers are looking for as they scan store shelves.

Jenna A. Bell, PhD, RD, is Senior VP and Director of Food & Wellness at Pollock Communications. ○



Jenna A. Bell

## Most Americans will use Facebook in 2016

By Jon Gingerich

Facebook won’t lose its standing in the social media pantheon anytime soon. More people than ever — more than half of the U.S. population, in fact — are expected to use the social network this year, according to a recent social network usage forecast by digital market research company eMarketer.

For the first time, nearly 163 million Americans — or 50.3 percent of the population — will log onto Facebook at least once a month in 2016, up from 49.3 percent last year, according to eMarketer.

Photo swapping site Instagram — also owned by Facebook — will see almost 90 million U.S. users this year, which accounts for nearly a third of the population, and Twitter will surpass 55 million users in 2016, representing nearly 18 percent of the

U.S. population, according to eMarketer.

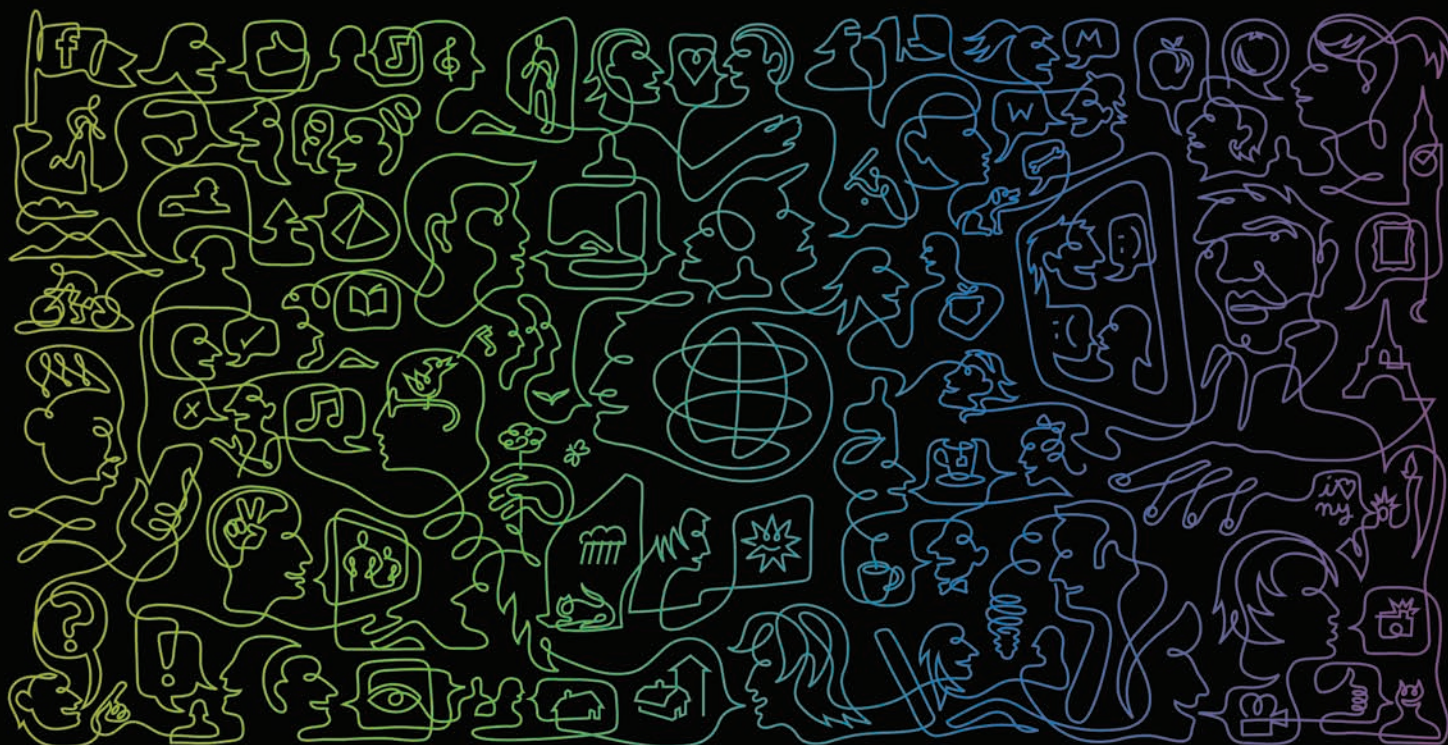
Not surprisingly, mobile use may account for a sizeable swath of Facebook’s continued popularity. According to eMarketer, 86 percent of all U.S. Facebook users will access the network via mobile devices this year, and more than half of all U.S. mobile users — 52.9 percent — will use their devices to log on to the network at least once a month.

The eMarketer forecast predicts that Facebook will garner nearly \$10 billion in ad spends this year as a result of its considerable user base, accounting for nearly 75 percent of all U.S. social network ad revenues. Mobile is expected to make up more than 80 percent of those revenues this year.

The forecast also predicts that Facebook will remain the top social media network “through at least 2020.” ○



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Ranked among the top 10 food  
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# Cause marketing: putting money where your heart is

**As a shift toward eating healthy foods and “giving back” takes hold, opportunities arise for brands to enhance visibility, extend reach in the social media marketplace, increase relevance and even open new markets.**

By Ronn Torossian

A few established companies, such as Newman's Own and Ben & Jerry's, have built their names and business models on what can be considered humanitarian marketing. Although additional brands are now capitalizing on this business model — such as Aquaball, which campaigns against diabetes in kids — and many garner successful responses among consumers, this is still a largely underserved niche with a considerably untapped market.

In an age where consumers are becoming increasingly health conscious and environmentally aware, food and beverage companies associated with poor environmental standards or whose products are seen as damaging — sugar, fat, chemicals — are shifting their publicly efforts. We will see more brands moving toward presenting new products, or remaking old ones, integrating philanthropy and the greater good to create social capital.

Giving charity or even time to socially conscious ideals can often be difficult, so consumers seek out socially conscious products to help them fill the need. When they use their money to purchase socially conscious products, making a brand's social purpose a major factor in their decisions, the consumer feels as if he has given back as well.

It's brilliant in a way: the company sells more products and makes money, while consumers feel rewarded thinking they have, in some way, helped save the rainforest by doing little more than spending money on a product they would have likely bought anyway. It's a win-win.

For instance, responsibly grown Thanksgiving Coffee's slogan is, “Not just a cup but a just cup,” stating on the label that it supports “social equity” through fair trade practices. It advertises that its coffee beans are shade grown, environmentally conscious, and high-end. Despite a higher price point than other coffee, consumers pay more to give back and help local and small farmers.

Today, it is not enough to simply offer a product, no matter how good. There are many more choices on crowded supermarket shelves, and a brand has to do something to differentiate itself from the crowd. Millennials ask why they should support a brand — they want to feel involved, and that is a key component of cause marketing today. What feeling does your product give

a customer? If it is something positive and uplifting, consumers will feel better about buying it rather than from a competitor, even if it costs a little more. Whole Foods has mastered this model, and people gladly pay more to feel they are making a difference.

The popularity of Whole Foods is based largely on self-esteem. People shop there because they want to feel good about themselves for buying food products they see as being healthy for them and their kids, ethical for small food manufacturers and good for the environment. Shopping at Whole Foods is more expensive than most grocery stores, but its consumers willingly flock there, and now traditional supermarkets are adopting organic and fair trade products to recapture market share.

Promoting the greater good puts you ahead of the competition by making people think you care, and inversely, that your competitors do not. Gluten-free, fat free or zero sugar food and drinks can make an otherwise indulgent food seem like the moral choice. “After all, it's for a good cause,” the consumer thinks. Making people feel good about the choices they make as consumers can increase sales and build strong customer loyalty.

After necessity, emotion is the prime motivator in purchase decisions. Consumers buy products because they support their sense of identity, their place in our culture, because the products appeal to their aspirations or boost their sense of self-worth. The initial success of Toyota's Prius proves that, with environmentally conscious drivers flocking to the homely looking, lackluster performance hybrid.

Giants such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi have taken the challenges of the socially conscious movement as an opportunity to reach new markets and shift consumer focus to their products. Coca-Cola's recycling initiative encourages consumers to enjoy a coke and recycle. It has also made market innovations with the “healthier” alternative soda, Coca-Cola Life, packaged in a subliminally green can, and sweetened with the new go-to sugar substitute Stevia instead of high fructose corn syrup — yielding about 85 calories (half that of Coke Classic).

In 2014, Pepsi got on the social cause bandwagon when it released Pepsi True, a healthier alternative to regular Pepsi. By eliminat-

ing high fructose corn syrup and replacing it with a sugar-stevia blend, and also using green color-coded packaging, it entered the new market for mid-calorie carbonated beverages, and became a viable competitor to Coke Life.

But food and drink manufacturers should be careful to support their claims, as Cadbury Schweppes learned. 7UP was being marketed as “Now 100% natural.” The product's continued use of high fructose corn syrup as an ingredient, however, resulted in outrage. Opponents to the new marketing raised issue with the fact that the commonly used sugary substance is a chemically corn byproduct. The company instead decided to advertise only the natural ingredients, marketing it only as “healthier.” Social media caused that. In our 24/7 Internet media environment, people are waiting for the opportunity to call out perceived evils. Nothing is worse for brand image than being labeled as deceptive.

Innovating with socially positive efforts for a brand is something that consumers, public affairs websites and social media latch on to, and has potential to spread virally. Media love uplifting stories about companies contributing to bettering the world. When done effectively, it can focus the public's attention from a company that be may viewed with some trepidation due to past practices, to where it's considered a socially conscious brand to be respected.

Ronn Torossian is CEO of 5WPR. ●



Ronn Torossian

## PR news brief

### Nasdaq to acquire Marketwired

Nasdaq is acquiring news release disseminator Marketwired, bolstering the exchange's PR services offering alongside its existing Globe Newswire product.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, beyond a disclosure that it involves cash and debt, and the transaction requires regulatory approval. The parties expect to close in the first quarter.

