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Communications & New Media

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FOOD AND BEVERAGE SPECIAL

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EDITORIAL

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Report says women hold less than their share of senior exec posts.

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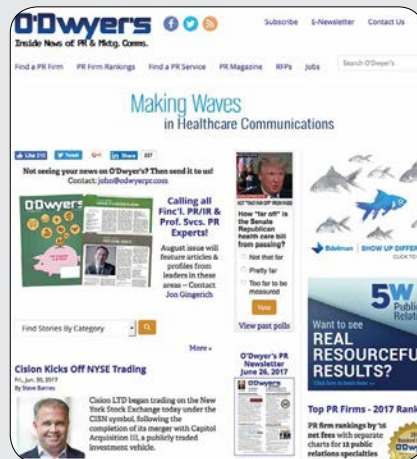
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Richard Goldstein



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January: Crisis Comms. / Buyer's Guide

March: Food & Beverage

May: PR Firm Rankings

July: Travel, Tourism & International

August: Financial, I.R. & Prof Services

October: Healthcare & Medical

November: Technology & Social Media

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On the nose, aromas of approachable savvy, precision and a keen interest in how to build your brand. Enticing mid-palate delivers strong characteristics of authenticity and bright fresh notes, followed by a bold, measurable finish. Powerful now and will continue to impress with age.

Michael Cohen: PR man extraordinaire

Michael Cohen, President Trump's former fixer and muscle, is scheduled to report May 6 to begin a three-year prison sentence for campaign finance law violations related to work for his former Boss, who now calls him "a rat."

Since Cohen was disbarred in New York on Feb. 26, he'll need a job once released from the slammer.

Some savvy PR firm should scoop him up. Cohen put on a PR clinic during his riveting public testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform on Feb. 27.

Right off the bat, Cohen apologized to the Members of Congress for previous untruthful testimony that he made "to protect Mr. Trump."

Warming the heart of every PR counselor, Cohen stressed the importance of staying on message—and then did—in portraying Trump as a "racist, con man and cheat."

Cohen presented his crisis manager credentials: "As many people that know me best would say, I am the person they would call at 3 a.m., if they needed help. I proudly remember being the emergency contact for many of my children's friends when they were growing up because their parents knew that I would drop everything and care for them as it they were my own."

That crisis mindset came in handy after the \$4 billion man, which in Trump's mind was the value of his brand in 2013, decided to trash President Obama's educational credentials. At that point, Trump had moved beyond the "birther" nonsense.

Trump told the AP in 2011 that he heard Obama was a "terrible student" and wondered how he got into Columbia and Harvard. "I certainly will look into it," said the real estate developer. "Let him show his record."

Once Trump launched his own presidential bid, crisis manager Cohen fired off letters to Trump's high school, colleges and the College Board that threatened legal jihad if they released his grades or SAT scores. [My hunch: Obama earned better marks than Trump.]

His May 5, 2015 lawyer letter to Fordham University President Rev. Joe McShane ended with a sweet PR flourish. "P.S. Mr. Trump truly enjoyed his two years at Fordham and has great respect for the University."

Cohen displayed great composure during the Q&A when Republican pit bulls Jim Jordan (OH) and Mark Meadows (NC) trashed him as nothing more than a two-bit convicted lying low-life scoundrel desperately trying to have some time knocked off his upcoming sentence by casting aspersions on the Tweeter-in-Chief.

In his prepared remarks, Cohen said it best: "I knew early on in my work for Mr. Trump that he would direct me to lie to further his business interests. I am ashamed to say, that when it was for a real estate mogul in the private sector, I considered it trivial. As the president, I consider it significant and dangerous."

And the dagger: "But in the mix, lying for Mr. Trump was normalized, and no one around him questioned it. In fairness, no one around him today questions it, either."

And that includes Trump lapdogs Jordan and Meadows who manage to keep their mouths shut over the President's 8,718 lies and misleading statements documented by the *Washington Post* as of Feb. 17.

Somebody should give Cohen a PR gig. At the very least, he deserves an industry honor (O'Dwyer's never got into the awards game) in the special events category for his testimony.

How about a Silver Anvil, PRSA? ○

— Kevin McCauley

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Gender gap persists in PR industry

Women account for more than three-fourths of the PR workforce, but only one in five serve in senior executive positions, according to a new report.

By Steve Barnes

While women now account for more than three out of four workers in the PR industry, only about 20 percent of the top leadership positions are occupied by women, according to a new report from the Institute for Public Relations and KPMG.

"Minding the Gap: Women's Leadership in Public Relations" looks at some of the reasons why the male-female leadership gap persists in the PR industry, and suggests a few strategies for overcoming it.

The study polled both male and female employees in mid-level and senior-level positions to find out how gender affects access to the C-suite as well as the ways in which it impacts the overall work experience.

One of the main takeaways is that whether or not you even see the gap is often a matter of which side of it you're standing on. Almost none of the male study respondents said that they'd ever experienced discrimination in the workplace. Almost all female respondents said that they had.

That split extends to the differing perceptions as regards how men and women view the systemic barriers women face as they move up through the ranks. Many of the men surveyed said that they did not think there were any such systemic barriers. Women cited several, including work-life fit, sexism and unconscious bias.

In addition, many women said that they felt left out of the "boys club" that they saw as a key to moving up the corporate ladder. Several female respondents mentioned being left out of client pitches and social outings.

When it comes to how the industry should

work to address the imbalance, several key factors came up. First off, respondents stressed that gender equality needs to be seen as an issue that affects all employees—not just women.

Addressing gender pay disparity was also seen as very important. Some respondents noted that consistently reviewing organization-wide compensation would go a long way toward addressing that problem.

But perhaps most important is the power of good leadership. Respondents said that having mentors and sponsors can make the path to the C-suite far more manageable for female workers. Interestingly, many said that informal mentorships, rather than formal mentorship programs, often had the greatest effect.

"Minding the Gap" was the result of ten focus groups. See the complete study at www.instituteforpr.org. ○

Digital ads to surpass traditional in '19

Digital ad spending will eclipse traditional ad buys in the U.S. for the first time this year.

By Jon Gingerich

Digital ad spending will eclipse traditional ad buys in the U.S. for the first time this year, according to the latest

ad spending forecast by digital market research company eMarketer.

Digital ad spending in the U.S. will surge by 19 percent in 2019 to total more than \$129 billion, according to eMarketer's report, accounting for an estimated 54.2 percent of the total U.S. advertising market. Those estimates include ads appearing on desktop and laptop computers, as well as mobile phones and other web-connected devices.

Behind this historic milestone is continued growth in the mobile ad market, which is expected to account for more than \$87 billion this year, or more than two-thirds of all digital ad spending.

Meanwhile, the report paints a dire picture for the current state of traditional media. eMarketer expects that radio advertising will dip 1.8 percent this year and estimates that TV ads will decline by 2.2 percent, though the upcoming 2020 presidential election is expected to temporarily cause a resurgence of growth in this market next year. Print is expected to continue its free fall, dropping an estimated 17.8 percent in 2019. eMarketer predicts that the biggest hit will affect the directory market—such as ads in the Yellow Pages—which will plummet 19 percent.

The only bright spot for the traditional media world this year comes from the out-of-home advertising market, or advertising that reaches consumers in public places. Bucking the downturn, the out-of-home market is expected to grow by an estimated one percent in 2019. ○

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Newspaper closures drive partisan identity

The shuttering of local newspapers across the country might be contributing to an increasingly polarized political climate.

By Jon Gingerich

Local newspapers provide an invaluable service to their communities, covering regional and community items that often go unnoticed on a national scale. And Americans' trust in these outlets remains unusually high: a study released last year by journalism nonprofit Poynter Institute discovered that Americans' trust in media remain highest at the local level, with nearly three-quarters of Americans—73 percent—citing trust in their local paper, compared to 59 percent who said they trust national newspapers.

However, the mass disappearance of news outlets around the country has resulted in a waning interest in local political coverage among Americans in exchange for an increasingly nationalized media diet. And outlets with a national reach find themselves thriving in a hyperpartisan political climate, with conflict in Washington driving revenues and subscriptions at outlets like the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*, all of which recently surpassed earnings expectations and saw increased subscribers, particularly

for their digital editions.

According to a recent study, Americans' shift in media consumption habits could be driving political polarization throughout the country, which, in turn, may also be having an effect on how we vote.

The study, which was co-authored by communication and political science scholars at Louisiana State University, Texas A&M University and Colorado State University, measured political polarization across the country by looking at split-ticket voting habits, the practice wherein voters choose candidates from different political parties in elections where multiple offices appear on the ballot. This practice has dipped markedly in recent years.

The study examined the number of the daily/weekly newspapers that had shuttered or merged with other outlets between 2009 and 2012 (according to the study, 110 closures were tallied, the majority of which involved weeklies). It then compared split-ticket voting habits during the 2012 election in areas that had lost a local paper with areas where local outlets remained.

The study discovered that in communities that lost a newspaper, voters were nearly two percent more likely — 1.9 percent — to vote same-party in Presidential and Senatorial elections than communities where a newspaper didn't shutter.

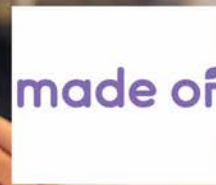
A decline of local newspapers, in other words, could be contributing to increasingly partisan voting habits. As Americans begin turning to nationalized news content in greater numbers, our political identities become a greater driving force in informing our decisions at the ballots.

To account for the possibility that other factors—a weaker local economy, for instance—could be the cause for an uptick in same-party votes instead of losing a local paper, the study also analyzed split-ticket voting numbers during the 2012 election in places that had a local paper but lost it shortly thereafter. According to the study's authors, no correlation was found.

The study, "Newspaper Closures Polarize Voting Behavior," appears in *The Journal of Communication*, a bimonthly peer-reviewed academic journal published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the International Communication Association. ○

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Have consumer food priorities changed since the '90s?

Instant access may have changed how and where we shop, but when it comes to what today's consumers and customers expect, some things never change.

By Lorna Bush

Flashback to the natural foods heyday of the 1990s and it might seem that the values of conscious food consumers haven't changed much over the last 30 years. Trusted local, high quality ingredients. Organic choices. A "natural" approach to real foods as opposed to complicated, unknown chemicals. Plant-based protein sources for a mix of nutritional preferences. Artisanal emphasis. Partnerships between local food producers and the community. Family-friendly products brought to market by trusted brands that understood responsible food practices and production.

From a food producer's perspective, the business challenges of meeting consumer and retailers' stringent demands also appear similar: ensuring product safety and integrity, reducing the risk of food recalls, navigating labeling concerns, procuring trusted suppliers for quality ingredients and meeting high standards for animal welfare and environmental sustainability.

These shared tenets for wholesome living and responsible eating seem awfully similar despite the time difference.

So, what's changed?

Instant access

A far cry from the "convenience" foods of the past — fewer healthy options that usually sacrificed quality for a quick meal fix — today's instant access means I can buy organic beef bone broth, fresh salmon and organic micro-greens for dinner tonight on the same app I use to buy replacement chargers for my iPhone and even a bulk bag of dog food if I'm in a crunch. My groceries, likely delivered by an Amazon or Walmart van or even a driverless delivery vehicle, can also be accompanied by a bottle of Quintessa that years ago would've required a trip to a local wine merchant. Instant access to high quality foods are changing the way consumers eat and changing the way the food and beverage industry is evolving to embrace the new "fast food." It's been estimated that the number of U.S. adults who order groceries at least once a month with an app will increase by nearly 50 percent this year compared to 2018.

In store incentives

How can brick and mortar stores lure

customers back into their aisles? To encourage and incentivize in-store purchases, food producers are employing QR codes and scan-and-save options to give consumers instant access to deals that make shopping more interactive. Scannable codes give consumers access to a mobile world of coupons, recipes and traceable sourcing details that increase brand engagement and reward entry.

Food safety traceability

We read headlines nearly each day about new food recalls. Two separate chicken nugget recalls right before the Super Bowl led to concerns about the category as a whole and garnered headline news coverage from CNN and the "Today Show." According to USDA reports, the agency in 2005 handled 53 food recalls, with just one related to extraneous/foreign materials and nine related to undeclared allergens. In 2018, the agency oversaw 125 food recalls, with 23 related to extraneous materials and

quickly trace risks and ensure that products are effectively removed from the marketplace.

Transparency watch

Who's literally watching the farm? Fresh foods producers must prioritize the integrity of the foods they raise for consumption. This includes the land on which they grow vegetables or raise livestock. Even with the popularity of farm-to-table and Slow Food movements, few U.S. consumers have access to the farms where the food they buy is grown. In large part, this limited access is vital for sound biosecurity practices that protect the food supply.

Thanks to the proactive marketing and community engagement of many producers who choose to provide real time footage of farms and food production, consumers have more ways to see agriculture in action. Also, now, more than ever, activists and producers alike are employing drone and AI technology to monitor property and livestock practices. In a visual duel of he-said, she-said, livestreaming production and practices simultaneously protect and target food brands online and with media.

Luxe knows no bounds

Lack of access for in-demand food and beverage items used to signal luxury: the coveted cult whiskey, the limited-edition vintage, the in-the-know butcher or the farmer's market friend that would save a bag of squash blossoms or ramps in peak season if you knew when to go. The instant access of today's consumer grocery e-marketplace has increased our ability to find coveted foodie finds on demand, online or in app. Greater access and increased competition for these items has also allowed us the ability to shop smarter and perhaps more frugally (service fee be darned). But will this instant access replace the emotional connection we crave with the brands we favor and the conscientious people behind them?

Some things never change. The foundation of good public relations remains rooted in consciousness, transparency and brand trust. Voice activated or not, these are the basics that today's consumers and customers expect now (and preferably Prime.)

Lorna Bush is Senior Vice President at Fineman PR in San Francisco. ○



Lorna Bush



Have consumer food priorities changed? Not much, according to these 1990s headlines from Fineman's *Brand PR* newsletter.

26 related to undeclared allergens. Is the food supply less safe? Hardly. Technical innovations, like high sensitivity imaging devices, along with increased training, shared resources and knowledge among industry partners, have significantly increased the ability of producers to detect potential risks before products ever leave the production line.

For those producers who do face recalls? The advent of blockchain technology and increased use of traceable sourcing systems makes it far easier to track down the root cause of potential product issues and supply challenges. Data-based solutions from the farm, transport provider or retailer system allow food producers and regulators to

Gaining trust, creating advocates among Millennials

Current nutrition and diet trends all suggest that companies today need to care about health if they want to succeed.

By Jenna A. Bell

Millennials comprise the most influential consumer generation since Baby Boomers. Millennials have a passion for health and wellness, and they demand products that deliver both without sacrificing flavor. As testimony to their impact, nutrition experts for the first time predict that a “healthy” food profile will begin to overtake cost and taste when it comes to consumer purchase drivers.

Eating is a lifestyle choice

Millennials have decided that nutrition is a lifestyle, and purchase decisions no longer are dependent on the number of grams, calories or Daily Values. This is confirmed by the progression of health and wellness in the seven years of results from the Pollock Communications and *Today's Dietitian* “What’s Trending in Nutrition” survey. This one-of-a-kind survey captures the insights, predictions and expertise of frontline nutrition experts — registered dietitians. Since its launch, close to 10,000 RDs have reported “What’s Trending in Nutrition” for the incoming year. The results for 2019 show how the impact of the Millennial is changing the food industry.

Superfood popularity contest: gut check

According to the 2019 “What’s Trending in Nutrition” survey, the most popular superfood for 2019 is the category of fermented foods. The likes of kimchi, kombucha, sauerkraut, kefir, miso and yogurt are included in this #1 here, suggesting that Millennials are looking for whole-body wellness and are starting with their guts. This choice indicates a level of nutrition savvy not seen in the past. To understand and desire the benefits of fermented foods is more complex than “eating more fruits and vegetables” as typically recommended. It may also suggest that consumers are becoming savvier than we might expect when it comes to their health.

Millennials are pushing plants-forward

In addition to incorporating fermented foods into their diets, Millennials are also taking a plant-based approach to better health. For some time now—decades in fact—nutrition experts have been pushing consumers to eat more plant-based foods, fiber, fruits and vegetables. Often falling on deaf ears. Not so for this generation. Millennials have listened and tailored these messages to suit their goals. RDs stated that their top recommendations are to eat more vegetables and increase fiber. It can’t be coincidental that plant-based diets come

in at number-four for the top trends; and it should come as no surprise that the top 10 superfoods are plant-based, including coconut products and non-dairy milk alternatives at numbers nine and 10.

Top 10 Superfoods for 2019:

1. Fermented foods
2. Avocados
3. Seeds
4. Ancient grains
5. Exotic fruits, like golden berries or acai
6. Blueberries
7. Beets
8. Nuts
9. Coconut products
10. Non-dairy milks

Communicating with Millennials

It’s clear that information consumption is no longer vertical. Nutrition is not downstream from policy to experts to consumers. It’s now a horizontal line of communication through social media and friends and family sharing information from nutrition advice to recipes to compression sock recommendations. Consumers are the commercials and they are telling each other what to eat and buy. Unfortunately, there can be a downside to this. RDs contend that most of the nutrition misinformation consumers are buying into comes from Facebook, blogs and Instagram.

Top “diet” trends shift to lifestyles

The top three diet trends among consumers are arguably lifestyles, not diets, many of which have seen increased popularity across social platforms over the past few years: ketogenic (keto), intermittent fasting and clean eating. Keto requires dedication and can be a significant transition. Intermittent fasting requires food abstinence, something foreign to our Starbucks-on-every-corner and fast-food-at-every-stop lifestyle. Finally, clean eating doesn’t dictate what you eat, it defines how you eat.

Everyone has a food diary app

Regardless of which diet or lifestyle patients subscribe to, RDs continue to find that consumers respond best to making small, reasonable changes to improve their diet, and they recommend keeping track of what you eat. What’s different is that RDs now support using technology for nutrition self-management. Eighty-eight percent of RDs recommend that consumers use apps like iTrackbites, Lose It! or MyFitnessPal, to track their intake. RDs suggest looking for apps that allow easy tracking, reliable data and a diverse database of foods with

brands and restaurants included.

Be the trend

While it took time for the food industry to take Millennials seriously as consumers, their impact is undeniable, and their demands are clear. From Boomers to Gen X, never has a generation had such a game changing impact on the food industry. The Millennial generation has taken the reins and some food manufacturers and supermarkets have responded accordingly and aggressively, from changing their ingredients to extending their product line and investing in food incubator startups.

Given that the trend towards “health” is driving purchases, the food industry should continue to be proactive in the ingredients they choose and the messages they send. Large consumer goods companies should develop and publicize brands that resonate with health and wellness; small companies should be mindful of how to serve the health-focused consumer; and commodity foods need to share their health attributes with nutrition experts and consumers alike.

The days of food companies deciding what consumers will eat is behind us. It’s a consumer world and we just live in it!

Jenna A. Bell, PhD, RD, is Senior Vice President, Director Food & Wellness at New York-based Pollock Communications, Inc. ○



Jenna A. Bell

Media news brief

Regular reading habits retain news subscribers

Providing unique, local content that creates regular reading habits subscribers are willing to pay for might be the key to making paywall-based revenue models a success for news publishers, according to data analysis conducted by Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism.

Medill partnered with three news organizations: the *Chicago Tribune*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Indianapolis Star*. Data scientists analyzed 13 terabytes of anonymous subscriber data provided by these organizations and measured what news consumption habits correlated with what subscriber retention habits.

The study revealed a strong correlation between regular habit and reader retention, that the frequency of consuming local news is the single biggest indicator insofar as whether someone will keep paying for a subscription, regardless of how many stories those subscribers read in a single visit or how thoroughly they read them.

The study also discovered that subscribers who read more than the average amount of stories per visit and those who spend more time reading them were no more likely to keep their subscriptions than those who merely skimmed.

How to thrive in the food and beverage industry

Four strategic initiatives to build thriving brands.

By Heather DeSantis

The number one mistake we see business owners make is missing the beat in industry news. It's easy to focus solely on day-to-day tasks, but successful press comes only from staying informed. PR agencies that understand this truth keep a finger on the pulse of what's going on in your niche, which enables publicists to create timely pieces for your media strategy.

Leverage listening, news, awareness

You can put this step into action by simply watching the news and jumping in on relevant conversations. When you see an opportunity, reach out to a media contact and explain, "I'm an expert and I'd love to give you my raw, honest opinion about this." Reporters and journalists are always looking for fresh new perspectives, so don't be afraid to raise your hand.

In addition to leveraging media features, your brand needs to consider Influencer Marketing as part of your awareness plan. While it may be difficult to track sales made from influencers, their ability to reach thousands from your target market is valuable in itself. Be sure to find the right influencer(s) for your brand: they should align with your values, speak to your prospective audience and have experience working with a brand.

By leveraging trending topics, breaking news and social media influencers, you can position yourself as timely and relevant to your target audience. The result could be the difference between surviving and thriving in your PR strategy.

Maximize your PR as a brand

Once you've landed a media feature or publication, it's critical to maximize your exposure by treating it like a brand. It's not enough to publish and wait. You need to boost your PR opportunity by sharing it at every touch point with your tribe of fans.

There's a time to brag, and there's a time to keep things understated. When it comes to amplifying your press, you need to share everywhere. This includes linking your media opportunity on your website, posting a link to your Facebook business page, Instagram story, personal LinkedIn page and into your email signature or newsletter. Whenever possible, you should tag the media and/or media personalities who were part of the story.

Brands should also use the press to support sales teams and keep retailers up to date. Consider sending monthly updates to show retailers how you're driving con-

sumer awareness, and always inform your sales team of recent exposure to share with prospective buyers at meetings. You can also magnify your exposure by running a Facebook ad that links to your media feature and leads viewers to your opt-in funnel. Ask yourself, "Where do I need to drive people? Amazon, social media, or to sign up for my email list?"

The point here is you always have the opportunity to maximize your public relations. Can you imagine if your company was in Rachael Ray's print magazine and you failed to leverage it? Be sure you take advantage of your press by sharing your media or publication feature whenever and wherever your brand is showcased.

Thought leadership to build your brand

To connect with your audience, you have to go beyond merely selling products or offerings. You need to deeply understand the solution you provide and the audience you're helping. Once you have a strong hold on that message, invite your CEO—and even the entire executive team—to jump into the trenches as a thought leader who provides valuable information.

Whether you're participating in an interview, contributing to an article or posting on your social media platforms, make sure your executives are offering helpful information or actionable steps your audience can take toward solving their problem. One executive who nails this is Kara Goldin from Hint Water. She consistently provides valuable content via online articles, videos and her social media channels.

Building your CEO's personal brand with thought leadership is a key step toward creating a successful PR strategy. You're going beyond the business mindset by incorporating a human element: empathy. As a result, your CEO or fellow executives will be seen as an authority in your industry, which will help instill trust in those who follow you. Because we'd all rather do business with people we like and trust.

When you align with the challenges your target audience faces and then provide thoughtful solutions for free, you can build a strong foundation of loyal fans who are more likely to buy from you or share your story with others.

Incorporate cause marketing, awareness

Being socially responsible is no longer an option. Today's consumers want to know that your brand not only cares about mak-

ing the world a better place, but that you also put your words to action. This is cause marketing, and it's now critical to your PR strategy.

To incorporate cause marketing into your business, start by asking yourself what's important to you and your employees. Word of warning: consumers can easily spot a non-genuine cause when they see one, so the answer can't be superficial. It must come from the heart.

Once you've decided on a cause that aligns with your brand's interests, look for ways to support it with your products or offerings. This could be a buy-one/give-one strategy where you give away a donation for every product sold. It could also mean incorporating the cause into your packaging, volunteering at local shelters or providing free products that support the mission. In addition, you could encourage people within your organization to join an advocacy group, be part of changing legislation or gain certifications for your business, like B-Corp or EWG Verified.

Whatever way you decide to incorporate cause marketing, the next step is to amplify your efforts in the media. Use a multi-platform approach by broadcasting the cause you support across all social media platforms, and contribute blogs or articles to publishers who align with its mission.

By spotlighting your bigger purpose, you can make a more impactful splash in your public relations. This will inspire more meaningful attention, which means you can also expect more effective results.

Your strategic PR initiatives are the number-one way to build brand awareness, increase your market space influence and strengthen your brand credibility in the industry. Once you've leveraged news and awareness, maximized your public relations as a brand, positioned your CEO as a thought leader and incorporated cause marketing into your PR strategy, the sky's the limit for your food or beverage brand.

Heather DeSantis is Founder and CEO of Publicity For Good. Interested in seeing where your brand stands? Get a free PR audit from the Publicity For Good team by emailing your name, company and a quick hello to Heather DeSantis at heather@publicityforgood.com ●



Heather DeSantis

The rise in experiential dining

Why tapping into the experiential dining trend can lead to profitable success among the next generation of restaurant patrons.

By Lacey Outten

As with many food and beverage industry trends predicted for 2019, experiential dining remains on the rise. Experiential dining is about transcending beyond the traditional hallmarks of what makes a restaurant great. Today's restaurant patron expects more than just quality food, friendly service and an authentic sense of place. The next generation is looking for a truly unique experience when going out to eat.

As you may have guessed, Millennials—those born between 1982 and 2000—are the generation driving this trend. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Millennial generation is estimated to be around 83.1 million, or about one fourth of the U.S. population. A study from LexingtonLaw.com found that Millennials together spend roughly \$600 billion in the United States each year, and that they spend two thirds the amount that Generation Xers and Baby Boomers spend when it comes to entertainment.

That said, Millennials are the living generation with the most spending power, so they're worth paying attention to from a business perspective. Furthermore, an Eventbrite survey found that three out of four Millennials prefer to buy an experience over something desirable. Their dining patterns either follow something that's easy and convenient—think fast casual concepts and delivery services like DoorDash and UberEats—or they're looking to experience something new and exciting, something beyond just a “cool” menu.

As communicators in this industry, and those in charge of creating brand perception, our role includes helping our clients define and understand their target audiences, and then determining how to reach their desired guests, keeping them interested and engaged, coming back for more. Tapping into the experiential dining trend can lead to profitable success.

Experiential dining doesn't mean you must go above and beyond to entertain your customers; it can be as simple as adjusting the lighting, music and ambiance. Consider making small, less costly changes to capitalize on the experiential dining trend while staying on brand. Perhaps this means installing an Instagram-worthy photo wall to be shared on social media, or implementing a guest-generated music playlist to make customers feel that they're part of the

experience itself. Or, maybe, the solution is implementing communal seating to make the establishment more approachable.