Private equity firm OMERS, part of a large municipal retirement system in Ontario, reportedly put Marketwired on the sale block in the fall at a valuation of around \$200 million. MW spun off its social platform Sysomos last February.

The deal follows a spate of sales and consolidation in the PR services sector. After Cision and Vocus combined last year, Cision gobbled up PR Newswire in December for \$841 million. Rival Business Wire was acquired by Berkshire Hathaway 10 years ago.

MW will sit in Nasdaq's corporate services arm. MW chief Adnan Ahmed called the deal a “natural fit.”





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# O'Dwyer's guide to FOOD & BEVERAGE PR FIRMS

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

It's hard to open a magazine, read a blog or turn on the television without seeing a story about a new food or beverage trend. Often, the 5W food & beverage PR team is the source of those stories.

With new brands, lines, products, and restaurants introduced each day, we understand competition for space (in shopping carts, on shelves and in the media) is fierce. From facilitating the launch of new products to developing long-term creative strategies that ensure maximum media coverage, sell product, increase distribution and win market share, our experience and results in the food and beverage arena are unparalleled.

We understand healthy beverages, telling compelling Public Relations narratives in the Alcohol/Spirits space, functional beverage arena and more.

We've helped Whole Foods Market, Sparkling ICE, Anheuser-Busch, Evian Natural Spring Water, Hint Water, Viki's Granola, M&M's, Welch's Fruit Snacks, Bauli, Grolsch Premium Lager, and many others become the focus of the media's menu.

## ALLIDURA CONSUMER

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Whether cars or cameras, diapers or detergent, health has never been more ubiquitous than it is today. For some brands, health may be a new focus. Fortunately, it's always been at the center of ours. And, we've taken this knowledge and enthusiasm to some of the world's

largest brands to help them connect with today's socially charged, health-minded consumers.

Allidura Consumer, part of the inVentiv Health Public Relations Group, takes an integrated approach to communications with capabilities spanning public relations, digital and social media, marketing and branding, graphic design and multimedia, and research and measurement.

Our client counsel allows brands to communicate across the wellness spectrum regardless of whether a brand's equity is in health or faced with a health challenge. Our meaningful insights and creative know-how have been tapped by a full range of consumer product and nutritional supplement brands, over the counter and beauty products, and food and beverage companies.

## ARTISAN PRODUCTION HOUSE

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Artisan Production House is a full service production house specializing in food & lifestyle publicity. We create brand content that resonates with your audience, keeps them engaged and brings value to their lives. Our innate understanding of story relevance and personal relationships with TV producers and media influencers throughout the country gets your story heard. We'll help you deliver your messages seamlessly and with style utilizing our high-end production capabilities (including film-style shooters and graphic designers). Artisan's in-studio & on location satellite junkies include quality bookings that are actually seen, spot-on custom craft services and a fresh, modern design aesthetic...because taste matters. Additional services include exclusive launch event integrations, stunning

branded content food videos, original book videos and select match-making between celebrity talent and brands.

## AURITT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

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**Joan Auritt**, *President*

Auritt Communications Group is a full-service broadcast and online PR production company providing creative multi-platform solutions that meet our clients' specific needs. Whatever industry we work in — healthcare, food and nutrition, entertainment, publishing, finance, tech — our producers partner with you to find the most effective story to tell. Our close, enduring relationships with the media result in the highest quality bookings. Our creatively designed cost-effective production packages increase brand awareness, reaching influencers and targeted audiences in prime media markets. Through carefully honed strategy and skilled execution, our team of media experts and network credentialed producers delivers promised results.

What we do: Video Production for Broadcast, Web, Corporate Events, Training; TV Satellite, Radio, Online Media Tours; Integrated Media Tours; Partner and Co-op Media Tours; Media Training; Social Media Campaigns; Webcasts and Live Streamed Interactive Events; Video, Audio, Multimedia News Releases; B-Roll Packages; PSAs.

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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: Arthur Schuman Inc., Bareburger, Chronic Tacos, Forto Strong Coffee, Griffin Club, Marriott Hotels, Michael's Restaurant Group, Mint Leaf Restaurants, Souk Shawarma, Sucre Sweets, The Pub at Chino Hills, Tio Gaspacho, United Beverages, and Via Veneto.

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**Carolyn Izzo-Feldman**, *President*  
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Carolyn Izzo Integrated Communications (CIIC) is a highly respected public relations firm in the food and beverage space. Our staffers bring many years of experience from several of the country's top PR firms and for 20 years, CIIC has been dedicated to servicing food and beverage brands.

Our experience in the F&B space is notable, having put Krispy Kreme Doughnuts on the map in the Northeast in the '90s. Since then, CIIC has represented a number of F&B brands, including, but not limited to, The Original Soupman, Sandella's, Morton's The Steakhouse, Marriott Hotels International, Kona Red Beverages, New Leaf Brands iced teas and lemonades, California Pizza Kitchen and Coney Island Brewing Company. We are adept at launches, openings and franchisor relations, and we are known for



our networking expertise and extensive contacts in the trade, media and influencer categories, which we leverage to increase the level of reach, media coverage, and access for our clientele.

The CIIC team is made up of enthusiastic and connected PR professionals. Your CIIC service includes day-to-day principal-led servicing from company executives, media specialists in New York and Miami who can build and escort an A-list media tour, arrange your appearance on network television shows, manage product sampling, and plan top-level events in your key markets. It is our implicit goal to deliver the best value and the best results.

## CISION

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Cision is here to help you serve up savory media outreach. Cision features over 25,000 of today's freshest food and beverage journalists and bloggers from around the world, pitching advice from the tastemakers themselves, and actionable social demographics to beef up your campaigns. We have everything you need to dish out your story. Learn more at [cision.com](http://cision.com).

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**Tim Schramm, Senior Vice President**  
**Lisa Wollon, Senior Vice President**  
**Beth Kimmerling, Assistant Vice President**

The April issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile firms that focus on social media, as well as video & broadcast service companies. If you would like to be listed, contact Senior Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or [jon@odwyerpr.com](mailto:jon@odwyerpr.com)

Working in the food and nutrition space has been a cornerstone of Coyne since the agency's inception over twenty years ago. From representing well-established category leaders to growing challenger brands, Coyne combines sound strategic counsel, cutting edge creative elements and flawless execution to achieve a client's communications and business goals.

Coyne has represented many of the most prominent and successful food brands in the world, including Del Monte Foods, Newman's Own, General Mills, PepsiCo, Kraft, The Hershey Company, Egghand's Best, Bimbo Bakeries USA, Just Born, Campbell's, McCormick, Perrigo Nutritionals, and DuPont Nutrition & Health's soy protein business, among others.

We've introduced scores of products, launched numerous breakthrough campaigns and initiatives, and helped brands navigate significant industry challenges and crisis situations. We immerse ourselves in our clients' business, becoming an extension of the communication and brand teams.

We create compelling storytelling, and match these skills with our broad and deep media relationships to drive new levels of attention for brands. Through proprietary tools, we identify, engage and activate the influencers who reach a brand's audience authentically. We understand how to tap into and amplify the voice of the brand evangelists. Our registered dietician network, consisting of 100+ influential and connected RD's and nutritionists, can be utilized to build, launch, and sustain campaign initiatives.

Our internal digital group, Studio C, is a full-service content production studio consisting of digital strategists, multimedia designers, website developers, and in-house creatives that offer clients a seamless extension of Coyne's public relations initiatives.

## FINEMAN PR

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Consistently recognized for its award-winning food and beverage campaigns since 1988, Fineman PR specializes in brand PR, crisis communications and multicultural



**Bimbo Bakeries USA wanted a breakthrough campaign to generate excitement prior to the launch of a new line of whole grain breads. Stepping up to the plate, Coyne created "Love, Your Bread," a fully integrated campaign that taps into the emotional connection consumers have with food they love. The key element of Love, Your Bread is the Healthfull Nom-Nom-Rom-Com, a tongue-in-cheek romantic comedy "bread trailer" to resonate with the target audience, women ages 25-54. The campaign accumulated 32.2 million social and digital impressions and helped Healthfull achieve distribution across major retailers nationwide.**

Photo: Arnold, Brownberry, Oroweat Healthfull Trailer

engagement across fresh, natural and organic foods, nutraceuticals, CPG, confections, and wine and spirits.

Fineman PR excels in focusing consumer messaging on each client's brand and building category leadership. We explain why a client's brand promise merits audience trust. Fineman PR's high-profile crisis communications work, from product recalls and labor negotiations to activist demonstrations and quick-draw lawsuits, has achieved national renown. We safeguard client reputations.

Recent work includes full-service marketing communications and issues management for Foster Farms poultry; Brand PR and consumer product promotion across fresh, frozen and gluten-free categories; blogger and influencer relations programming; social/digital content strategy and development; media training; cause marketing and community relations; and internal and retailer relations. Fineman PR's lifestyle, wine and multicultural divisions add specialty services tailored to each client's needs.



**San Francisco-based Fineman PR promoted the opening of three private tasting pavilions at Napa Valley's Quintessa winery, gaining national consumer wine and travel coverage.**

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FoodMinds is an award-winning communications and consulting company boldly transforming the way the world thinks about food, nutrition and health. We harness communications, science and public affairs to establish unique selling propositions and produce novel food and nutrition programs. Clients come to FoodMinds when they want to create a better story that makes a difference, and tell it in a way that achieves their objectives through measurable results.

FoodMinds brings together the right mix of talented, seasoned and motivated professionals — from registered dietitians, consumer marketers and media strategists to PhDs, science writers and public affairs experts — to shape a new food frontier with our clients where people are healthier and happier.

Clients include: Almond Board of California, American Heart Association, Applegate, Can Manufacturers Institute, Chobani, Dairy Management, Inc., Diageo, Hass Avocado Board, Mondelez, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Nestlé, Sabra Dipping Company, and Welch's.