Off-premise dining opportunities are another way for restaurants to tap into the experiential dining trend. These “pop-ups” can take many forms, and the format options are endless. The venue may welcome a featured guest chef or bartender from outside the restaurant for a complete restaurant “takeover.” Or perhaps the host restaurant will collaborate with the visiting culinary talent to produce a mash-up type menu, available for only a limited time.

During these events, there's typically a sense of comradery between restaurateurs and chefs, which typically spills over into the dining experience itself, further creating an experiential community feel. We've done this with several clients, and it helps open you up to a new audience entirely while bringing something fresh to your regulars.

Pop-ups can also help to drive new traffic and boost sales on slower nights. A restaurant or bar may pinpoint certain nights that are slower than others. Chances are their nearby competitors are experiencing similar sales. Instead of competing for guests on these low-traffic nights, look for ways to collaborate to create an attention-grabbing dining experience which will attract new guests and even loyal guests on a night they might not usually dine out.

Well-crafted programming is another area which can enhance the overall restaurant experience. For newer establishments, customized programming targeted to your desired audience can also help drive traffic. Think beyond the traditional happy hour and discounted food and drink specials. Incorporate live music, community games like Bingo and trivia or a monthly fundraising special for a local charity.

Whether making small adjustments or totally reinventing your concept, restaurant brands—and partners servicing them—must employ innovative marketing tactics. To generate more impactful media coverage, new updates and event announcements are both newsworthy but also opportunities to reconnect with writers who have not covered you in some time.

Additionally, social media helps to drive buzz and excitement. The next-generation diner responds well to engaging Instagram posts and Facebook events. Setting up tick-

et sales for events creates a clear call to action while simultaneously building a sense of urgency as well as a sense of exclusivity.

As with many industries, food follows cyclical trends so the takeaway should be this: restaurant brands who understand their customers—current and future—and invest in opportunities to reach these audiences will enjoy increased dining frequency, satisfaction and loyalty.

As we know, the next-generation customer is technologically savvy, connected and has high expectations. As a result, it's more important than ever to deliver on these needs in a world controlled by instant photo posting and opinion sharing. And finally, while there's no set formula for success, good business practices remain the same. Always stay true to your brand. While it's crucial to remain fresh and relevant, it's equally important to understand the changing industry climate.

Lacey Outten is Director, Food, Wine & Spirits Division at Hemsworth Communications. ○



Lacey Outten

PR news brief

Food news a priority for Americans

More Americans now consider food and nutrition news to be more important than any other type of news, according to an annual Food News study commissioned by Hunter Public Relations.

Hunter's annual study, which surveys consumers on the most memorable food-related news items each year and what impact or behavioral changes these stories provoke, found that the importance of food news surged among Americans last year.

More than a third of respondents (35 percent) said they consider food and nutrition stories to be very important, and nearly half (47 percent) said they think food and nutrition news is more important than any other type of news. This sentiment was notably high among members of the Millennial and Gen Z generations, where 83 percent said they consider food news to be very important and 64 percent said they find these stories to be more important than other news.

Headlines involving food safety and recalls are always popular, and 2018 proved no exception. A majority of respondents (44 percent) said they now consider food safety news to be the most important food-related topic. The second most important food-related topic addressed in 2018 involved food nutrition/health & wellness (23 percent). These items were most often associated with reported changes in opinion.

The study also noted that many of 2018's top food stories were uniquely sharable in design. Nearly half of Americans (47 percent) said they regularly share food experiences via social media. However, this behavior surges to nearly three in four (74 percent) when respondents identify themselves as Millennials or Gen Z members.

Financial communications in the restaurant industry

The restaurant industry is evolving at a rapid rate, and keeping pace with investor priorities is critical if communications are to be effective in helping business leaders build and protect their brands' value.

By Raphael Gross and Alexis Tessier

For the past two decades, we've been following the publicly traded restaurant industry, first as sell and buy side analysts, and more recently, as financial communications professionals. Through most of that time, understanding a restaurant's investment thesis was rather straightforward. Both the messaging conveyed by the c-suite and investor relations representatives, along with the more informal "follow up" inquiries from analysts and investors, were centered on a fairly narrow and consistent framework of topics.

Communications typically revolved around the competitive landscape and the brand's differentiation; menu innovation; service standards; four-wall unit economics; comparable restaurant sales trends and strategies, including pricing, mix and transaction components; cost headwinds or tailwinds; margin improvement opportunities within the restaurants and at the corporate level; traditional marketing; real estate; and existing penetration, along with potential for regional, national and international expansion.

Other items that would come up or get proactively addressed centered on launching a franchising or remodeling program, testing a new prototype design, the company's capital structure and future needs for financing and management's depth to support ongoing operations and long-term development.

However, in the past several years, our conversations with analysts and investors have markedly shifted focus, a phenomenon that has reshaped the messaging that we help CEOs, CFOs and even CMOs prepare for their company's quarterly earnings calls, investor conference presentations and fireside chat Q&A sessions. It has also made complementing an effective investor relations program with equally robust public relations and digital branding programs more important than ever.

Of course, the topics referenced above are critical to understanding a restaurant company's attractiveness as a potential investment, and therefore still routinely addressed, but interestingly they're now less typically the starting point of any communication.

Instead, the most commonly asked questions at the onset of a discussion involve how a brand is engaging with its customers

digitally, and what operational modifications to address online and mobile ordering and delivery it's making. This is followed by inquiries around the results it's experiencing so far through these efforts, and whether incremental sales growth and improved profitability are being generated. Even a casual reading of recent quarterly earnings call transcripts from leading public restaurant companies will attest to this seismic shift.

Initially, this new line of questioning focused on the brand's social media strategy: how many followers do you have on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.? Do you have partnerships with "influencers," and how does that work? Do you have or create content that resonates with the intended audience, and specifically with Millennials, or for the most forward-looking among them, Gen Z?

Early adopters were winners, and saw a clear competitive advantage both from consumer loyalty and investor standpoints. Management teams were eager to tout how their brands weren't simply "product-driven" but were, more broadly, "lifestyle-driven," eager to engage with customers inside and outside of their restaurants who shared their corporate values and believed in their mission. And it was this "stickiness" that would serve as a catalyst for driving guest counts.

Then just as quickly as it began, simply having a social media presence no longer sufficed. Investors stopped trying to draw straight-line correlations between "followers" and top-line and earnings growth potential. Brands needed to have a robust digital strategy anchored by a social media presence that also incorporated immersive websites, user friendly mobile apps for ordering, loyalty programs. Last but certainly not least, delivery capabilities were no longer an added bonus, but a necessity.

These platforms for "new" customer engagement became more relevant and therefore of greater interest to investors. Not surprisingly, we advised companies to devote more of their prepared remarks to addressing their digital strategies as we worked with them to determine which metrics they could and should share on a quarterly or annual basis — balancing the need for investor transparency and disclosure with management's desire to limit information sharing for competitive purposes.

Restaurant industry observers will certainly agree that segmentation (fast-food, fast casual, casual, upscale dining) largely and directly impacts the sales mix originating from digital channels. A brand's demographics, technological capabilities, menu offerings, ambiance and the eating occasion itself are also important contributors to its current digital penetration and potential for sustainable growth. Not surprisingly, this is why, for example, pizza chains are far ahead of bar & grill chains in digital sales, and the reason fine dining concepts have barely or not even entered the digital realm.

Other factors may include how the restaurant prototype is set-up or can be retrofitted to process and expedite digital orders for easy pick-up or delivery, minimizing the "friction" in the ordering process to positively affect ease of use. Management initiatives that address capitalizing on all of these opportunities quickly become key takeaways in all financial communications.

Still, as time went on and more data was shared regarding digital engagement, analysts and investors began monitoring progress in how a brand was increasing its penetration of digital mix (the current range can be as low as zero to five percent, to as high as 60 percent or more), and to what degree the average check and ordering frequency were being enhanced through digital channels. Any loss of momentum became cause for investor concern and warranted being addressed head-on.

Now, the meteoric rise of third party delivery companies such as GrubHub, DoorDash, Postmates and Uber Eats has changed the game yet again, creating a multi-billion-dollar market with even greater potential for disruption. Some restaurant brands readily embraced one or more of these delivery service providers immediately, eager to convey the importance of these new partnerships to the investor community. Others were more reluctant, arguing against being "early adopters" and hesitant to give up 20-30 percent in margins, accede control of the "customer experience," and perhaps more importantly, their proprietary customer



Raphael Gross



Alexis Tessier

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Embracing tech in the food and beverage world

Technology plays a big role in today's food and beverage landscape, and with an ever-growing lineup of tech items on the menu, brands must adopt and adapt for the sake of their consumers.

By Maggie O'Neill

This year's International Consumer Electronics Show had an unexpected winner. The Impossible Burger 2.0 was recognized by a show normally dominated by the latest in autonomous driving, HD televisions and other gadgets. While CES (this was my 20th year representing brands at the event) has had other unexpected breakout stars since its inception in 1967, Impossible Burger seemed to set a new precedent, and a potential direction for the food and beverage industry.

Is this a tipping point or just a blip on the technology radar for F&B innovation? And if it's a tipping point, how can brands be ready to truly bring technology to their menu, and align this adoption with their consumer's needs, not just the latest trend?

Technology has been a key driver in a lot of change for the F&B industry over the past few years. Consider tablet-based ordering at airport terminals, new packaging advances in food preparation and shipping, robotic bartenders and even AR interactions at point of purchase.

F&B brands looking to make a splash with technology have a lot to think about as they work to align technological adoption with the needs and wants of their consumers. Listening to their consumers and aligning communications strategies around this adoption can make or break a brand's technology investment.

Here are three things to keep in mind as tech takes greater presence on the menu.

Technology with relevance

Technology for technology's sake has never really never worked in the long run.

When incorporating technology into product development, customer service and brand experience, it should be relevant and convenient for the end consumer. Appliances like the Instant Pot are delivering a relevant cooking technology to today's space- and time-starved consumer. These succeed unlike an LG refrigerator launched almost 20 years ago, which was ahead of its time but had no reason for the in-door, waist-high television. At the end of the day, technology must improve the experience and the end product. The same stands true for technology applications in the F&B industry. It's critical to remember that Impossible Burger may have conquered CES, but it won on taste before technology.

The shifting focus of your consumer

As consumer lifestyle and the lens by which we live it continues to change, brands need to keep up. Demands on time, a need for convenience and awareness (or need for transparency) of a product lifecycle is critical.

On the issue of convenience, we're seeing more and more restaurants — both fast casual and fine food — establish a technology interface that educates diners and offers access to the brand in new ways. In addition, delivery via apps has grown exponentially, even in fine food with Caviar delivery services already bringing five-star cuisine to homes in 15 markets and growing. We have seen that the key to success in establishing this technology-driven convenience is ensuring that the brand experience continues at home.

With regard to transparency, consumers

today not only want to know where a brand's product, ingredients, etc. came from, but how the product was made, how it got there and how you're ensuring its quality.

Technology plays a role across this entire lifecycle of a product, and communicating it in a transparent way is critical for building brand loyalty and word of mouth.

The human element

In a world of robotic bartenders and tablet-based wait staff, brands can't and shouldn't forget about the human element within the F&B industry. Particularly at retail and in restaurants, interaction with the people who serve has always been a critical ingredient in the recipe for success. Finding a way to include executives and employees in the adoption of technology is a key factor in making sure the excitement is passed on to the consumers.

An engaged mixologist alongside the robotic bartender, and a fresh-focused chef ensuring his dishes reflect food trends can help to make the brand and its experience stand out. And these experts can also elevate how the brand communicates its technology, benefitting toothier fans and potential future consumers.

Technology is here to stay, and will continue to shape the industry, and how we communicate to and with customers and guests. Embracing it in a way that complements the brand and continuing to deliver technology based on the final product is how the F&B industry can take CES next year. See you in 2020.

Maggie O'Neill is Chief Client Officer and Partner at Peppercomm. ●



Maggie O'Neill

FINANCIAL PR FOR RESTAURANTS

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data. While individual brands may have had compelling reasons to jump in immediately, more slowly, or not at all, investor sentiment in most cases was clearly biased towards forging these partnerships, and rewarded companies, large and small, who did so.

Initial reactions have been positive, with operators generally adamant that sales are incremental and check averages are higher for online and delivery orders. Investors now eagerly await hearing about a brand's rollout schedule for new DSP partnerships or new geographies that will offer delivery, and have all but stopped asking about the

DSP's fees or expressing concerns around product degradation during the delivery process.

However, while delivery sales may be incremental for now, at some point we're bound to see cannibalization of in-store sales; restaurant companies will need to acknowledge this to their investors if they want to maintain credibility. To be sure, there's increasing chatter about some restaurant companies rethinking their DSP partnerships and considering other options such as in-house delivery. It remains to be seen how this will all shake out, but certainly, effective messaging and transparent communications to analysts and investors will be critical in managing any transition from this point forward.

For publicly traded restaurant companies—and for those brands looking to raise capital or enter the public markets—it's critical that their financial communications not only convey their enthusiasm for these new business practices but can also be backed up with hard data demonstrating how they are positively impacting their top and bottom lines. In the "new" dynamic restaurant world, brands often express as much pride in their technology prowess as they do in the crave-ability of their food. And that combination, perhaps, is the best recipe for success.