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French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs and brand communications agency, independent or otherwise. Founded in April 1997 by Agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV now employs 96 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts among its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles

and Tampa offices.

FWV is home to one of the country's largest food and beverage practice areas and has been ranked in the top 20 nationally by O'Dwyer's for more than a decade. A leader in launching head-turning, results-driven marketing campaigns, FWV currently works with some of the world's foremost companies and brands, including Hood River Distillers, Pendleton Whiskey, BRAND Napa Valley, Melitta Coffee, Moe's Southwest Grill and Smithfields Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q.

FWV has also produced award-winning campaigns that significantly increased product sales for the likes of The Coca-Cola Company (NESTEA, Gold Peak, Minute Maid, DASANI and Simply Orange), Celebrity Chef Lorena Garcia, the North Carolina Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, Brinker International (Maggiano's Little Italy restaurants), Elevation Burger, House-Autry, ConAgra (Slim Jim, Pemmican Beef Jerky), Nabisco Foods, Brown-Forman (Jack Daniel's), Grain & Barrel Spirits, Whole Foods Market and Diageo North America (Bulleit Bourbon), among many others.

The agency also executes multi-faceted digital and social media campaigns tied to effective earned media and advertising campaigns that together stimulate product trial, increase brand awareness and drive purchase intent.

## GIBBS-RBB STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

New York, NY  
www.Gibbs-rbb.com

**Christine Barney**, Principal  
**Tina Elmowitz**, Principal  
**Jeff Altheide**, Principal  
**Ron Loch**, Principal  
**Denise O'Handley**, Managing Director

Conscious Consumers™ Care more, Share more and Spend more. Interested in establishing and strengthening your brand's relationship with Conscious Consumers? Gibbs-rbb Strategic Communications can help you own the conversation with our enlightened approach to food and beverage public relations and holistic understanding of supply chains and global issues that affect purchasing decisions. Conscious Consumers represent a \$2 billion market, and

we connect companies and brands with this growing segment of discerning consumers by identifying and responding to shared values around interests such as health, sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

Gibbs-rbb provides expertise and counsel from agribusiness marketing to consumer product launches. Our capabilities include consumer and industry-specific media relations, cause marketing, corporate communications, sustainability consulting, crisis communications, event management, promotions, digital and social media, and creative services.

Gibbs-rbb's leadership team is comprised of seasoned professionals in the food, beverage and CPG industries, each bringing a minimum of 20 years of experience to the table. Our team's diverse expertise in these industries includes: public affairs and corporate communications programs in crop and livestock production, processing and packaging; award-winning, multifaceted consumer marketing and public relations campaigns; and CSR consulting for *Fortune* 500 companies.

Gibbs-rbb has offices in New York, Chicago, Miami and Raleigh.

Let Gibbs-rbb put our experience to work for your brand. Contact Denise O'Handley at [DOhandley@gibbs-rbb.com](mailto:DOhandley@gibbs-rbb.com) or 212-697-2555.

## HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

41 Madison Avenue, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10010-2202  
212/679-6600  
www.hunterpr.com  
smormar@hunterpr.com

Partners: **Grace Leong**, **Jonathan Lyon**, **Jason Winocour**, **Mark Newman**, **Donetta Allen**, **Gigi Russo**, **Erin Hanson**

Hunter Public Relations is an award-winning consumer products public relations firm with particular expertise in food and nutrition, beverages, wines and spirits. Clients include some of the countries most iconic and respected food and beverage companies including Diageo (Johnnie Walker, Don Julio Tequila), E&J Gallo Winery (Barefoot, Gallo Family Vineyards), Lactaid, Mondelēz (Sour Patch Kids, Trident), Mrs. T's Pierogies, Outback Steakhouses, Pompeian, Post Foods, Premier Protein, Redbull, Smithfield and Tabasco

Brand Pepper Sauce. Hunter PR's creative approach and client service-orientation has led to some of the most enduring client relationships in the business including Tabasco Brand Pepper Sauce, who was our first client 27 years ago, and still a client today.

With offices in New York and London and a strategic footprint in markets across North America, Hunter PR's 110-person firm offers a full suite of strategic marketing PR services including: research and insights; traditional and digital media relations; social media marketing; Hispanic strategies and solutions; corporate/social responsibility initiatives; special event production and sponsorships; product introductions and anniversaries; nutrition and recipe initiatives; talent negotiations, entertainment and sports integrations; spokesperson media tours; and crisis counseling. Hunter PR's award-winning graphic and digital design team creates everything from program logos and collateral materials to innovative, custom social and digital media applications in house. Revitalizing mature brands, creating buzz around new products and building awareness among key influencers groups (including the epicurean and nutritional health communities) are among the firm's specific areas of expertise.

Hunter Public Relations worked with Smithfield to team up with acclaimed local Chef Matt Bolus of The 404 Kitchen in Nashville to serve a delicious southern-inspired menu at the inaugural Gospel Brunch during the third annual Music City Food + Wine Festival.

## ICR

685 Third Avenue, 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
Fax: 646/277-1201  
www.icrinc.com

**Thomas M. Ryan**, CEO,  
Co-Founder  
**Don Duffy**, President

Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to optimize transactions and execute strategic communications programs that achieve business goals, build credibility and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm's highly differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications profession-

— Continued on page 30



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**Gloria Bohan**  
President, Founder & CEO



**Nick Lananna**  
Client Services Manager

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1271 Avenue of the Americas  
Suite 4300 - New York, NY 10020  
646-693-7404 - nlananna@owt.net





To launch Moonstruck Chocolate's Savory Mushroom Collection, LANE developed tasting events for influencers that introduced a new paradigm for enjoying chocolate, including culinary dinners and a cocktail reception at The Wayfarer.

## ICR

Continued from page 28

als, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 500 clients in approximately 20 industries.

ICR's clients range from emerging, pre-IPO companies to mature multinationals, seeking counsel in a variety of high-stakes situations, whether it's preparing for an IPO, paving the way for a merger, managing a crisis, rebuilding a reputation, or communicating a significant change in a business model or strategy.

Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and advisory firms in North America, maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco and Beijing. The firm marked 2015 with another year of double digit growth, the launch of ICR Capital, an independent capital markets advisory subsidiary, and a new brand identity. In January 2016, ICR hosted the 18th consecutive ICR Conference, Wall Street's premier investor event for growth companies.

View & download profiles of hundreds of PR firms specializing in a dozen industry areas at: [www.odwyerpr.com](http://www.odwyerpr.com)

## KELLEN

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404/836-5580

750 National Press Building  
529 14th Street N.W.  
Washington, DC 20045  
202/591-2440

**Rick Cristol**, *President*  
**Joan Cear**, *Senior Vice President*  
**Debra Berliner**, *Senior Vice President*

With more messages about diet, nutrition, health and food safety than ever before, how do you break through the clutter and help stakeholders separate fact from fiction? Kellen combines decades of global experience in food and nutrition with ingenuity, influence and science to make an impact for our clients. We deliver integrated B2C and B2B marketing communications solutions, issues management, public policy, key opinion leader outreach and nutrition research initiatives delivered by professionals who specialize in food and nutrition. In addition to experienced writers, publicists, digital and social media specialists, Kellen's team includes registered dietitians, certified specialists in sports dietetics, food scientists and technologists, and government relations professionals experienced



Marketing Maven led a U.S. PR campaign surrounding Swedish Lund University Professor, Dr. Charlotte Erlanson-Albertsson's patented spinach extract, Appethyl.

in food related-public policy and regulatory matters.

Kellen is a leading resource for the food and beverage industries worldwide. We have strong relationships with relevant media outlets and extensive connections among health professional communities, academia and government regulators. From farm to fork, our professionals have the experience to help clients both promote and protect their products. Kellen is an employee-owned company with eight offices worldwide. We've been delivering solutions, opportunities and innovations to our clients for more than five decades.

## LANE

New York City | Portland | Seattle  
[www.lanepr.com](http://www.lanepr.com)  
[wendy@lanepr.com](mailto:wendy@lanepr.com)  
503/221-0480

**Wendy Lane Stevens**, *President*

LANE builds buzz and drives trial and sales for brands from coast to coast. With over 25 years of experience across the food and beverage industry, LANE's seasoned specialists know how to target messages and elevate brands. Drawing on insights garnered from firsthand experience as well as from media, influencer and consumer circles, LANE's integrated campaigns connect across traditional and digital media, retailers and restaurants, and events.

LANE's award-winning campaigns have produced measurable results for national and international clients in the wine, beer and spirits; water, juice and coffee; and natural, organic and specialty food categories including José Andrés Foods, Moonstruck Chocolate Co., Snake River Farms, Double R Ranch, International Olive Council, Oregon Strawberry Commission, Trailblazer Foods, Steaz, Portland Roasting Coffee, Wines from Spain, E. & J. Gallo Winery, Cupcake Vineyards, Sokol Blosser Winery and 10 Barrel Brewing.

## MARKETING MAVEN

135 East 57th Street, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10022  
Phone: 212/967-5510  
[www.MarketingMavenPR.com](http://www.MarketingMavenPR.com)

Los Angeles Headquarters  
310/994-7380

**Lindsey Carnett**, *CEO & President*  
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**Natalie Rucker**, *VP of Business Development*  
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**John Krisiukenas**, *Managing Director, NY*  
[johnk@marketingmavenpr.com](mailto:johnk@marketingmavenpr.com)

Marketing Maven's sophisticated share of voice and sentiment analysis tools help to shape campaign strategy for food and beverage clients. Aligning with key influencers and utilizing grassroots



social media tactics, paired with traditional media relations, generates significant impact for clients.

From an online cooking school to patented functional ingredients, the bicoastal team at Marketing Maven knows how to navigate food and beverage PR and social media campaigns. We specialize in showcasing your brand and increasing sales with unique pitch concepts distributed to top media for national TV, radio, newspaper, magazine and online coverage.

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

Marketing Maven is 8(a) certified by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Women's Business Enterprise (WBE), has WOSB status with the government and DBE, CUCP and CPUC certification.

## MARX LAYNE & COMPANY

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www.marxlayne.com

**Michael Layne, Managing Partner**

Marx Layne has been providing cost-effective marketing, public relations and digital media on a local, regional and national basis to the food and beverage sector since 1987.

Services offered to clients include media relations, product launches, grand openings, crisis and issues management, internal communications, special events planning, community engagement programs, social media, online reputation management, direct mail, eBlasts, graphic design, web development, and brochure and newsletter production.

Clients include luxury hotels, four-star and quick service restaurants, supermarket chains, and food and beverage manufacturers and suppliers. We have successfully introduced concepts new to Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Florida and other markets.

Our creativity is boundless with one example being when Marx Layne conceptualized and managed all aspects of a product launch for a global restaurant brand that featured Nik Wallenda walking a

high wire 80 feet above the City of Detroit, generating nearly \$1M in national media coverage. Wallenda later went on to break Guinness World Records crossing Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon.

## M STUDIO

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www.mdidit.com  
shannon@mdidit.com

**Shannon Furey, Public Relations Director**

M studio is an integrated public relations and marketing agency that has extensive experience in supporting the food and beverage industry with branding, public relations, communications and digital marketing campaigns.

Since our agency's inception in 2004, many of M studio's clients have occupied the food, beverage and hospitality space. We have branded, and launched food and beverage venues — from fast-casual to fine dining — cultivated chef personas, re-branded legacy spirit businesses, designed packaging and branding strategies for healthy snack companies, and developed engaging content and social strategies for leading food suppliers and grocery chains, including Whole Foods Market.

The M studio team understands the food and beverage industry and the challenges our clients in this sector face. From media relations and strategic publicity strategies, to influencer marketing, product seeding, brand ambassador programs and full service photo and video production services, M studio's integrated approach ensures our clients, unique selling propositions are amplified across platform while maintaining the integrity and cohesiveness of the brand. Our extensive media network and strategic communications programs adeptly communicate the value and innovation our clients bring to the space, while elevating recognition and engagement with carefully developed branding systems and design elements.

In an ever-changing media landscape, our agency understands diverse services and tactics needed to be employed. While our knowledge of the industry supports clients' goals, our agency's expertise on when and how to employ custom programs within the food and beverage space allows us to deliver truly specialized results.

## MWWPR

304 Park Avenue South  
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212/704-9727  
www.mww.com

**Tara Naughton, Executive Vice President, Consumer Lifestyle Marketing**  
tนาughton@mww.com  
**Lindsey Winkler, Senior Vice President, Consumer Lifestyle Marketing**  
lwinkler@mww.com

At MWWPR, we are foodies with media chops. We have deep connections in the food industry, and we know top chefs just as well as we know top influencers. We also know that consumers are more discerning about the food they eat and are demanding ever-increasing transparency from food companies as a result. Since each demographic approaches food purchasing differently, our team works hard to bring the right message to the right channels to forge a strong connection with your target audience.

At MWWPR, we make our clients Matter More™ to their stakeholders by establishing relationships between brands and consumers through integrated public relations and marketing activities that drive awareness, engagement and consideration. We expand media coverage beyond food media and into influential traditional and digital lifestyle outlets, creating brand relevance and developing emotional connections that drive trial and brand loyalty. Whether it's establishing a restaurant as a top-choice for dining or creating demand for a new product launch in a competitive category, we help position our client brands as a vital ingredient in consumers' lifestyles.

## PADILLACRT

1101 West River Pkwy., #400  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
612/455-1700  
PadillaCRT.com

**Ed Hoffman, Senior Vice President**

PadillaCRT is a top 15 independent public relations and communications company. Its 200 employee owners use insightful strategies to help clients develop deep connections with the people who are important to their success. Its 360-degree approach uses research, branding, advertising, design, digital, social, mobile, media relations and crisis management expertise to build corporate and

product brands with customers, investors, employees and communities.

PadillaCRT's Food, Beverage and Nutrition Practice is one of the strongest and most experienced in the country. Representing both brands and marketing cooperatives, the agency covers all audiences: consumer, foodservice, retail and manufacturing. PadillaCRT's team includes food experts; wine and spirits experts; writers and publicists; registered dietitians; recipe developers; and research, branding and digital specialists. Its food and beverage teams' unique in-house resources include a culinary studio near national media in New York City and an extensive food and beverage library.

Clients in the food and beverage sectors include Hass Avocado Board, U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, Prosciutto di Parma, the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, Les Vins Georges Duboeuf and Wines from Rioja (Spain).

PadillaCRT is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 111 independently owned partner offices in 140 cities on six continents.

## PEPPERCOMM, INC.

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hello@peppercomm.com  
www.peppercomm.com

**Steve Cody, Co-CEO and Co-Founder**  
**Ed Moed, Co-CEO and 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**

Peppercomm is an independently owned 20-year-old integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York with offices in San Francisco, Boulder and London. Helping clients see around the corner and determine what's next sets Peppercomm apart from other integrated

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**Pollock educates healthcare professionals about the benefits of Dannon® Light & Fit® Greek Nonfat Yogurt and drives sampling at the 2015 American Association of Diabetes Educators Annual Meeting.**

## PEPPERCOMM, INC.

— Continued from page 31

communications and marketing firms. It enables us to push boundaries while mitigating risk for clients in financial services, consumer, B-to-B and multi-industry sectors.

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

Our love of what we do combined years of deep category experience with brands like TGI Fridays, 21 Club, Texas de Brazil, Moe's Southwest Grille, Inspired by Happiness and Super Squeezies shape our work. We engage your audiences on every level and set your brand apart. And we do all this to help your bottom-line and build your business. So get in touch. We're all ears.

## POLLOCK COMMUNICATIONS

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www.lpollockpr.com  
**Louise Pollock, President**

Pollock Communications is

an independent PR and marketing communications agency that offers cutting edge expertise in traditional and social media outreach for food, beverage, health & wellness, and lifestyle clients. With an established background in reaching influencers who affect change, Pollock provides impactful and successful social and traditional communications campaigns. Founded in 1991, Pollock pioneered communications for the functional food movement, creating some of the major food trends of the past 10 years, including making tea the healthy drink of the new millennium and making chocolate a healthy indulgence. Most recently, Pollock positioned cranberries as the superfruit of millennials through a creative social media campaign that helped to create a new generation of cranberry lovers. For more than 25 years, we have been advisors to *Fortune* 100 food and beverage companies and global commodity foods, working to direct, shape and amplify their health and wellness stories. By strategically targeting and influencing food policymakers, traditional and social media, retail professionals and the healthcare community, Pollock Communications delivers results that change consumer perceptions and protect and enhance a brand's position in the market. We utilize evidence-based science, influencer advocacy and social media to achieve measurable results in brand awareness. We change consumer perceptions through influential healthcare professional (HCP) recommendations, and by generating media coverage and so-



**Quinn's dinner for professional food instagrammers at Del Frisco's Grille.**

cial media buzz that impacts consumer purchasing decisions.

In addition to PR practitioners and marketers, our staff includes media-savvy registered dietitians who can address health & nutrition issues that are top-of-mind for today's print, broadcast and online journalists. Over the last two decades, Pollock has cultivated long-term relationships and trained a network of spokespeople, including media registered dietitians, celebrity chefs, social media celebrities, medical doctors and scientists, who are available and ready to deliver key messages for a variety of our clients in broadcast, print and social media.

We believe in pushing boundaries, breaking barriers and asking, "what if?" We diligently do our homework to develop an executable, strategic plan that delivers measurable results...every time.

Clients: Abbott's EAS Brand, American Society of Hypertension, Cranberry Institute, Cranberry Marketing Committee USA, Dairy Management Inc., Eating Disorder Recovery Specialists, Frito-Lay, Green Mountain at Fox Run, PepsiCo's Quaker Brand, Prestige Brands: PediaCare, FiberChoice and Beano, Seafood Nutrition Partnership, Tea Council of the USA, The Dannon Company, The Danone International Institute, USA Rice Federation, Whey Protein Research Consortium.

## QUINN PR

48 West 38th Street, Penthouse  
New York, NY 10018  
212/868-1900  
www.quinn-pr  
407 Lincoln Road

Miami Beach, FL 33139  
786/600-3954

Quinn's Food, Wine + Spirits teams in NYC and Miami use discipline, creativity and strategy to elevate reputations, convey brand stories and drive business.

We opened La Chine, an unprecedented dining experience at the Waldorf Astoria New York, with more than 55 media placements and nearly 316 million impressions in two months. The *New York Times* wrote that La Chine was "imagination worth the added price." *Vogue* highlighted the baijiu pairings, and *Departures* rhapsodized that the new Waldorf eatery gave you reason to travel. *Architectural Digest* called the Waldorf's newest eatery one of the most stylish restaurants in New York.

The *New York Times* broke our news that Andrew Carmellini of The Dutch fame in New York and at the W South Beach (also a Quinn client) was opening his first Brooklyn eatery at The William Vale. Many others have followed.

The dinner we hosted for professional food Instagrammers at Del Frisco's Grille was covered in *The Wall Street Journal*.

To create awareness for Del Frisco's Double Eagle Steak House's wine program, Quinn positioned wine director and Masters candidate Jessica Norris as a thought leader in the "women in wine" movement, securing features in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vanity Fair*.

For CorkBuzz's Laura Maniec, the youngest woman to achieve the Master Sommelier designation, we publicized her Chelsea Market, NYC location and her en-



tree into Charlotte, NC.

To elevate Hawaiian Airlines' in-flight dining, we placed its island-inspired menus from Hawaii's top chefs in *USA Today*, *Travel + Leisure*, *New York Post*, *Yahoo Travel* and more.