Raphael Gross, Managing Director, and Alexis Tessier, Senior VP, work in ICR's Better Living practice, advising companies on their investor relations programs. ●

Personalized wellness: what's next in nutrition and health

The personalized wellness movement is on the rise, and represents a fundamental shift in the way consumers and health professionals approach nutrition, health and wellness. A look at today's research and technology landscape illustrates some of the many promising opportunities on the horizon.

By Ashley Desrosiers and Jean Owen Curran

There's no denying that customization is a trend permeating today's marketplace. You can begin your day scrolling through a newsfeed based on your preferred outlets and reading history, make a trip to your closet for a stylist-recommended outfit per your online style profile and then, finally, head out the door with a personalized playlist piping through your headphones. And when it comes to health and wellness, customization continues. To be sure, it's no fleeting fad.

Personalized wellness represents a sweeping and likely lasting shift from the traditional top-down, one-size-fits-all nature of Western medicine. Though the term can be used in different ways, for our purposes, personalized wellness is a means of providing individually informed and precisely tailored care. It's a puzzle-piece approach meant to match a person's unique set of clinical data and diagnoses, lifestyle variables and preferences, and/or personal health goals. These collective factors are being tapped to develop a new generation of diet recommendations, exercise regimens, and stress management programs tailor-made for an audience of one.

Already, the landscape is rapidly changing with the widespread emergence of nutrition and wellness apps. And that's just the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

Personalized wellness is growing increasingly specific on a cellular level. Since the Human Genome Project was completed in 2003, achieving the incredible feat of sequencing the entire human genome, we've just begun connecting the dots between individual genetic variations and personal health risk or disease resistance. Although the genome sequence is more than 99 percent identical in all humans, research shows that remaining fraction of a percent translates into thousands of potential genetic variations between different people. The possibilities for individualized genome-guided health and wellness solutions is staggering to fathom, albeit premature to accurately predict.

What's more, the Human Microbiome Project offers still another microscopic lens through which to view personalized wellness. By creating a "representative blueprint" of the human microbiome, HMP has made it possible to explore and clarify our

understanding of the interrelationship between an individual's unique ecosystem of good and bad bacteria and his/her health vulnerabilities. While much remains unknown, research suggests that a person's gut microbial community plays a large role in nutrient metabolism and absorption with potentially powerful nutrition implications.

Products get personal

With consumer desire for customization aligning with promising research, it's no surprise that companies in several wellness-focused sectors are trending towards a personalized approach. From individualized meal plans and exercise monitoring devices to supermarket-crafted, shopper-tailored grocery lists, the marketplace is seeing an explosion in personalized wellness innovations.

Over the past decade, the amount and types of monitoring technologies have soared, with the introduction of the iPhone revolutionizing the industry in 2007. Since that time, wearable technology has allowed consumers to track various lifestyle metrics and personal progress in new and easy ways, and hundreds of thousands of apps have been developed that give users a window into their personal health status by tracking movement, nutrient intake, sleep and more.

Apple and FitBit, among others, have led the way to discovery of the "quantifiable self," a term referring to the vast array of numerical health measurements that can be recorded and analyzed from an individual at any given time via wearable technologies. According to the International Data Corporation's Worldwide Quarterly Wearables Tracker, the wearables industry has reached a value of \$5.5 billion worldwide, and the market is expected to reach nearly \$19.5 billion by 2021.

Personalized nutrition services are also experiencing rapid growth. Online nutrition and fitness programs, direct-to-consumer and direct-to-health-professional genetic testing kits, disease-focused services, and microbiome analyses are all relatively new to the nutrition scene, and all promise technologies and experiences driven by the client's or user's goals, preferences and data. The personalized nutrition industry alone is poised to grow from an

estimated \$93 billion in 2015 to \$127 billion in 2020, according to data presented at the 2018 Personalized Nutrition Innovation Summit in San Francisco.

Looking ahead

How "personalized" can we really become? What will the science of customization look like in five years? In 25 years? And how much evidence do we need before accepting various technologies to effectively address health needs? One thing is sure: opportunities abound in this new frontier. That's why agencies like FoodMinds, a division of Padilla, are making personalized wellness a strategic focus area.

While more research is needed to elucidate the connections between our individual biochemistry, lifestyle choices and ultimate well-being, current knowledge gaps needn't be a stopgap in continued progress. Building relationships with partners in medical and nutrition science and policy can help drive future discovery and foster cross-sector collaboration. And though many new personalized tools may not be ready as stand-alone offerings, they certainly may signal inroads to more comprehensive solutions for today's health and wellness consumer. With users continually contributing personal data to the field, researchers have a wealth of information to mine, and technology will get smarter quickly. It's exciting to witness the dawn of this new industry, and even more exciting to consider opportunities to contribute to its bright future.

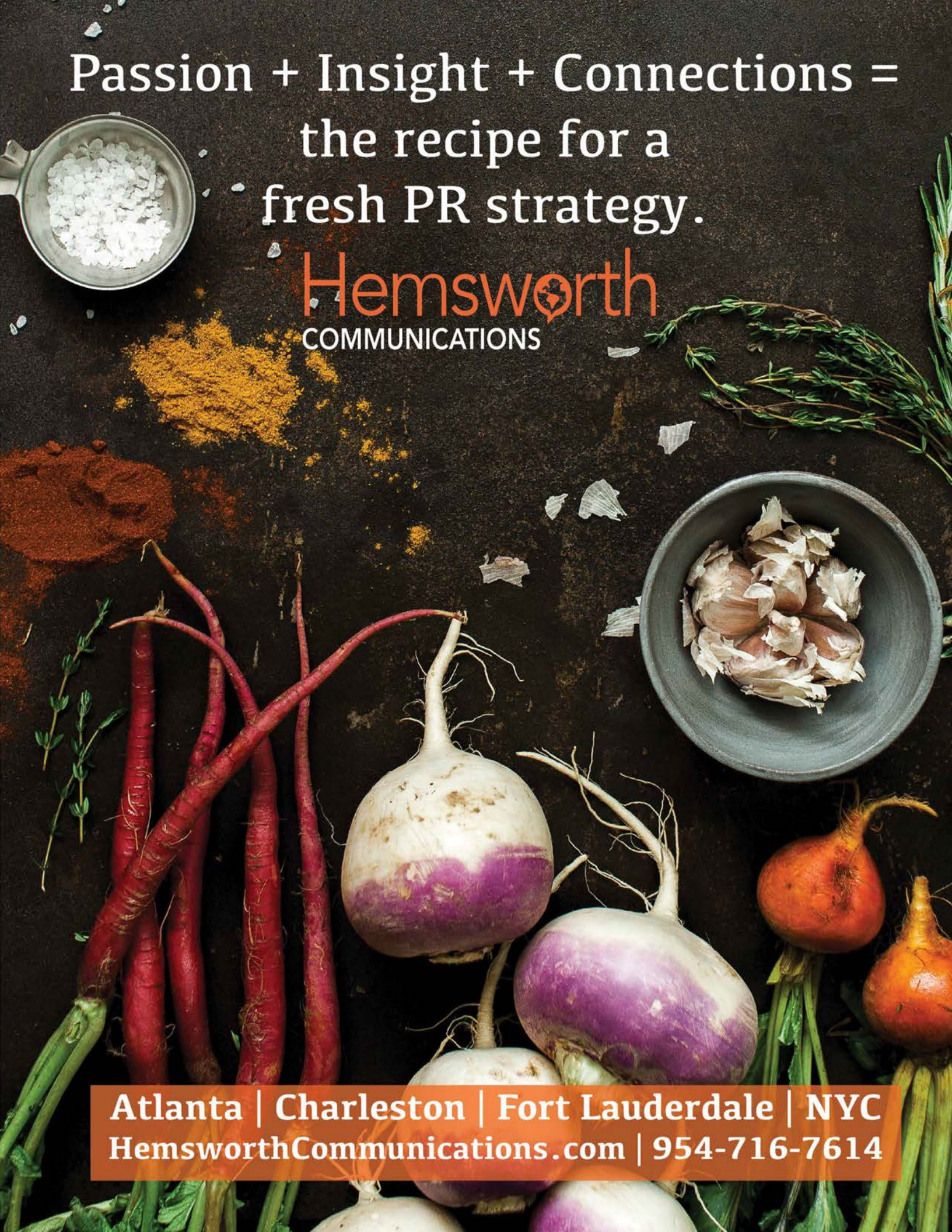
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Telling a brand's story has never been more important.

The food industry is grappling with seismic shifts in how consumers eat and how quickly product must move. As brands navigate this changing environment, the importance of telling their story is greater than ever. Three key insights reveal how brand-building helps meet consumer expectations and sales goals.

By Edward Hoffman

The food industry has gone a bit mad. We live in an environment of unprecedented change insofar as how consumers eat, with high-pressure expectations to move product volume with increased velocity. This short-term, transactional focus may be necessary to demonstrate proof of concept, but it misses a critical opportunity to establish a brand position. Brands must tell their story from the moment they enter the market or, ultimately, risk failure.

At Padilla, we study market forces and cultural trends, mining for insights to transform client businesses through imaginative communications. And we've been monitoring three emerging topics that collectively reveal the urgent opportunity for brand-building while driving sales.

Consumers want substance

The food industry has experienced a tectonic shift regarding what it takes to succeed with today's consumers. New and emerging companies are reimagining what, when and how consumers eat. In 2017, venture capitalists invested \$1.08 billion in food start-ups, an 88 percent increase over 2016, according to Food Tech Connect's U.S. Branded Food Investment Report. There's a common thread running through all this innovation and reinvention: producing authentic food and beverages with integrity to make consumers' lives better. Of the 20 largest new product introductions in 2017, 85 percent command a price premium to deliver on these attributes.

Take a stand and stick to it

According to Accenture Strategy's Global Consumer Pulse, 63 percent of global consumers gravitate toward buying products and services from companies that have a purpose and share their personal values and beliefs. And the food industry is no exception. There's an overwhelming proliferation of new products touting their social responsibility commitments; "legacy" brands retooling their product formulations to align with customers' shifting expectations of health; and a heightened awareness for the industry to reduce its environmental impact. Consumers want brands to make a demonstrative commitment to positively contribute to society and are open to how brands express themselves. But it must be consistent with a

brand's positioning and enduring, because consumers will see through disingenuous efforts.

Numbers won't love you back

Countless articles have been written about companies drowning in data. There's a head-spinning amount of information available regarding consumers' purchasing habits and behaviors, and companies are beginning to successfully harness it. In fact, some marketing strategists predict that data will exclusively direct marketing programs, risking mass product commoditization. (Marketing strategist Ana Andjelic recently wrote an excellent article for *Advertising Age* on this topic.)

There's no question that data analytics play a rapidly increasing role in predicting consumer behavior to drive product purchase. But data is not an indicator of brand strength, crucial to sustained, long-term success. It may tell brands where to find customers, when to reach them and even what to bring them. But data can't tell them why consumers made a purchase.

So, how do these disparate forces tie together? Consumers have exponentially more food and beverage choices that are all, theoretically, trying to align with their individual expectations. And more are coming every year. Brands need to tell their story. They need to speak their truth to connect with purpose to consumers. Otherwise, they'll be lost in a sea of sameness and at the mercy of an algorithm to reach potential customers.

Who's doing it well?

Halo Top has reinvented the ice cream category by demonstrating that better-for-you indulgence is very much possible. The company uses natural and organic sweeteners, adds protein to enhance the nutrition profile (which today is demanded by consumers in virtually every foodstuff) and offers a wide range of flavors that appeal to their customers' changing tastes. And they proudly put the calories — for the entire pint — smack-dab on the front of the package. The company reimagined a familiar treat category to meet consumer expectations for quality, better-for-you food. The brand demonstrates its authenticity and commitment to purpose by offering complete transparency into their products.

Phivida Organics launched a line of

CBD-infused flavored waters and iced teas in 2018. Inspired by whole-plant nutrition and natural ingredients, the company seeks to help customers live their busy lives to the fullest. The company recognizes there's a lot of confusion and possible fear around CBD, so they've taken a bold approach to educate consumers about it, which they must know will also help competitors. But this is what leaders do when blazing a new path: they bring consumers on their journey to expand customers' knowledge, build their confidence and gain their trust.

As I stated, the food industry has gone a bit mad, but not necessarily in a bad way. Today, we're living in a marketplace fueled with daring creativity, lightning-quick innovation, explosive growth and a near-universal desire to "do good." The key to success for brands is to have a confident, genuine voice that meets consumers on their terms.

Edward Hoffman is a Senior Vice President with Padilla and oversees the firm's food and beverage sector. ○



Edward Hoffman

PR news brief

Marketers plan to boost influencer spending in 2019

A SocialPubli.com report that surveyed marketing pros on their challenges and successes with influencer marketing found that virtually all (93 percent) now currently use influencer marketing in some capacity.

An overwhelming majority of marketers (84 percent) said they find the practice effective, and most (60 percent) said they plan to increase their influencer marketing budget this year, while 30 percent said they expect to maintain the same budget.

Only about three percent reported plans to decrease their influencer marketing spending in 2019.

Among the benefits for collaborating with influencers, an ability to reach target audiences and building trust and credibility among consumers were cited most often. Marketers listed their main objectives for utilizing an influencer campaign as increasing brand awareness (26 percent), driving brand engagement (17 percent) and reaching new audiences (13 percent).

Nearly a third (28 percent) said measuring ROI was their biggest challenge for influencer campaigns, followed by verifying influencers' authenticity as well as their followers (21 percent) and finding the most relevant influencers (16 percent).

How Millennials are driving fast food innovation

If you've seen healthier options at your local fast food restaurant, you likely have Millennials and government to thank.

By Danielle Kent

There are anywhere between 80 and 95 million Millennials in the U.S., which means this demographic currently comprises approximately 30 percent of the population. By next year, it's expected they'll have a collective purchasing power of \$1.4 trillion.

Whether it's a response to consumer demand or new policy implementations affecting the food industry, one thing's certain: the age of the super-sized cheeseburger drenched in trans-fats is over. And unlike years past, when fast food could regularly be produced with cheap and unhealthy ingredients, it's clear that Millennials are driving the demand for a certain level of care in the production of their food, regardless of cost.

Governmental interference on the menu

Leading the trend in health-driven change in the fast food industry, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg banned trans-fats across his municipality. Though that policy was initially perceived as extreme, three years after the ban went into effect studies showed that diners at fast food restaurants in the city were eating an average of 0.5 grams of trans-fat per meal, down from 2.4 grams of trans fats prior to the ban. Beyond that, the number of meals without any trans-fat at all went up from 32 percent before the ban to 59 percent after the fact. Several cities have since followed suit with similar bans. Additional policies

enforced by the FDA include mandating restaurants with more than 20 locations to note calorie counts on their menus, though studies have shown that only a sixth of consumers make note of those numbers.

Spending more in the name of quality

In a recent survey by Deloitte, 83 percent of respondents said the typical fast-food menu didn't offer enough healthy choices. As the trend of fast casual restaurants maintains its stronghold, we see that Millennial consumers are willing to spend a few more bucks to seek food they perceive as higher quality. Brands like Panera have seen major success in investing their funds in reformulations of signature menu items to meet their customer base's interest in cleaner choices. Keywords like "local" and "natural" majorly sway Millennial purchasing behavior, and even competition from higher cost food trucks and local restaurants is more of a threat than ever.

Millennials asked and they received

Executives at companies like McDonald's have seen sales slip in recent years and have been quick to tweak even its most popular items to regain their previous position in the marketplace. The Happy Meal's evolution over the past six years is indicative of a major shift in America's dining behavior; portion sizes have been reduced, sliced apples and yogurt are encouraged over fries, and bottled water has replaced sugary sodas as the default beverage. From adding

salads to their once burger-centric menus to their promise to reduce the added sugar content in their chocolate milk, it's clear that the power of the discerning consumer is a force to be reckoned with.

Food politics expert and author Marion Nestle, the Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health at New York University noted "The trend is clear: fresh, natural, local, organic. This is hard for fast food and processed food makers to accomplish, but they are all trying."

In a competitive and overly saturated industry like fast food, flexibility is necessary to stay competitive. Meanwhile, marketers are tasked with reframing the public opinion surrounding fast food. A question of credibility comes into play as today's consumers are asked to trust that establishments once offering nothing more than burgers and fries have shifted their offerings to include salads and fruit platters. Low cost and fast service is no longer the sole factor driving fast food purchases; marketers must alter the tone of fast food brands to position them as nutrient-dense quick meal options rather than junk food. Without adjusting their core values to adhere to the health interests of Millennials, fast food brands will struggle to stay afloat.

Danielle Kent is based out of Marketing Maven's Los Angeles headquarters. ○



Danielle Kent

Influencers unsure how to prove marketing value

By Jon Gingerich

Influencer marketing is expected to account for a \$10 billion industry by next year, but despite becoming an integral ingredient in today's marketing mix, a gap exists between marketing and influencer camps that often makes collaboration difficult, according to a study of marketers and influencers conducted by Allison+Partners.

The report, which surveyed marketers and influencers across five different sectors, found that marketers often find themselves unable to successfully identify and choose which influencers to work with. Meanwhile, influencers reported being unable to adequately show the impact their efforts have on campaigns, while finding themselves under increased pressure to do so.

Moreover, the study found that only some marketers conduct testing with influencers

to see what kinds of content and strategy work best to carry their message. And a majority of influencers reported that marketers generally request only reach, unique page views or monthly blog view data, even though many see the true value of their work in authentic post comments and interactions.

Finally, most influencers reported having a purely transactional relationship with marketers virtually devoid of collaboration, with influencers simply carrying out the directed task of the campaign regardless of outcome and expressing discomfort in voicing their opinions insofar as how that campaign or its content might be improved.

The study also identified increased marketing budget scrutiny, arbitrary pricing standards, potential commoditization among a growing influencer pool that could devalue price and perceived value, privacy

issues and tightened government regulations and reliance on third-party social platforms with varying algorithms and rules as additional challenges facing influencer marketing programs.

The report outlined three fundamental areas both marketers and influencers should address in bridging the divide between these two groups. These include a "maturity" effort in the influencer marketing world that employs a set of industry standards that better identifies campaign influencers and their authenticity, and optimizes overall influencer engagement; improved collaboration, testing and planning that provides solutions and best practices for influencer strategies and partnerships; and formulating an improved measurement structure, where the gathering and storing of data on both sides provides better metrics to report on benchmarks and value. ○



We are consumed by food.

**Food, beverage and nutrition
expertise, every way you slice it.**



Together, Padilla and FoodMinds provide global expertise and leadership in the planet's evolving food ecosystem. We're reimagining why, what and how the world eats and drinks – to build a flourishing future for all. See what we've got cooking at PadillaCo.com.



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, scroll through social media or turn on the television without seeing information 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 traditional and social media coverage, sell product, increase distribution and win market share, our experience and results in the food and beverage arena are unparalleled.

We understand the food and beverage space and are experts at crafting compelling Public Relations narratives for health and wellness beverages, alcohol and spirits, functional beverages and much more.

Client experience include Sparkling ICE, ZICO Coconut Water, Anheuser-Busch, Evian Natural Spring Water, Santa Margherita Wines, Whole Foods Market, GAEA, Viki's Granola, M&Ms, Welch's Fruit Snacks and many others. We get food and beverage PR.

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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 junkets include quality bookings that are actually seen, spot-on custom craft services and a fresh, modern design aesthetic ... because taste matters. Additional services include stunning branded content food videos, original book promotional videos and select matchmaking between celebrity talent and brands.

Our clients include Food Network, Penguin Random House, The Wonderful Company, Le Creuset of America and commodity boards ranging from the National Onion Association to Grapes from California.

AT THE TABLE PR

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Cheryl A. Miller, CEO

At The Table PR has been committed to food, beverage, restaurant and agriculture commodity marketing for 35+ years. We are a full-service boutique agency offering overall branding, strategic planning, social media strategy and implementation, media relations, international marketing, blogger coordination, local store marketing, franchise marketing, videography, product launches, advertising, packaging and design, food photography, grand opening PR and marketing and special event planning and implementation.

From the farm to the table, At The Table PR is dedicated to serving our clients by promoting their brands with our team of experienced professionals and creative partners, specializing in all areas of the food industry. We represent

a diverse group of clients, from pecan and produce farms to vineyards, all the way to the tables of some of the best eateries. Our relationships with our clients are forged with trust and integrity and the desire to bring the freshest ingredients and finest products and services to the table.

Results are what matter to us, so we continually try to produce fresh ideas and create long-term relationships. We offer each client the personal involvement of a customized team of skilled, passionate professionals.

Whether your objectives are to increase sales, strengthen consumer loyalty, build your brand or improve your public image, we have saved a place for you at At The Table PR.

BLAZE PR

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Matt Kovacs, President

BLAZE PR is the trusted partner of choice for lifestyle contender brands hungry for a real piece of the marketshare. BLAZE PR has been retained by a growing number of savvy clients who want integrated PR, influencer and social media strategies — and flawless execution. BLAZE PR 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 PR is adroit in advancing client objectives and nimble to the quick-changing pace of media technologies.

Clients include: Chronic Tacos, KOE Kombucha, Liquid IV, Patina Restaurant Group, Perfect Hydration, Robeks, Stonefire Grill, Tom's Urban and Weihenstephan

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BML Public Relations is an award-winning, consumer-focused PR agency with experience representing some of the planet's most recognized brands within the food, beverage and franchised restaurant categories. Simply put: WE. GET. EARNED. MEDIA.

We provide unparalleled creative strategy capturing each brand's personality and combine it with our never-satisfied approach to media relations to generate impactful traditional and social media coverage. From creating the infamous Pumpkin Spice Pizza; to stirring the World's Largest Hot Chocolate; to unveiling the nerve-striking Gender Reveal Lasagna; to revving it up at Monster Jam; and knighting an entire town to Lords and Ladies; nothing is out of reach. We have a proven track record for driving consumer traffic and increasing bottom-line.

We're experienced newsjackers, daily blockers and tacklers, media mavens, crisis communicators, true partners and team players. If this is something your brand needs, give BMLPR a buzz. We'd love to run some ideas by you.

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When restaurants and chefs seek out the very best and brightest Florida PR and marketing experts, they count on Boardroom Communications (DBA BoardroomPR).

We are a full-service public relations and integrated marketing agency delivering results for some of Florida's top restaurant brands and dining destinations. By utilizing a combination of both new and

traditional media, our clients have an edge in rising above Florida's highly competitive food and beverage market.

For 30 years, clients have turned to BoardroomPR for creative solutions to increase visibility, establish credibility and build their brand and their buzz. Our highly experienced team of former journalists, multimedia specialists and senior marketers have worked with some of the state's top chefs and highly-successful restaurant brands. Services include media relations, social media and influencer marketing, event planning, video production and media training.

Whether you are a specialized, new restaurant concept, or a statewide brand looking to expand further, we can help turn up the volume and take your business to the next level. BoardroomPR has the experience and know-how to get the job done.

BROWNSTEIN GROUP

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Marc Brownstein, President and CEO

Erin Allsman, Managing Director
Laura Emanuel, Director of Public Relations

At Brownstein Group, our food and beverage PR practice is varied, results-driven and strategic. Whether you're launching a restaurant in a new locale, hosting a tasting event for the media or looking to better communicate your story to the public, we work with you to create a plan that is not just going to make headlines but meet business objectives.

From creating digital and on-the-ground activations to orchestrating integrated campaigns, our expertise has spanned a number of clients in this space, including P.J. Clarke's, The Halal Guys, Wonder Ball, The Palm Restaurant, La Colombe and Guy Fieri's Philly Kitchen + Bar at Harrah's Philadelphia. Brownstein Group's industry know-how, combined with our team's passion, gives us the ability to concept and execute ideas that result in continued success for our clients.

View & download profiles of hundreds of PR firms specializing in a dozen industry areas at: www.odwyerpr.com

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Carolyn Izzo-Feldman, President & Founder

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 22 years, CIIC has been dedicated to servicing food and beverage brands with top-tier public relations campaigns and award-winning results.

CIIC got its start by putting Krispy Kreme Doughnuts on the map in the Northeast in the '90s. Since then, CIIC has represented a number of F&B brands, including The Original Soupman, Sandella's, Morton's The Steakhouse, Kona Red Beverages, New Leaf Brands iced teas and lemonades, California Pizza Kitchen, The Bohlsen Restaurant Group, Coney Island Brewing Company, Opal Apples, Barton & Guestier Wines, Beekman 1802 and more. 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 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.

EVINS

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On behalf of our client Opal Apples, CIIC brought the Opal Orchard NYC pop-up to the Big Apple to celebrate National Apple Day in October 2018.

At EVINS we know that the secret to building brand relevancy, consumer engagement and organic advocacy among consumers is through exceptional storytelling, and nowhere do stories come alive with more passion and lasting emotion than at the table. For over 30 years, EVINS' Food, Wine and Spirits (FWS) Practice has been telling the stories of the brands, experiences and people that shape the way consumers engage and enjoy. We are gratified and honored to have a number of client relationships for more than a quarter of a century, helping brands including Cakebread Cellars, Chef John Currence, Crown Maple, Maker's Mark, Nat Sherman Cigars, Tequila Avion, SmartWater, Trinchero Napa Valley and countless others convey their stories to the audiences that matter most to them. We are the driving force behind a number of the most iconic brands, personalities and trends in the food and beverage industry, we pioneered the practice of "seeded self-discovery" marketing, and we take great pride in being the leading practitioners of seamless "no fingerprints" public relations and influencer engagement. The EVINS FWS Practice skillfully

combines the intense personal interests and proven professional expertise to create programs and attention-getting media coverage that bring hidden stories to the forefront. Transparent in our practices, relentless in our commitment to results, and passionate about solving the challenges facing our clients, EVINS has become a trusted and indispensable partner to our clients. The EVINS FWS practice is nimble enough to act quickly and produce impactful results, while also able to provide clients with the structure, organization and attention-to-detail that are hallmarks to the EVINS approach. Learn more about what we can do for you by visiting us at www.evins.com.