We have two cocktails named after us by Ray Keane, the on-demand mixologist at Newport, NJ's Battello. Penthouse Potion No. 12, named after our 12th floor penthouse in NYC, and Moon Over Miami, for our South Beach digs. Both concoctions were inspired by the creative cities of New York and Miami, where we do our thing.

## RFIBINDER

950 Third Avenue, 7th Floor  
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www.rfbinder.com  
Twitter: @rfbinder

**Amy Binder, CEO**  
**Atalanta Rafferty, Chief Performance Officer**

RF|Binder was founded 15 years ago by our CEO Amy Binder. A public relations veteran from a family of industry pioneers, Amy followed in the footsteps of her father, David Finn, and her uncle, Bill Ruder, founders of Ruder Finn, to launch her own agency in 2001. Her goal in forming RF|Binder was to create a different kind of agency — one that combines the resources of a large agency with the advantages of a sophisticated, boutique consultancy.

The food and beverage industry is central to our agency identity, and today is a cornerstone practice at RF|Binder. The agency brings over 200 years of combined industry experience having worked for more than 60 food and beverage clients.

We believe that the approach we take to food and beverage marketing communications sets us apart. We understand the industry in all its facets and have built a team that brings a breadth of expertise ranging from media, influencer and trade relations to consumer engagement campaigns, digital knowledge, and issues and crisis management. We work both at the brand and at the corporate level for *Fortune* 500 food and beverage companies as well as start-ups.

From the beginning, RF|Binder has been committed to delivering a higher level of senior management involvement, a more responsive working client relationship, and an operating structure that maximizes creativity and innovation. Today,

our mission remains to help clients manage the issues, challenges and opportunities that emerge when the interests of consumers, trade and the public intersect. We pride ourselves on our ability to establish and grow successful, long-term client partnerships built on loyalty and trust.

## SPONG

110 North Fifth Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
612/375-8500  
www.spongpr.com

**Julie Batliner, President**  
**Grete Lavrenz, Senior Partner, Chair, Food and Nutrition**  
**Erika Collins, Director of New Business**

If you can no longer stomach the same stale, tasteless ideas, perhaps it's time for some fresh thinking. Spong leads the food, nutrition and wellness arena — representing some of the biggest brands. Our list of envied clients includes: packaged goods (Arla and Castello cheeses, Jack Link's Protein Snacks, Lorissa's Kitchen, Jennie-O Turkey, and The Schwan Food Company brands Freschetta and Red Baron pizza and Mrs. Smith's and Edwards pies); food and beverage containers and storage (Genuine Thermos Brand); and retail (SUPERVALU and Schwan's Home Service). We work with food industry leaders, consumer groups, celebrity chefs, nutritionists, commodity groups, regulatory organizations, social influencers, bloggers and experts in general, on a regular basis. Our relationships go beyond media. We know the right people to target with the right program, product, campaign or cause. And they know us.

## TAYLOR

The Empire State Building  
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3800  
New York, NY 10118  
212/714-1280  
www.taylorstrategy.com

**Tony Signore, CEO & Managing Partner**  
**Bryan Harris, COO & Managing Partner**

Taylor partners exclusively with category leading consumer brands that utilize lifestyle, sports, and entertainment platforms to engage consumers and drive business growth.

Named "Consumer Agency of the Decade" by *The Holmes Re-*



Taylor develops strategic marketing communications programs, digital strategy and creative platforms for a number of category leading food and beverage brands, including — for the past 28 years — Diageo, the world's leading premium drinks business. For Diageo, Taylor has successfully launched new products, reinvigorated iconic brands and sustained momentum in the marketplace for adult beverage favorites such as Bulleit, Crown Royal, Guinness, Captain Morgan, and Smirnoff, among others.

port, Taylor has more than 100 employees with headquarters in New York and offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, Charlotte, and Austin. The agency provides a full array of services including: brand planning; creative; digital strategy and social media; strategic media relations; consumer insights; measurement and evaluation; event creative and production, Hispanic/multicultural; and spokesperson procurement and training.

Taylor develops strategic marketing communications programs

for a number of category leading food and beverage brands, including — for the past 28 years — Diageo, the world's leading premium drinks business. For Diageo, Taylor has successfully launched new products, reinvigorated iconic brands and sustained momentum in the marketplace for adult beverage favorites such as Crown Royal, Guinness, Captain Morgan, Smirnoff and Bulleit, among others.

The agency also partners with

— Continued on page 34



Spong client Jack Link's® unveiled "Meatzilla," a monster-sized, three-story-high bag of jerky in celebration of National Jerky Day.

## TAYLOR

— Continued from page 33

leading consumer food brands for a wide range of services, including product introductions, sponsorship activations, and digital strategy.

### TREVELINO/ KELLER

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www.consumebrands.com

Trevelino/Keller, having established its food, beverage and franchising practice as one of the more health-centric in the U.S., targets emerging and middle-market companies across four channels: restaurants, franchising, manufacturing and associations.

With one of the more progressive foodie agency cultures, the firm brings an integrated approach through Public Relations, Content Marketing, Creative Services and Demand Generation for product launches, brand revitalization, reputation management and category disruption. For global brands, Trevelino/Keller has band together three boutiques to form Consume Brands, designed to serve early stage and global brands with needs beyond communications including culinary arts, brand extension and product development. Experienced in fine dining, casual, fast casual and quick service as well as packaged goods for foodservice, grocery and specialty, the firm's ambition is to get out in front of the market in relation to supporting a more responsible food society, promoting companies with healthy nutritional strategies, organics, sustainability and local initiatives. The firm's work with TCBY included the launch of its "Super Fro-Yo," a super nutritional classification that distinguishes the brand from others in the category. It has also worked closely with the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness and its Chef's Table Gluten Free Tour and the web launch of Santo Li, a natural occurring sparkling water with distinct nutritional benefits. Interested in exploring a relationship, please email dtrevelino@trevelinokeller.com.

### WEBER SHANDWICK

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www.webershandwick.com

**Gail Heimann, President**  
**Janet Helm, MS, RD, Chief Food and Nutrition Strategist, North America**

Weber Shandwick has built one of the largest and most successful food and nutrition practices in North America. Our clients include many of the world's leading food companies, and we've been behind some of the most iconic campaigns for food brands in the country. Weber Shandwick also has deep expertise in turning food industry groups like milk and pork into brands with award-winning campaigns that have changed perceptions and built demand.

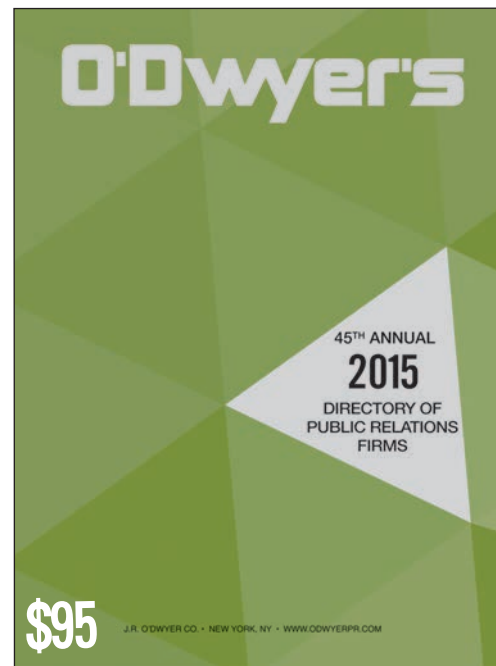
Our food clients range from the indulgent to functional, and they each have a story to tell. In today's "always-on" world, we help brands engage, always. We manage the online communities of our multiple food clients and have extensive experience in creating engaging content and managing issues. Our work involves launching new products, reinvigorating brands, establishing thought leadership, and leveraging scientific research to change the way consumers and influencers think about specific foods or ingredients.

We have a dedicated food and nutrition team that includes some of the industry's most strategic senior counselors and content experts — including registered dietitians, PhD nutrition scientists, former and current journalists and trained chefs. These imbedded experts have extensive experience in public-private partnerships, alliance building, food and agriculture policy, food regulations, sustainability, food safety and crisis communications.

We have strong relationships with food and nutrition influencers, including registered dietitians and bloggers, who are increasingly influencing the media landscape. Weber Shandwick created and continues to support the Nutrition Blog Network — an aggregator of more than 900 blogs written by registered dietitians. Our food practice specialists have extensive experience in engaging the communities that matter most to our food and beverage clients. ○

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# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

## FOOD & BEVERAGE PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2014)	Firm	Net Fees (2014)
<b>1.</b> Edelman, New York, NY	\$98,062,752	<b>28.</b> SSPR, Northfield, IL	698,850
<b>2.</b> Hunter PR, New York, NY	15,000,000	<b>29.</b> LANE, Portland, OR	690,273
<b>3.</b> APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	13,895,513	<b>30.</b> Quinn, New York, NY	546,047
<b>4.</b> FoodMinds, Chicago, IL	8,072,494	<b>31.</b> Peppercomm, New York, NY	501,715
<b>5.</b> MWWPR, New York, NY	7,832,000	<b>32.</b> O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	465,100
<b>6.</b> Taylor, New York, NY	7,010,000	<b>33.</b> Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	441,545
<b>7.</b> Zeno Group, New York, NY	6,619,318	<b>34.</b> Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	375,305
<b>8.</b> PadillaCRT, Minneapolis, MN	5,587,772	<b>35.</b> Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	375,000
<b>9.</b> RF   Binder Partners, New York, NY	5,443,766	<b>36.</b> Power Group, The, Dallas, TX	361,173
<b>10.</b> Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	5,019,321	<b>37.</b> Bizcom Associates, Addison, TX	350,000
<b>11.</b> Current Lifestyle Marketing, Chicago, IL	4,433,907	<b>38.</b> McNeely Pigott & Fox PR, Nashville, TN	305,949
<b>12.</b> 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	3,300,000	<b>39.</b> Seigenthaler PR, part of Finn Partners, Nashville, TN	245,236
<b>13.</b> W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	2,505,000	<b>40.</b> Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	170,574
<b>14.</b> Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	2,362,220	<b>41.</b> PAN Communications, Boston, MA	156,000
<b>15.</b> French   West   Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,233,616	<b>42.</b> Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	151,545
<b>16.</b> Finn Partners, New York, NY	2,178,044	<b>43.</b> CJ Public Relations, Southington, CT	136,880
<b>17.</b> 360 Public Relations, Boston, MA	1,948,991	<b>44.</b> North 6th Agency (N6A), New York, NY	129,168
<b>18.</b> DVL, part of Finn Partners, Nashville, TN	1,660,275	<b>45.</b> rbb Public Relations, Miami, FL	122,074
<b>19.</b> SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	1,504,373	<b>46.</b> LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	98,000
<b>20.</b> Ruder Finn, New York, NY	1,435,288	<b>47.</b> Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	96,000
<b>21.</b> Konnect Public Relations, Los Angeles, CA	1,209,019	<b>48.</b> Red Sky PR, Boise, ID	89,043
<b>22.</b> LEVICK, Washington, DC	1,091,507	<b>49.</b> Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	77,876
<b>23.</b> IW Group, West Hollywood, CA	996,000	<b>50.</b> Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	75,000
<b>24.</b> J Public Relations, San Diego, CA	867,984	<b>51.</b> Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	67,019
<b>25.</b> Lambert, Edwards + Associates, Grand Rapids, MI	854,000	<b>52.</b> Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	54,900
<b>26.</b> BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	842,185	<b>53.</b> Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	10,000
<b>27.</b> Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	775,210	<b>54.</b> Beehive PR, St. Paul, MN	1,022