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For 30 years, San Francisco-based Fineman PR has been consistently recognized for its award-winning food and beverage

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FINEMAN PR

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programs. From coining the term “Brand PR” in the 90s, to driving the natural foods boom, to servicing prestigious wine clients—Fineman PR has a tenured reputation that prioritizes substance over spin. The agency specializes in Brand PR, crisis communications and digital marketing for a full range of food and CPG categories, including conventional and organic foods, nutritional supplements, confections and wine and spirits.

Fineman PR excels in building category leadership for its clients. We demonstrate why a client’s brand promise merits audience trial and trust. Fineman PR’s high-profile crisis communications work is nationally renowned and includes food safety issues and product recalls, labor negotiations, activist demonstrations, brand defamation, high profile lawsuits and workplace accidents. We safeguard and reinforce client reputations.

Recent food and beverage programs include full-service marketing communications and issues management for Foster Farms poultry; regional event marketing and brand awareness for Dunkin’ Donuts and media relations and influencer engagement for Loch and Union Distilling, Quintessa and Materra Family Vineyards.

Fineman PR specialties for food and wine clients include proactive media relations; leadership positioning for brands and company executives; influencer relations; social/digital content strategy and development; media training; cause marketing and community relations; and internal, trade and retailer communications. Fineman PR’s lifestyle, wine and spirits divisions add specialty services tailored to each client’s needs.

FINN PARTNERS

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Alicia Young, Founding Managing Partner (NY)

Missy Farren, Managing Partner (NY)

Wendy Lane, Managing Partner (Portland)

FINN Partners uses a holistic lifestyle approach and integrated marketing strategy to build buzz,

drive trial and help clients exceed their marketing and sales goals. We deliver this by assembling teams of seasoned experts — a talented mix of media relations strategists, content developers, digital specialists, designers and more — that thrive on helping clients break through.

With almost 700 professionals across the U.S., Europe and Asia, FINN brings diverse backgrounds and viewpoints to the table. Our food, beverage, wellness and lifestyle experts have their fingers on the pulse of the evolving media landscape and developing industry and consumer trends. We offer clients a big picture perspective, drawing on these insights to develop campaigns that will set your brand apart and inspire action among your target audiences—online and offline.

FINN’s award-winning campaigns have produced measurable results for national and international brands ranging from wine, beer and spirits; beverages; natural, organic and specialty foods; food-service concepts and retailers including Applegate, Auntie Anne’s, Carvel, Cinnabon, International Olive Council, Jamba Juice, Lumi Juice, Marine Stewardship Council, Olympia Provisions, Omaha Steaks, Peet’s Coffee, Pernod Ricard, Redhook, Save-A-Lot, Steaz, Snake River Farms, The Wine Region of Rioja, Treasury Wine Estates, Tree Top, Trichero Family Estates and Whole Foods Market.

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Fish’s in-depth experience in franchising helps us customize national and local programs for our clients that drive both consumer engagement and franchise sales. Our services range from national and local media relations, franchise recruitment, grand openings, influencer relations and cause marketing to crisis communications. Our focus is to meet and exceed our clients’ business goals by providing strategic counsel and marketing support that goes beyond traditional public relations.

We’re proud to serve systems of all sizes, from emerging foodservice brands to some of the industry’s leading concepts and pride

ourselves on becoming your PR partner. Clients include Dunkin’, Denny’s, Jersey Mike’s, FOCUS Brands, Captain D’s, Chicken Salad Chick, Tropical Smoothie Café, Sizzler and more.

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At FoodMinds, we put passion into practice by harnessing science, public affairs, food values and communication to meet our clients’ business and public health objectives — a capability we created and define as food and nutrition affairs. FoodMinds is the only agency with more than 20 registered dietitians, and a Global ExpertBench™ of nutrition science, policy and communication professionals around the world. Capabilities include: food and nutrition affairs; sustainable and nutritious food systems engagement; personal wellness strategy; food values insights; strategic planning; thought leadership; partnerships and coalitions; health professional and influencer communication; influencer mapping; strategic insights; consumer engagement and media relations. We are not just another PR agency. We help our clients tell a better story.

FoodMinds works with more than 30 leading commodity boards, food companies, brands and associations in the U.S. and around the world, including several Fortune 500 companies. Contact us to learn more.

FoodMinds is a division of Padilla, an independently operated, globally resourced public relations and communication company with offices across the United States and an AVENIR GLOBAL company. Between FoodMinds and Padilla Food + Beverage, we are happily consumed by food all the time. Together, we’re re-imagining why, what and how the world eats and drinks—to help build a stronger, flourishing future for all. We are building, growing and protecting brands and reputations by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most to our clients. Together, our services span the ecosystem of food, beverage and nutrition—from research and insights to branding, creative and

digital, to marketing communication and The Cookery, our culinary studio.

FRENCH/WEST/
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David Gwyn, President / Principal
Natalie Best, Chief Operating Officer / Principal

French/West/Vaughan (FWV), the Southeast’s leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency, is home to one of the country’s largest Food & Beverage practice areas. FWV is ranked among the nation’s 15 largest PR firms overall (2018 *O’Dwyer’s* Ranking of Top U.S. PR Firms) and has been in the top 20 for more than a decade.

FWV specializes in creating maximum brand exposure through earned media campaigns, promotional partnerships, celebrity endorsements, sponsor relations, event management, social media, influencer marketing, experiential activations and trade shows. The firm has vast experience with product launches in B2C and B2B channels, as well as in strategic counsel on issues related to environmental topics, supply chain, manufacturing and product recalls.

This broad range of expertise, including the evolving communications and content technologies utilized by consumers and industry, has enabled FWV to serve some of the most sought-after F&B brands in the world, including Melitta Coffee, Moe’s Southwest Grill, BurgerFi, Certified Angus Beef, The Coca-Cola Company (NESTEA, Gold Peak, Minute Maid, DASANI, Simply Orange), ConAgra (Slim Jim, Pemmican Beef Jerky), Nabisco Foods, the N.C. Pork Council and North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission.

Our past and present client roster in the beer, wine and spirits category includes Proximo (Pendleton Whisky), Brown-Forman (Jack Daniel’s), Diageo North America (Bulleit Bourbon), Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits (Josh Cellars, Yellow Tail), BRAND Napa Valley, Grain and Barrel Spirits, Mother Earth Brewing and the N.C. Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association.

The agency has also produced award-winning campaigns for ce-

lebrity chefs Christine Hazel, Jeff Mauro and Lorena Garcia, Brinker International (Maggiano's Little Italy restaurants), Elevation Burger, House-Autry, Atlantic Natural Foods, Lidl, Whole Foods Market and Smithfield Chicken 'N Bar-B-Q, among many others.

FWV was winner of *The Holmes Report* 2016 Consumer Agency of the Year and the *Bulldog Reporter* 2017 Consumer, Midsize and North American Communications Agency of the Year. It has captured 15 National Agency of the Year honors over the past two decades. Founded in April 1997 by agency Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV employs 113 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles and Tampa offices.

HEMSWORTH COMMUNICATIONS

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Samantha Jacobs, Founder and President
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A dynamic, full-service PR agency with several offices across the United States, Hemsworth is one of the fastest-growing firms within the food and beverage sector. With three distinctive divisions — Food/Wine/Spirits, Travel/Tourism, and Franchising/Business Services — Hemsworth represents renowned global powerhouses as well as fresh, up-and-coming brands. Services include brand communications strategy, media relations, promotions, guerrilla marketing, social media, thought leadership and event planning.

Unlike traditional PR agencies, Hemsworth is dedicated to crafting customized communications programs that are infused with personal, passionate client service and positively contribute to each client's bottom line. The result? Award-winning work for the agency and its clients. A recent and noteworthy accolade, Hemsworth was named one of the Top Agencies to Work for in the United States in 2018, recognized for the agency's unique, forward-thinking culture.

Clients within Hemsworth's



In celebration of its 150th anniversary, TABASCO® brand Pepper Sauce wanted to capture the attention of food-loving millennials around the world with one cohesive message. Knowing that wherever they call home, the target consumer sees food as an experience through which they explore the world, Hunter executed TABASCO® Global Kitchen birthday parties in 20 markets globally. Each had a food market theme, reinforcing TABASCO® Sauce's role in contemporary global fare, from Korean fried chicken to ramen, tacos, and even ice cream. In addition to this scalable event concept, Hunter developed a unifying identity and style guide for the 150th anniversary campaign, along with a library of digital content, creative assets, and influencer tools.

Food, Wine & Spirits portfolio include I Heart Mac & Cheese, JWB Prime Steak & Seafood, Walgreens Gridiron Grill-Off Food, Wine and Music Festival; Steelpan; Stems & Skins; Jackrabbit Filly, Gatsby's Joint and many more.

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Hunter is an award-winning, integrated consumer marketing firm and the second largest food and beverage agency in the U.S. Hunter's creative approach and client-led orientation has led to some of the most enduring client relationships in the business including TABASCO® Brand Pepper Sauce, who was our first partner 30 years ago, and still a client today. Others include some of America's most iconic and respected companies and brands including Post Consumer Foods, Diageo North Amer-

ica, Smithfield, and Pompeian.

With offices in New York and London and a strategic footprint in markets across North America, Hunter's 120-person firm is perhaps best known for creative, equity building campaigns that drive conversation and insert brands firmly into the lifestyles of their target consumers. From breaking through the "dusty" single malt whisky category to make Lagavulin go viral, to curating #DairyEnvy by correcting common misconceptions about lactose-free products, and setting the first-ever Guinness World Records™ title for the Largest Grilling Lesson for Smithfield, there's very little Hunter hasn't tackled in the food and beverage arena.

In addition to our core competencies, we also offer specialized PR services for food & beverage clients including: recipe development and photography; culinary + nutritional trade shows; food service + industrial campaigns; partnerships with government and non-profit agencies; third-party research development; relationships with bartenders, mixologists, chefs and celebrity food influencers, as well as health care professional outreach.

Hunter served as the founding member of the Food + Beverage

division of the Public Relation Society of America, and conducts an annual Food News Study, now in its 16th year, to help keep our clients abreast of what is making news in the industry and which media consumers trust most.

ICR

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Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to execute strategic communications and advisory programs that achieve business goals, build awareness and credibility, and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm's highly-differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 650 clients in approximately 20 industries. ICR's healthcare practice operates under the Westwicke brand (www.westwicke.com). Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and

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ICR

— Continued from page 25

advisory firms in North America, maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, San Diego and Beijing. ICR also advises on capital markets transactions through ICR Capital, LLC. Learn more at www.icrinc.com. Follow us on Twitter at @ICRPR.

Clients: B&G Foods, Black Bear Diner, Boot Barn, CV Sciences, Chunghwa Telecom Co. Ltd., Cobalt Int'l Energy, Darden Restaurants, GNC Holdings, FleetCor Technologies, Inc., Fossil, Inc., Freshpet, Genuine Parts Co., Gildan Activewear, Greenlane, Harman, Herbalife Ltd., Hostess, HubSpot, IAC, Jarden Corp., Lazard Freres & Co. LLC, La Quinta Holdings, Inc., Legg Mason & Co. LLC, Limoneira, lululemon athletica, Mobileye, Michaels, Michael Kors, New Relic, Nomad Foods, Nutrisystem, Ocwen Financial Corp., Paramount Group Inc., Planet Fitness Inc., Red Hat Inc., Shake Shack, Starwood Property Trust, Texas Roadhouse, Tilray, VF Corp., Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Workiva.

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Konnnect Agency (www.konnnectagency.com) is a strategic public relations and marketing partner for food & beverage brands. The team of almost 40 professionals provides public relations, social media, influencer, content, and marketing services focused on garnering measurable results that positively impact brand growth. Konnect Agency represents both national and international companies via offices in Los Angeles, New York, Denver, and Austin. Clients include KRAVE Jerky, Kite Hill, ONE Brands, Chosen Foods, Lenny & Larry's, Fourth & Heart, Peckish, Urban Remedy, and Smashmallow, to name a few. Using an integrated-approach and

with a desire to add incremental value, Konnect is a true partner that promotes client-agency transparency, the use of technology to better client relationships, and a thoughtful approach to media and influencer relations.

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Lambert is the challenger agency for challenger brands™ with 20 years of experience serving CPG brands seeking outsized returns on marketing budgets that must compete with category leaders. The agency is a full-service public relations, investors relations and brand communications firm employing more than 65 professionals from global agency, journalism, legislative and *Fortune* 500 backgrounds,

and serving publicly traded and privately held clients in 20 states and six countries. Founded in a basement in 1998, we now rank among the top 10 largest firms in the Midwest and the 17th largest firm serving the Food & Beverage segment. We are also a partner in PROI Worldwide, the largest partnership of independent PR firms in the world spanning 120 cities on five continents.

Our experience is diverse, but we are grounded in a commitment to creative thinking that drives outcomes that matter. We approach our work from the perspective of our clients, putting their metrics at the forefront of everything we do.

Lambert has been named *PR Week* and *PRNews* Small Firm of the Year and been honored as an Edward Lowe "Michigan 50 Companies to Watch."

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Leslie Pardo, Senior VP and Food & Beverage Lead

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, social media, grand openings, product launches, special events, crisis and issues management, internal communications, community engagement programs, sampling events, blogger relations, online reputation management, direct mail, eblasts, graphic design, web development and design, content creation, brochure and newsletter production, and expanding concepts into new markets.