# The antecedents of a flourishing field

By Fraser Seitel

In February, a historic figure in public relations celebrated a major milestone: Harold Burson, Co-Founder and Chairman Emeritus of one of this industry's most storied agencies, Burson-Marsteller, celebrated his 95th birthday.



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*.

More than 150 former and current Burson-Marsteller employees gathered at the James Burden Mansion on Manhattan's Upper West Side to celebrate Burson's birthday. To those who know him — and there are thousands — Harold Burson, a wise counselor, loyal friend and man of unbridled optimism, represents the very best of the practice

of public relations.

Burson is also a public relations pioneer, opening his agency more than 60 years ago and following in a tradition that other pioneers, most notably Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays, helped establish.

But what about the public relations practice before these 20th century industry giants? Who were the pioneers, what are the true antecedents of this practice that has become so prominent and powerful in the 21st century?

As a point of fact, public relations has been with us for centuries. Here's a brief history:

The first public relations man may well have been Aaron, the much less famous brother of Moses. According to the Old Testament, when Moses was chosen by God to plead the plight of the Jewish people before Pharaoh, he called on his brother — a better and more persuasive speaker — to represent him at the royal court. The Jews left town via the Red Sea shortly thereafter.

In the 6th century B.C., the Greeks used

the word, *sematikos* — today's "semantics" — to signify persuading people to believe something and take action to do it. Greek Sophists were paid speakers, hired by legislators, to persuade the populace to support certain measures. Today, we call such people "lobbyists."

The Romans were great debaters and writers. In 50 B.C., Julius Caesar wrote Caesar's Gallic, in effect a campaign biography, that promoted his military experience and success to illustrate that he deserved to be head of state. Today, of course, every presidential candidate this side of Gov. Jim "Happy" Gilmour produces a de rigueur book describing how lucky we are to have them.

The American Revolution of 1776 depended on writers and pamphleteers to spread the gospel to their countrymen of separating from England. Committees of Correspondence fueled the revolution. And the men who led the public relations charge were America's revered founding fathers, like Thomas Paine, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and Alexander Hamilton (who wrote in hip hop).

In the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson depended on "Kitchen Cabinet" member Amos Kendall and his *Washington Globe* daily newspaper to polish Old Hickory's reputation by getting out the positive messages about Jackson's programs and prowess.

Later, during Abraham Lincoln's presidency, Secretary of State William Seward became a master of using the press to push the administration's programs. He reportedly told his friend Jefferson Davis, before Davis became his Civil War enemy, to "speak to the newspapers — they have a large audience and can repeat a thousand times what I want to impress on the public."

Finally, there is the historic figure that today's public relations professionals loath to claim as their own. Phineas Taylor Barnum, a master of persuasion, who in the 19th century promoted his museum, circus and performers with equal parts zeal and deception. P.T. Barnum's hugely successful empire helped give public relations a bad name, as it was built on a foundation of self-promotion, braggadocio, hype and outright lies.

Thank goodness that in today's more learned, sophisticated society, no individual possessing such anti-social traits could presume to ascend to a position of such power. ○



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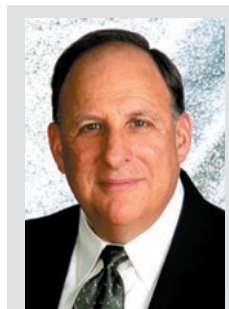
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# The move from billable hours to value pricing

By Richard Goldstein

**M**any industry consultants are urging PR firms to dump billable hours and replace it with a fixed-pricing model, or even value pricing. For some reason, billable hours seems to be set in stone in many service organizations, including PR agencies.



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

The beginning of billable hours begins with the initial proposal. By this I mean a price is determined, usually based on hours to complete the project. Staff is given budgets to complete a project and record their time in a time keeping system. At the end of the project, management has a profit or loss based on billable hours. More frequently than not, the question asked is, "How can this have taken that much time?" The question translates into a realization write-off and overall dissatisfaction from the account supervisor and the team members!

## Some history

So what is wrong with the billable hour? The billable hour was never meant to be a pricing method. It was originally intended to be a tool to allow a service organization to measure the profitability of an engagement, not a means to price it. It is a cost accounting tool!

Ask a professional of any profession to eliminate his or her time sheet. Staff will chuck it in an instant. Management would be concerned that they would not know whether or not they made money on an individual engagement. This is a valid point but wrong! The concept of using a standard billing rate is not cost accounting but profit forecasting. By this I mean knowing the desired net income of the firm using a cost plus formula. By the way, a cost plus formula is only as good as the determination of the cost plus formula input. The US Post Office uses cost plus to determine price. We know how well it does!

## Lessons from the accounting profession

Many CPA firms are still using billable hours internally to help calculate a fixed monthly rate for some of its clients. However, other firms are completely discarding the notion of an hourly metric and instead use "value pricing" to determine prices based

on the value of the service to the client. It is interesting that based on accounting firm surveys, the majority of CPA firms still use the billable hour. Those that say they use value pricing are really just using another form of the billable hour according to Ron Baker, a well-known value pricing consultant.

## What's wrong with using billable hours?

According to Ron Baker, the billable hour relies on practitioner's input, namely time, rather than the output, results. The value of the results should determine the cost of the service, not the time it takes to achieve them. Otherwise, firms can find their revenue stream severely limited. (There are only so many hours a person can work in a day.) Also, think about this — how much time and energy does it take to track time, analyze the result, and labor over what went wrong! The time is better spent on results for clients!

## Challenges

Firms are hesitant to move away from the billable hour, because firm management still needs to track time to determine their costs and gauge which services produce the best margin. (In my view even this is not done properly.) Baker disagrees with this notion, arguing instead that other methods such as price-led costing, project management, key predicative indicators, and after-action reviews are better suited to determining and managing costs than time sheets.

## If your client demands hourly billing

There are many clients that want to see all the detail behind the bill, including how you determined the billable rate, etc. According to Baker, some buyers of your expertise are so used to buying services based on time and rate, they demand to know this. I have been asked many times to provide the firm's billing rates in the proposal. It is also true that sometimes a client/customer just wants to buy your time (perhaps to ask a numerous questions according to Baker), and the only benchmark of value in that instance is the time spent. This is not the type of client you want to deal with, since the client has no idea of the value you bring, or if he/she does, is not willing to pay for it. After all, you spent a lifetime learning your craft, why should you give \$10,000 of value to a customer in a one hour meeting? Better yet, why should you provide this value in the proposal?

## Determining profitability

If you eliminate time sheets, how will you know if you are profitable? It is simple: income statement management. Look at the cost of labor as a percentage of gross revenue. This is a different mindset from pour-

ing over hourly reports. Not comfortable with this? Keep your time sheets and make it a true cost accounting system, rather than a pricing model.

I would be remiss if I did not give you the reader the advantages and disadvantages of hourly billing so here are just a few:

Some advantages: It's easy and efficient; it can be a cost accounting tool; and it transfers risk to the client if the engagement goes over budget.

Disadvantages: Focuses on hours not value; places risk on the client; fosters a production line, not an entrepreneurial spirit; creates a subsidy system where some clients are overcharged and others are undercharged in order to meet hourly quotas; transmits no useful information other than identifying rainmakers, managers, and technicians, and useful information is found in client service, attitude, client retention ability, profitability and collection, ability to delegate, monitoring skills, etc.; focuses on efforts not results; encourages the hoarding of hours to fulfill quotas; penalizes technological advances; rates are set by reverse completion, where you look at the rates of your competition in your market and see where you fit in; creates bureaucracy; does not differentiate a firm; and limits income potential.

Get the picture?

More next month on this subject, including a case study by a major law firm on "killing" billable hours. ○

## PR news brief

### NY Times profit climbs on cost cutting

The New York Times Company saw net income jump nearly 48 percent in the fourth quarter to \$51.7 million as lower costs and severance expenses offset flat revenues of \$444.7 million.

The Times said operating costs fell 7.7 percent during the quarter to \$352.7 million. It added 53,000 new paid digital subscribers in Q4, the most in three years.

Despite previous reductions, the company said it plans a "sweeping examination" of the newsroom to identify further areas for cost reductions.

Circulation revenues inched up 1.3 percent while ad revenues fell 1.3 percent during the quarter. Print ads fell 6.6 percent while digital ads climbed 10.6 percent to \$69.9 million. Digital subscriptions climbed 13.3 percent in the fourth quarter worth \$50.4 million.