Industry experience includes fine dining, fast casual, QSRs, super-market 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. For example, 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 national media coverage and tremendous social media buzz. Wallenda later went on to break Guinness World Records crossing Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon.

PADILLA

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PadillaCo.com

Edward Hoffman, Senior Vice President

Padilla's Food + Beverage 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.

Consumed by food, Padilla's team includes food thought leaders; wine and spirits experts; writers and publicists; registered dietitians; recipe developers; and research, branding and digital specialists. Unique in-house resources include a culinary studio near national media in New York City and an extensive food and beverage library.

Together with FoodMinds, a division of Padilla, the agency is re-imagining why, what and how the world eats and drinks — to help build a stronger, flourishing fu-



From left: Konnect CEO Sabina Gault, Managing Director Carmen Hernandez, CCO Monica Guzman Escobar and Executive VP Amanda Bialek.

ture for all. Clients in the food and beverage sectors include Almond Board of California, Bordeaux wines, the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers, Hass Avocado Board, Prosciutto di Parma, U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council and Welch's.

Padilla is an independently operated, globally resourced public relations and communication company with offices across the United States. The agency builds, grows and protects brands and reputations worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at Food-Minds, and the research authorities at SMS Research Advisors. Padilla is an AVENIR GLOBAL company and is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 132 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Connect with purpose at PadillaCo.com.

PEPPERCOMM

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Steve Cody, CEO
Maggie O'Neill, Partner & Chief Client Officer
Ann Barlow, Partner & President, West Coast
Jacqueline Kolek, Partner & GM, New York
Tara Lilien, Chief Talent Officer

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm combines 24 award-winning years of expertise serving blue chip and breakout clients with forward-thinking new service offerings and the freshness of a start-up. This unique mix of experience and energy attracts and empowers teams with a creative edge, drive and a passion for promoting, protecting and connecting clients in a fast-changing marketplace.

Leveraging analytics to drive insights, our experts create a unique mix of thinking for today's fast-paced media cycle. Core capabilities include media relations, creative design, website design, digital marketing, crisis communications, user experience, branding and positioning, and employee engagement.



Tiffany McClain, Senior Director of Marketing of Mimi's Cafe (a client of The Power Group), with Fox4 anchors Tim Ryan and Lauren Przybyl for National Muffin Day.

Over the years, Peppercomm has worked with food and beverage brands from retail to restaurant including TGI Fridays, The Capital Grille, D'Artagnan, Ready Pac, Edible Arrangements, The Cakerie, the American Beverage Association, Zagat and Diageo.

Visit www.peppercomm.com or find us @Peppercomm.

POLLOCK COMMUNICATIONS

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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 communications campaigns for its clients. Pollock pioneered communications for the functional food movement, creating some of the major food trends of the past decade, including making tea the healthy drink of the new millennium and making chocolate a healthy

indulgence. Most recently, Pollock engaged millennials on behalf of its Tea Council of the USA client through a creative, award-winning social media campaign that inspired tea lovers to share their #individualiTEA. The traditional and digital media campaign, which helped drive awareness for National Hot Tea Month, increased awareness of tea benefits among a key target, and drove an increase in social followers.

For more than 25 years, we have been powering change for *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 delivers results that change consumer perceptions and protect and enhance a brand's position in the market.

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. Pollock Communications has built a broad network of influential 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: American Pulse Assn., Bay State Milling, Cranberry Institute, Cranberry Marketing Committee, Fifty50 Foods, iTrackBites, Moon Cheese, National Watermelon Promotion Board, Tea Council of the USA, Danone North America, The Danone International Institute, USA Rice Federation and Whey Protein Research Consortium.

THE POWER GROUP

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Amy Power, President and CEO
Kortni Robinson, Manager of Client Development

The Power Group (TPG) is a

Continued on page 28



Quinn's VOGUE interview with MR CHOW founder Michael Chow included this image of Mr. Chow matchbooks with works by David Hockney and Ed Ruscha.

Photo courtesy of Mr. Chow.

THE POWER GROUP

Continued from page 27

full-service public relations agency that believes every brand deserves to be heard.

After 20 years of serving restaurant brands and launching new CPG products, The Power Group has earned its bulletproof reputation one client at a time. The company is proud of its long-term restaurant industry relationships including Golden Chick, a client for more than 16 years.

This type of tenure can only be based on creating ROI which The Power Group realizes through media relations, influencer campaigns, pop-ups, social media strategy and management and event planning and execution. TPG is also called upon for its award-winning crisis management expertise as well as its proprietary spokesperson training and brand development workshops.

The Power Group works with its clients to set specific, measurable goals that tie into its clients' overall business objectives. Additionally, the agency's distinctive 30-day guarantee is an assurance that client dollars are hard at work with tangible news or influencer placements in the first 30 days of outreach. Always keeping its clients in mind, The Power Group does not base its services on the anti-

quoted hourly billing model. It instead focuses on delivering against agreed upon metrics with a monthly or project-based service fee.

Client experience includes but is not limited to: Tacos4Life, Abacus-Jaspers Restaurant Group, Cotton Patch Cafe, Pollo Camp-ero, Mimi's Cafe, Vacation in a Bottle, TEAZZERS, Dillas Quesadillas, Dallas Donut Fest and Van's Kitchen.

The agency has been consistently recognized for hard work and meaningful results throughout its two solid decades of growth, including the honor of PR Daily's Digital PR "Best Crisis Management" award and ranking on the *Dallas Business Journal's* Top 20 PR Firms in North Texas. Its founder Amy Power is a 2015 Top 25 Women in Business honoree by the *Dallas Business Journal*, a member of the Forbes Agency Council and regular contributor to Forbes online. She was recently named one of DFW's Most Admired CEOs by the *Dallas Business Journal* and serves on the board of Entrepreneur's Organization Dallas (EO).

To learn more about The Power Group's services, clients and results, visit www.thepowergroup.com, or contact Amy Power, founder and CEO at amy@thepowergroup.com, or Kortni Robinson, manager of client development at kortni@thepowergroup.com.

PUBLICITY FOR GOOD

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heather@publicityforgood.com

Offices in San Diego, CA and Ohio
Heather DeSantis, President and CEO

Publicity For Good (PFG) is the only Millennial-led, female-influenced public relations firm focused on supporting purpose-driven food and beverage companies. We are more than your publicists—we are activists and advocates of your brand.

We believe PR is ripe for change, and we are excited to be that disruptor. Instead of using public relations to push products or brands on people, we spotlight our clients' bigger purpose: their socially-conscious activities, consumer education and their ability to give back. The result is more impactful press and bigger growth for our clients.

The Publicity For Good integrated solution provides strategic planning for PR support around all product launches, retailer expansions and executive leadership announcements. Focused on research, media messaging, features in national and local media, industry-specific publications and press

release distribution, we work hard to build your brand awareness; increase influence in the market space; increase brand credibility in the industry; and support advertising marketing efforts.

Clients can expect superior client service with on-time, on-budget and on-point communications assistance from qualified and seasoned professionals who truly understand your industry and consumer. Clients include: Flying Embers Hard Kombucha, Gutsii, Made Of, Good Idea Drinks, Cold Be Gone and Fizzique. Services include: Media relations and PR, social listening, content writing, influencer marketing, product reviews and round ups, award management, thought leadership and brand ambassador management.

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Florence Quinn, Pres.
Tathiana Rosado, Sr. VP
Kristie Deptula, Sr. VP

Quinn represents a select group of Food, Wine + Spirits clients.

Restaurant brands: Bagatelle, Barcelona, Bartaco, Datz Restaurant Group, Del Frisco's Grille, Del Frisco's Steakhouse, Graziano's Restaurants, Merriman's Restaurants, MR CHOW, Tartinery.

Wine & Spirits brands: Kendall-Jackson Wines, Stones Wine, Wheatley Vodka.

Individual restaurants: Unagi (NYC), La Centrale (Miami), Joel Robuchon (Monte Carlo), ZUMA (Miami), ZUMA (NYC), ZUMA (Boston), Michelin-star Plume (Washington, DC), Queensyard at Hudson Yards for D&D London

We help our clients define their visions, build brands and drive business.

RFIBINDER

950 3rd Ave. Floor 7
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Amy Binder, CEO

Jacqueline Piccolo, Head of Business Development

RF|Binder is a fully integrated communications and consulting firm—powered by strategy, creativity, analytics and purpose. We are business builders who address challenges and opportunities with a communications mindset, enabling our clients to build, grow, protect and transform their brands and reputations. We are independent, entrepreneurial, and woman-owned. RF|Binder is headquartered in New York City, with offices in Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and a global presence across 50 countries in 100 cities through our PROI Worldwide network.

Food, drinks and nutrition is a cornerstone practice at RF|Binder. We have worked with over 60 food and beverage companies, brands and institutions that are innovating with better solutions, offering consumers more delicious and healthier options, or building a more sustainable food future. We've developed consumer and corporate campaigns for *Fortune* 500 companies and start-ups, across QSR, restaurant, CPG brands, B2B ingredients, wine, beer and distilled spirits brands, country trade groups and industry associations. We specialize in working with emerging food innovators, from food technology and plant-based companies to category disrupters. We have built reputations and driven sales for brands located in every aisle of the supermarket and handled a range of issues from product recalls and in-store incidents to customer complaints and activists' campaigns.

ROGERS & COWAN

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Mark Owens, CEO
Corey Silverman, SVP of Marketing and Business Development

Rogers & Cowan is a leading entertainment PR and marketing communications agency offering consumer brands access and alliances with the powerful influences of the entertainment industry as well as an insider's point of view on lifestyle and consumer trends. The agency has extensive expertise in the food and beverage categories working with packaged and bottled goods companies, entertainment brands and content, restaurants, and wine, beer and spirit brands.

Our teams provide food and beverage brands publicity and marketing campaigns, special event support, sponsorship activation, celebrity/influential seeding, promotional tie-ins, brand integration and social media strategies audits, campaign design, execution and measurement for our clients.

We work with clients to launch new products, build awareness for national and international advertising campaigns, promote charitable initiatives, drive viewership for television and digital content, leverage celebrity spokespeople for media opportunities, integrate products into entertainment content, build and manage online communities, execute social media strategies and maximize awareness of sports and entertainment sponsorships and alliances, among others.

Recent clients/projects have included McDonald's, Heineken, Coca-Cola, Betty Crocker, Bertolli, Illy, Nestea, Evian, Edible Arrangements, Wheaties, Cheerios, Two Forks, Pennsy Food Hall, Mayacamas Vineyards, Skinnygirl Cocktails, Morton's Steak House, Sprite Refreshing Films, and Dylan's Candy Bar among its roster of clients, using a mix of owned, earned and paid media, celebrities, digital influencers, live events and data-driven tactics to produce measurable results.

ROSICA COMMUNICATIONS

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Rosica Communications is an integrated PR and online marketing agency that promotes and protects companies, brands, and people. Founded in 1980, the firm serves a diverse clientele, specializing in food, healthcare, nonprofit/foundation, education, B2B, and pet product industries.

The firm's deep expertise in B2B and B2C food and beverage spans decades. Agency President Chris Rosica is a culinary school graduate (Johnson & Wales University) a food writer, and former hospitality industry executive. Rosica is also a graduate of Florida International University's School of Hospitality Management.

The agency's PR and communications capabilities include positioning and messaging, thought leadership development, media



For 20 years, SPM Communications has created impactful campaigns and activations that resonate with consumers for food, beverage and restaurant clients.

relations, social media management, influencer marketing, crisis communications, content marketing, corporate communications, cause marketing, and media training. Rosica's social media services include strategy, management, branding, content development/optimization, and follower acquisition. The agency's online marketing team, based in New Windsor, NY, is a Google Certified Partner and specializes in SEO, online reputation and reviews management, online advertising (PPC, geofencing, retargeting, and social ads), website development, and WordPress security.

As a "thinking partner" focused on achieving its clients' objectives, Rosica creates and executes thought leadership programs with clearly defined KPIs/metrics. A national agency, Rosica creates and disseminates compelling, authentic stories and messaging to effectively tell its client-partners' good news while supporting sales and communications.

Rosica's process includes:

- Strategically identifying client business and marketing goals/objectives
- Identifying stakeholder audiences, influencers, and key opinion leaders
- Honing client positioning, stories and key messages, tailoring them to each audience
- Developing measurable, integrated, and creative PR, social media, and internal/external com-

munications programs

- Proactively communicating with clients
- Aggressively securing results, evaluating progress against pre-determined KPIs and strategic imperatives
- Repurposing and leveraging content and PR coverage to augment SEO, sales activities, online reputation management, tradeshow marketing, analyst relations, and direct marketing

Current Clients Include: Bridor, Copper Chef, Power Air Fryer Oven, Tristar Products, and others. Please visit www.rosica.com for case studies and additional information.

SPM COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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Suzanne Parsonage Miller, President & Founder

For 20 years, SPM has worked with food and restaurant clients, telling the story of the evolving food and nutrition landscape, from sustainability and non-GMO verified to farm-to-table and organic.

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SPM COMMUNICATIONS

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An *O'Dwyer's* top 20-ranked Food & Beverage firm for the past five years, we've worked with emerging food brands to help take them national and with established national brands that have important stories to tell that need to make a deeper impact.