President and CEO Mark Thompson called 2015 "a year of progress" for the Times, noting its virtual reality play, growth in its T Brand Studio and mobile, as well as digital growth.

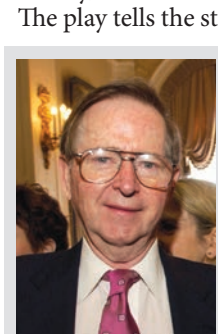
For the year, revenues slipped 0.6 percent to just under \$1.6 billion. Digital ads rose 8.2% to \$197.1 million. Print fell 8 percent.

The Times claims 1,094,000 digital-only subscribers as of the end of Q4, up 20 percent over Q4 of 2014.

# Play about Tylenol murders hammers J&J

By Jack O'Dwyer

**D**eath on the Supermarket Shelf" is a play about the seven Tylenol murders in 1982 that will run from March 4 to March 26 at the Centerstage Theatre, Federal Way, between Seattle and Tacoma, WA.



Jack O'Dwyer

The play tells the story of Michelle Rosen, who watched her 27-year-old mother Lynn Reiner die of poisoned Tylenols after she had returned home from giving birth to her brother Joshua. Lynn Reiner was one of seven victims of cyanide poisoning in the Chicago area.

We hope it will dramatize this story of corporate culpability and spark a re-examination of it by major media which have so far dropped the ball, succumbing to J&J's endless praise of itself and its "code."

No drug should ever have been sold in easily-doctored capsules and especially not after seven people died horrible deaths after ingesting spiked capsules.

It took another Tylenol poisoning death, that of 23-year-old Diane Elstroth of Peekskill, NY, on Feb. 17, 1986, to force J&J CEO James Burke to stop selling drugs in capsules. He said he was "sorry" the capsules had been returned to the market. They came back in "tamper-resistant" packaging. Who would buy a "bullet-resistant vest?"

## Seven dead; J&J offers \$100K reward

Seven people were dead and J&J, a blue-chip with mega-bucks by ordinary standards, offered \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrator. It should have been \$10 million or \$20 million.

Aiding and abetting the perpetrator was J&J itself. "The Tylenol Mafia," by former employee Scott Bartz, details in nearly 500 pages the circuitous route Tylenol ingredients took on their way to store shelves. There were many opportunities for an insider to slip cyanide into bottles.

J&J fought the families for eight years in court before making a settlement on May 23, 1991, a day before a trial was to begin. The families accepted a meager award rather than face another eight years of legal wrangling.

Goats, in this modern morality play, include the police, who spent much effort trying to pin the murders on relatives; the media, which swallowed whole the J&J version

of the murders; the Food & Drug Administration, which declared J&J blameless on the second day after the incident, and PR Society of America, which created a special "Silver Anvil" after J&J lost in 1983 to a program for Hygrade Hot Dogs.

FDA Chief Arthur Hull Hayes Jr. left the FDA in 1983 when he received a ten-year contract to work for Burson-Marsteller, J&J's PR firm, at \$1,000 a month. He later joined a company funded heavily by J&J. He became Vice Chairman and Medical Director of Nelson Communications, founded in 1987 by former J&J executive Wayne Nelson. The company got 39 percent of its \$86 million in revenues from J&J in 1996. Nelson headed McNeil Consumer Products Co., created to market Tylenol in capsules.

The play, written by Alan Bryce with music by Dawn Clement, has a cast of 13. Bryce, author of the play "For All That," brings "a real life murder mystery with a darkly disturbing backdrop of corporate intrigue with the child of one of the victims (Rosen) still in relentless pursuit of the truth."

J&J was able to deflect suspicion and guilt via a massive effort that strictly controlled communications on the tragic event. Much of the evidence in the form of bottles still on the shelves or in the homes of people, was either turned over to J&J or destroyed by consumers. It was an instance of a suspect in a crime receiving much of the evidence.

The company did not hold a press conference. It adopted the stance that it knew no more about the incident than anyone else.

Critics, however, including Bartz, contended there was plenty of proof that the Tylenols were poisoned while in the distribution chain of J&J and was not the work of a "mad person" running from store to store. Proof cited by Bartz is that Lynn Reiner obtained her poisoned Tylenols from a secure hospital pharmacy.

## Media swallowed J&J info

J&J was up to its ears in product recalls in 2010 resulting in a public apology by CEO Bill Weldon. Almost every story said the tarnish on J&J's image was all the more newsworthy because of the stellar job it did in defending itself in 1982.

However, the stories neglected to mention the murder of Elstroth in 1986 via poisoned Tylenols. The murderer, it appeared, was still on the loose.

J&J brought Tylenol capsules back to the market within five weeks, knowing the killer was still at large and despite many indications that the Tylenols were poisoned while in the J&J distribution chain.

Several PR professors have written that

the five-day delay in pulling Tylenol capsules from the market should never be referred to as "immediate" or "instant," and that there is no way of knowing how much the profit motive figured in J&J's decision to re-market the capsules.

The profs, quoted in the online PR Journal of PRSA hosted by Prof. Don Wright, also focus on the rarely mentioned \$100K reward that J&J offered in both the 1982 and 1986 murders. They write that this small sum was J&J's way of claiming it had nothing to do with the murders.

## Media praise J&J/Tylenol

*The Economist* said in April 2010 that J&J/Tylenol was the "gold standard of crisis management." The remark was in a column called "Schumpeter" written by Adrian Woolridge. Business Editor Edward McBride said that "In the context of Toyota's recent failings, or Tiger Woods' infidelities, or any of the other episodes referred to in the article, J&J's decision to recall Tylenol was very prompt — although the firm may well have made subsequent mistakes."

*New York Times* reporter Natasha Singer on May 3, 2010 praised J&J for its "fast and adept" handling of the Tylenol murders crisis." Peter Goodman, in an Aug. 2010 NYT feature that ran nearly three pages, called PR for Tylenol "Exhibit A in the lesson book on forthright crisis management."

*The Christian Science Monitor*, in Jan. 2010 said J&J's response to the murders "is still regarded as a shining example of corporate social responsibility." *Fortune*, on May 28, 2007 hailed J&J/Tylenol as the "gold standard in crisis control." PR Society of America's *Tactics* praised J&J in 2007 for providing "an enduring example of crisis management done right."

## UF flunks us

The University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications was contacted because of a posting on its website called "Effective Crisis Management," which says J&J "conducted an immediate product recall," "knew they were not responsible for tampering of the product," and put "public safety first."

We asked College Dean John Wright, Ph.D., to correct these false — or at least debatable — statements.

David Carlson, Executive Director, Center for Media Innovation and Research at the College, said we offered "nothing but opinion." He said the piece was by a student who quoted the *Chicago Sun-Times*, J&J, and Mark Mitchell of the Economic Assn. Int'l. The piece will be changed when those organizations change their opinions, he said. ○



## Journalism vet Pulley to Weber content posts

**B**rett Pulley, a journalism vet who moved to PR last year, has joined Weber Shandwick as an EVP and

Managing Director for Corporate Content and Media Strategy.

The former dean of Hampton University's Scripps Howard School of Journalism was a reporter for the *Times Union*, *Orlando Sentinel*, *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*.

He was also an editor for and writer for Bloomberg News around a stint in New York's dot-com realm. He was dean of the 400-student Hampton j-school from 2011-15 and took an advisory role with Burson-Marsteller last year. ○



Brett Pulley

## B-M hires Henderson for southwest post

**W**PP's global PR flagship Burson-Marsteller has appointed Teresa Henderson Managing Director in its U.S. corporate and financial practice. She will also serve as Market Leader of Burson-Marsteller's southwest region, which includes the agency's offices in Dallas and Austin.

Henderson was previously Senior Vice President of Client Development in the Texas office of Oklahoma City-headquartered marketing communications agency Saxum, where she fielded accounts for clients such as Hess Corp., Interstate Natural Gas Association of America and RigNet. Prior to her tenure at Saxum, Henderson was a Senior VP at Houston-headquartered investor relations and PR agency Pierpont Communications, where she was general manager of the Dallas office and headed accounts for Saudi Aramco, Sunoco Logistics and Emirates Airlines. She also formerly served as an Executive VP at Edelman, where she was also Southwest Corporate Practice Leader and head of the independent giant's Dallas and Austin outposts. Prior to that she was a Senior VP at Ketchum and Director of that Omnicom unit's Dallas office. ○



Amy Inglesby

As southwest Market Leader, Henderson is now tasked with overseeing the agency's growth and business development in that region. She will work out of the agency's Dallas office and will report to U.S. Corporate Practice Chair and New York Market Leader Alan Sexton. ○

## Crosby calls Inglesby for VP role

**A**nnapolis, MD-based agency Crosby has appointed Amy Inglesby to the role of Vice President and Director of Integration Management.

Inglesby, who joined Crosby in 2002, has headed communications campaigns for the agency focusing on national public education, public service and behavior change, working with federal agencies and nonprofit organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star program, Disabled American Veterans, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the National Association of Social Workers and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Inglesby is now charged with leading Crosby's team of integration managers, who oversee the planning and execution of Crosby's marketing programs. She will also help set agency-wide practices that foster collaboration among clients and will streamline processes that bolster efficiency and campaign results. ○



Amy Inglesby

## PCI picks Dewar for VP

**C**hicago-based agency Public Communications Inc. has appointed Sharon Dewar to the role of Vice President and Company Officer.

Dewar comes to PCI from Chicago's Lincoln Park Zoo, which she joined in 2008 and served as Director of Public Relations. Prior to that she was a Senior PR Rep. at the Zoological Society of San Diego, and also previously served as a journalist and public affairs specialist in the United States Navy, where she wrote news items for military-targeted publications and assisted news agencies during international events such as the Korean Airlines crash in Guam, the Kurdish refugee evacuation from Iraq and tsunami recovery efforts in Papua New Guinea.

Dewar now uses her experience to support the PCI team with strategic leadership

that delivers positive results for the agency's clients. ○

## Portland picks Shapiro

**N**ew York-based communications agency Portland has appointed Rob Shapiro to its U.S. leadership team. He will now head the agency's B2B practice.

Shapiro comes to Portland from Fleishman-Hillard, which he joined in 2012 and served as Senior VP and Partner. At Fleishman, Shapiro led B2B marketing efforts for the agency and counseled corporations on marketing communications, reputation management and corporate positioning. Prior to Fleishman-Hillard, Shapiro was at financial and professional services agency Greentarget, where he was General Manager of that agency's New York office.

At Portland, Shapiro is now charged with building the agency's U.S. B2B practice and leading new business efforts. He will be based in Portland's New York office and will report to U.S. General Manager David MacKay. ○



Rob Shapiro

## Jawski joins PN rep. management practice

**P**orter Novelli has appointed Greg Jawski to the role of Senior Vice President of the agency's reputation management practice, as part of a bid to widen the Omnicom global PR unit's foothold in that sector.

Jawski comes to Porter Novelli from JCPR, where he was Managing Director and General Manager of that agency's New York office. Prior to that he was a Senior VP at Emanate PR, where he oversaw programs focused on mortgage outreach and retail banking. He also served as VP in Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide's financial services and corporate practice, and was a VP in Fleishman-Hillard's financial services group.

Jawski will now counsel PN's corporate affairs clients and help the agency expand its offerings in the reputation management sector. He will be based out of the agency's New York headquarters, and will report to PN Partner and New York Managing Director Darlan Monterisi. ○



Greg Jawski

## GAO to probe PR spending

The Government Accountability Office will investigate PR and advertising spending after a request from Senate Budget Committee Chair Mike Enzi.

Enzi, in a February 5 letter to GAO Comptroller General Gene Dodaro, noted “federal resources dedicated to public relations activities is largely unknown,” pointing to a Congressional Research Service estimate of \$892.5 million in fiscal 2013.

Enzi had previously requested an accounting from the Office of Management and Budget but the OMB said it could not process the request.

The Senator’s GAO request is twofold: the first involves spending across the federal government on PR activities, including contracts and internal agency support; and the second entails federal agencies spending the most on PR and for what purpose. ○

## Cruz axes top spokesperson

Presidential candidate Ted Cruz fired Communications Director Rick Tyler, his campaign’s top spokesman, in February after Tyler disseminated an edited video of Marco Rubio.

The video showed Rubio walking by Cruz’s father and a campaign staffer reading the Bible, and purported Rubio to say, “Got a good book there, not many answers in it.” Rubio’s campaign sent out an unedited version of the video that shows him saying, “Got a good book there, all the answers are in there.”

Tyler apologized on Facebook. Cruz said Tyler is a “good man” who made a “grave error of judgment.”

Tyler is a former Newt Gingrich Spokesman and Executive Director of the Maine Republican Party. ○



Tyler

## T-Mobile taps new lobbying shop

Wireless giant T-Mobile has hired newly formed Washington, D.C. lobbying firm Farragut Partners, LLP for Capitol Hill representation.

Farragut will help T-Mobile push its support for the “Wireless Tax Fairness Act,” a bill that would enact a five-year moratorium on any new state or local taxes imposed on consumers for wireless service.

Farragut will also aid T-Mobile with general lobbying activities related to wireless policy on consumer protection and privacy issues and spectrum-related issues.

Farragut Partners was formed in January by former Ryan, MacKinnon, Vasapoli and Berzok Partners Jeff Mackinnon, Joe Vasapoli and Jeff Mortier. Mackinnon is a former Legislative Director for Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX). Vasapoli is a former Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Special Assistant and House Energy and Commerce Committee Counsel. Mortier was a professional staff member on the House Energy and Commerce Committee under Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and worked Legislative Affairs for Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY). ○

## Shirley & Banister join Kasich

Public affairs pros Craig Shirley and Diana Banister have joined the presidential campaign of former Ohio Gov. John Kasich. The Principals of Shirley & Banister PA will aide the cam-



paign with outreach to national media outreach and thought leaders, particularly in the conservative realm.

Kasich Senior Advisor for Communication, Scott Milburn, said Shirley and Banister were the campaigns first choice to expand its communications team.

Kasich exceeded expectations in the New Hampshire primary in February with an upbeat message that contrasted sharply to many of his rivals and finishing second to Donald Trump. While not expected to be among the leaders in the South Carolina primary, Kasich hopes to build momentum in his home Midwest. ○

## Saunders opens DC shop

Aaron Saunders, EVP and COO of Dezenhall Resources, has opened Drumfire Public Affairs in Washington.

Saunders was Communications Director to Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and the late Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK). He said Drumfire aims to integrate communications, lobbying and coalition billing, among other PA disciplines. Services include ally mobilization, issue management, spokesperson training and media relations.

At Dezenhall, he ran day-to-day operations of the 15-staffer crisis specialist. Dezenhall senior counselor Kathryn Davis Rodriguez is a Director of Drumfire PA. ○

## Yelp takes Monument

Internet business review site Yelp Inc. has hired lobbying firm Monument Policy Group for Capitol Hill representation.

The San Francisco-based marketing and reviews giant, which allows users to rate businesses they have frequented, will be using MPG for general lobbying issues in relation to the computer industry, labor issues and civil liberties, and specifically, “Internet issues related to competition and free speech,” according to lobbying registration documents.

Founded in 2004 by former PayPal employees, Yelp currently staffs about 3,250 and boasted 2014 revenues of nearly \$380 million. The site, which received nearly 200 million U.S. visits for the month of January, according to data by Quantcast, is the focus of a forthcoming documentary film titled Billion Dollar Bully, which details the business’ often controversial practices. Longtime Hollywood publicist Michael Levine is the film’s executive producer.

A 12-member team at Monument Policy Group will head the Yelp account, including firm founder and partner Stewart Verdery, a former Homeland Security assistant secretary and staffer for Senators John Warner (R-VA) and Don Nickles (R-OK). ○



## USAID plans reform PR push in Ukraine

The US Agency for International Development is planning an agency search to guide a PR push touting reform initiatives underway in Ukraine, where Russia sparked a military crisis in late 2014.

USAID said it expects to award a six-month contract via an RFP process to aid the State Department unit in the “conceptualization and execution of public awareness campaigns aimed at increasing the awareness of several reform initiatives underway in Ukraine.”

The underlying goal will be to boost public support of reform efforts by the Ukraine government amid confusion and misunderstanding there. The US government also wants Ukraine citizens to understand how proposed reforms “will improve their lives.”

USAID did not release a date for the RFP.

The US has provided \$84 million in aid to Ukraine since the outbreak of the Russia crisis in 2014. 

## Robertson markets Montréal

Travel marketing and branding agency Robertson Solutions has been named agency of record for Tourisme Montréal, the private, non-profit tourism association that promotes travel efforts to Québec’s largest city.

New York-based Robertson Solutions will manage media relations duties to drive U.S. awareness and tourism interest in Montréal. The city, which celebrates its 375th anniversary next year, will be the site of a series of commemorative festivities led by non-profit organizing committee MTL 375. Robertson is also charged with spearheading media and key event-related activities leading up to these anniversary celebrations.

Heading the Tourisme Montréal account will be Robert-

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 Law Offices of Robert Kelley**, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 5, 2016 for National Mobilization Force, Basija, Ninawa Province, Iraq**, to convey the views of NMF (soldiers fighting ISIL) to members of Congress, executive branch officials and the U.S. press.

**Squire Patton Boggs, LLP**, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 2, 2016 for the Government of Saint Lucia**, Minister of External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation.

**California Strategies, LLC**, Sacramento, CA, **registered Jan. 20, 2016 for Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco, San Francisco, CA**, to collect and analyze information concerning high speed rail activity in California; provide analysis and recommendations regarding opportunities for the Japanese high speed rail industry in the state; facilitate meetings between leaders; and create a PR program aimed at providing the Japanese high speed rail industry with opportunities to articulate the positive role of that industry in California.

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).

**Peck Madigan Jones**, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 18, 2016 for Mortgage Bankers Association, Washington, D.C.**, regarding the Telephone Consumer Protection Act.

**Kelly Cole Strategies**, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 17, 2016 for Univision Communications, Inc., Washington, D.C.**, regarding issues related to telecommunications.

**The Glover Park Group LLC**, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 16, 2016 for Stop Mega-Cable Coalition, Washington, D.C.**, regarding charters pending acquisition of Time Warner Cable and Bright House Networks.

son Founder and Principal Kylie Robertson and Account Manager Debra Kelman Loew. 

## Mercury touts Turkey

The Washington D.C., office of public affairs and strategy firm Mercury has been tapped by the Turkish Institute for Progress for foreign relations support.


International relations organization Turkish Institute for Progress was formed as a means of establishing a forum for dialogue between Turkey and the international community. The non-profit organization is headquartered in New York.

Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu unveiled an economic plan in February to bolster Turkey’s ailing tourism industry, which has been hurt recently due to a spate of terrorist attacks and escalating tensions with Russia.

A January suicide bombing in Istanbul’s popular tourist district Sultanahmet Square killed 13, all foreigners. A second bombing, this one from a car targeting military personnel, killed nearly 30 people in the Turkish capital of Ankara.

Turkey’s relations with Russia have also soured surrounding both countries’ ongoing role in Syria’s civil war, which was the sight of a provisional February cease-fire brokered between Russia and the U.S.

Russia has thrown its support behind the Kurdish forces loyal to Syria’s autocratic ruler Bashar Assad, forces also supported by the U.S. for aiding in its fight against ISIS. Turkey, which opposes the Syrian government, has supported rebels intending to overthrow Assad, and along with Qatar and Saudi Arabia, has backed umbrella rebel groups such as The Army of Conquest, which allegedly bears ties to al-Qaeda.

Turkey in November shot down a Russian warplane it accused of entering its airspace, representing the first downing of a Russian aircraft by a NATO power since the Korean War. 

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