We integrate earned media relations, influencer partnerships, events and social media to create campaigns that target the right audiences, increase brand awareness and meet business objectives. Some of our work highlights include:

- Brought natural, gluten-free niche brand Van's Simply Delicious into the mainstream with intensive national media and influencer relations outreach that garnered multiple food awards and ultimately, the brand's sale to Hillshire Farms.

- Aided in the rise of industry giant and sustainable foods pioneer Chipotle through a 17-year partnership and landed the first national story about "Food With Integrity" mission to change the way people eat and think about fast food.

- Helped reposition Smoothie King as a health and wellness lifestyle brand with the launch of purpose-driven, Clean Blend smoothies such as The Premama, developed in partnership with Premama Wellness.

- Introduced consumers to the first "other bean" hummus, Lantana, and helped to successfully launch the first national brand of fruit hummus, winning healthy food awards and national coverage.

- Developed a loyal local following for True Food Kitchen and its menu inspired by Dr. Andrew Weil's anti-inflammatory diet with sustained media, influencer and community relations around the opening of the brand's first Texas location.

Through our robust crisis communications practice, we've helped clients manage some 3,000 crises, from foodborne illnesses and viral videos. Our media protocol is currently deployed in more than a thousand restaurant and retail locations across the nation.

Our culture-driven agency was founded on our "No Jerks" policy, which fosters strong agency-client relationships with mutual trust and respect and leads to greater creativity, productivity and true partnership between agency and client.



To reinforce Smirnoff vodka's core value of inclusivity, Taylor led a marketing communications campaign focused around the brand's decades of support for the LGBTQ community. Taylor recommended partnering with Jonathan Van Ness, the queen of self-love and acceptance, to amplify the re-release of the Smirnoff "Love Wins" limited-edition bottles and expanded partnership with the Human Rights Campaign which included a pledge to donate \$1 to the HRC for every "Love Wins" bottle made for a minimum of one million dollars over three years. The partnership with Van Ness kicked off Pride weekend on Smirnoff's float at the NYC Pride March. Overall, the campaign generated 1.5X the earned media impressions compared to the launch in 2017. This is one example of Taylor's Smirnoff work focused around diversity and inclusion, which included the "Phenomenal You" campaign for 2018 International Women's Day and the current "Welcome to the Fun%" campaign.

Other food and beverage brand experience includes Del Frisco's Restaurant Group, RW Garcia, Cicis, Bruegger's Bagels, Stubb's Bar-B-Q, Pei Wei, P.F. Chang's, Boulder Organic, Whataburger, Taco Cabana, Salata, YoCrunch, La Madeleine French Bakery & Cafe and many more.

STUNTMAN PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Neil Alumkal, President
David Abrams, Senior Vice President
Elana Levin, Associate Vice President

Stuntman is a full-service, Manhattan-based public relations agency that is highly specialized within food & beverage and hospitality-oriented media relations. The core belief of the agency is that widely accepted public relations

practices are completely outmoded, and based around old, legacy media.

However, the proliferation of interactive, on-demand content over the past decade has created a cluttered cultural and media landscape that requires a return to bold thinking. The big-idea publicity associated with early-century figures like P.T. Barnum and Edward Bernays. One-way communication, powered by cutting-edge methodologies.

Our longstanding media relationships with bloggers, social media influencers, magazine & newspaper editors, television producers and talent bookers, combined with a keen eye for creating targeted and poignant messaging, allow for us to consistently secure headline news. Our coverage for hospitality clientele have frequently become the most highly cited.

We have launched national campaigns for the likes of the Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium, Max Brenner Worldwide, MealPal, Le Coq Rico, Valrhona, Francois Payard, Drunken Dumpling, The 21 Club, Kanon Organic Vodka, YO!

Sushi, Bareburger, Hotel Indigo, Mellow Mushroom Pizza Bakers and scores of other brands and properties.

TAYLOR

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Tony Signore, CEO & Managing Partner
Mike Costabile, Managing Partner
Carla Wilke, Chief Strategy and Integration Officer
Maeve Hagen, President

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 Report*, Taylor has nearly 100 employees with headquarters in New York and offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Charlotte. 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, multicultural; and talent procurement and training.

Taylor develops and executes marketing communications programs for category leading food and beverage brands, including — for more than 30 years — Diageo, the world's leading premium drinks business. Via social campaigns and strategic media relations, Taylor has successfully launched new products, reinvigorated iconic brands and sustained momentum in the marketplace for Diageo's adult beverage favorites such as Crown Royal, Guinness, Captain Morgan, Smirnoff and Bulleit, among others.

The agency also partners with leading consumer food and QSR brands for a wide range of services, including product introductions, sponsorship activations, and digital strategy/social activation.

TREVELINO/ KELLER

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Trevelino/Keller has established its food, beverage and franchising practice as one of the more accomplished in the U.S., targeting emerging and middle-market companies across four channels: restaurants, franchising, manufacturing and associations. With its progressive foodie agency culture, from wine making to its own organic bee colony to seasoned salt production, as well as programs such as Red With Ted and Farm to T/K, the firm is sought after for international, national and hyper-local programming in four core of-

ferings: Public Relations, Digital/Social Marketing, Demand Generation and Creative Services.

With a commitment to launching new brands and re-establishing lost leaders, Trevelino/Keller's disruptive approach to strategy and creative makes it one of the more innovative agencies in the industry. Its success cross fertilizing its food and beverage practice with franchising, environment, health, lifestyle and even technology, gives it a leg up on those agencies limited by a franchise or food and beverage only focus. Its balanced base of experience in B2B and B2C enable companies to consolidate their agencies for an integrated approach.

The firm's growth in digital/social marketing has resonated with those brands and concepts interested in a dual national and hyperlocal approach with tactics ranging from paid search, organic social, remarketing and social lead gen and the launch of its integrated SEO PR program.

Notable work includes Johnny Rockets, Corner Bakery Café, TCBY, Moe's Southwest Grill, Starbucks Coffee Company, Mrs. Fields, National Foundation for Celiac Awareness, Great Southern Craft Beer Competition and the Atlanta Food & Wine Festival. The firm extends its commitment to food and beverage four times a year with its original Winepreneurs event series, hosted in partnership with Silicon Valley Bank, for entrepreneurs who love wine.

WILKS COMMUNICATIONS GROUP (WCG)

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WCG was founded more than 25 years ago on a simple principle — to provide clients with superior value as defined by high quality service and meaningful results.

Today, we're an award-winning, full-service integrated marketing communications firm serving clients across the consumer products, food, corporate and nonprofit sectors.

Our offerings include earned media, digital and social engagement, content marketing, influencer

campaigns, trade shows, thought leadership, shopper marketing and other initiatives designed to drive reputation and engage constituents.

We pride ourselves on the length of our client engagements, many of which extend decades, and our proven track record in creating and executing programs that support client's objectives to amplify their brand, accelerate business momentum and build reputation.

Clients: Nielsen-Massey Vanillas, Coppercraft Distillery, Jos. A. Magnus & Co. Cheese Merchants, Sunshine Nut Company LLC.

ZAPWATER COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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David Zapata, President & Founder
Jennifer Barry, Managing Director
Jenn Lake, SVP
Stephanie Poquette, Vice President, Social Media and Influencer Programming

Zapwater Communications is an integrated communications agency specializing in consumer and lifestyle brands. Founded in 2005, the agency has grown into one of the premier creative communications firms in the United States, proudly working with a diverse range of brands in the food & beverage industry.

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

The agency integrates multidisciplinary services — digital engagement, experiential tactics and media relations — to drive bottom-line results. To date, Zapwater has won 125+ public relations' industry awards, including some of the industry's most prestigious accolades.

Recent client experience includes a curated mix of local and national brands including Angel City Brewery, Burpee Home Gardens, Deutsch Family Wine + Spirits, Pabst, Veggie Grill, and [yellow tail] wines. **O**



Zapwater Communications works with Burpee Plants to spread awareness on their fresh and flavorful collections for home-grown veggies and herb plants and how you can incorporate them into your daily lives

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS

FOOD & BEVERAGE PR FIRMS

Firm	Net Fees (2017)	Firm	Net Fees (2017)
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$112,839,000	26. Power Group, The , Dallas, TX	\$645,154
2. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	19,424,800	27. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	586,889
3. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	16,344,533	28. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	586,395
4. Hunter PR , New York, NY	15,250,000	29. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	425,000
5. Taylor , New York, NY	7,547,000	30. J Public Relations , New York, NY	379,200
6. RF I Binder Partners , New York, NY	5,300,000	31. Maccabee , Minneapolis, MN	329,680
7. Finn Partners , New York, NY	5,175,000	32. The Buzz Agency , Delray Beach, FL	324,897
8. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	4,600,000	33. Stuntman PR , New York, NY	315,000
9. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	4,000,000	34. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	270,000
10. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	3,991,006	35. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	264,000
11. French I West I Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	3,574,896	36. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	200,117
12. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	3,337,476	37. North 6th Agency, Inc. , New York, NY	180,537
13. Konnect Agency , Los Angeles, CA	3,040,687	38. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	178,655
14. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	2,654,820	39. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	170,022
15. Fish Consulting , Hollywood, FL	1,429,000	40. Rosica Communications , Paramus, NJ	148,590
16. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	1,378,103	41. Hemsworth Communications , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	125,411
17. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	1,242,000	42. Hodges Partnership, The , Richmond, VA	120,000
18. RMD Advertising , Columbus, OH	1,165,179	43. LANE , Portland, OR	103,655
19. Kohnstamm Communications , St. Paul, MN	1,067,838	44. Singer Associates, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	100,044
20. Matter Communications , Newburyport, MA	1,067,026	45. CooperKatz & Co. , New York, NY	66,239
21. BLAZE , Santa Monica, CA	866,708	46. BoardroomPR , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
22. Quinn , New York, NY	813,125	47. Greenough , Boston, MA	45,000
23. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	811,000	48. Hollywood Agency , Hingham, MA	35,000
24. Peppercomm , New York, NY	774,440	49. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	6,145
25. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	707,000		

Mitra moves to Edelman

Sujata Mitra, most recently communications lead at Vox Media, has joined Edelman in Washington as Senior VP Media Relations.

On Twitter, Mitra said she “couldn’t be more thrilled” with the opportunity of working with Lisa Ross (Edelman Washington President), Tom Cochran (GM-digital & integrated marketing), Dina Cappiello (Senior VP and Editorial Director) and Emily Kaplan (VP-Consumer Media).

At Vox for the past year, Mitra handled media relations for its Vox, Recode, The Verge and SB Nation brands.

Earlier, she worked three-year stints at The Huffington Post (Senior Director of Communications) and CQ Roll Call/The Economist Group (Director of Marketing Communications).

Mitra has PR firm experience from jobs at Allison+Partners and DKC. ○



Sujata Mitra

Digital/content pro Ramsey joins MMC

Marina Maher Communications has recruited digital/content pro Gretchen Ramsey as Managing Director for Brand Engagement, a new post.

Ramsey joins from the Senior VP, Content Strategy slot at Publicis Media’s Blue 449 unit, where she handled Pizza Hut, eBay, Denny’s and Nintendo.

At MMC, Ramsey will oversee digital & social content, influencer and media. She will report to CEO Marina Maher.

Prior to Blue 449, Ramsey worked at Oxford Communications (VP-Brand Strategy and Culture), Grey Group (Director of Social Media), TenthWave Digital (VP-Strategy) and MRM/McCann (Senior VP-strategy). ○



Gretchen Ramsey

Finn tabs Kuhl as managing partner

Finn Partners U.S. pharma team lead and Senior Partner Kristie Kuhl has been promoted to the role of Health Practice Managing Partner.

Kuhl, who previously held Executive Vice President positions at Cohn & Wolfe and Makovsky & Company, joined FP in 2015. As Senior Partner of its health practice, she was responsible for a range of pharmaceutical efforts, which included biotechnology, pharmaceutical and specialty pharma.

As Managing Partner of the agency’s health unit, she’ll now oversee Finn Partners’ New York and Chicago health groups as well as its U.S. pharma team. She remains stationed in Finn’s New York headquarters and will report to Managing Partner and global health practice Director Gil Bashe. ○



Kristie Kuhl

APCO’s DeAngelo becomes Rep. Kim’s CD

APCO Worldwide’s Anthony DeAngelo has signed on as Communications Director for Jersey Congressman Andy Kim, who won a 49.9 percent to 48.8 percent squeaker over Republican Tom MacArthur in the November election.

Kim, a Rhodes Scholar who worked for the State Dept., Pentagon and National Security Council, fended off a barrage of TV ads in which MacArthur criticized him as “not only far left but far out.”

In exiting APCO’s Media Relations Manager slot after a three-year run, DeAngelo is returning to Capitol Hill, where he served as Communications Director for Rep. Betty Sutton (D-OH) and Press Secretary for Rep. Debbie Halvorson (D-IL).

Prior to joining APCO, DeAngelo was Press Secretary at the AFL-CIO. ○



Anthony DeAngelo

Buck, ex-speaker Ryan’s aide, joins Blue Engine

Brendan Buck, who was a counselor to former House Speaker Paul Ryan and Press Secretary to his predecessor, John Boehner, is joining D.C.-based strategic communications and public affairs firm Blue Engine Message & Media + JDA Frontline as a Partner.

Buck led messaging and communications strategy for Ryan, as well as for the broader House Republican leadership team. In addition to working for Ryan and Boehner,

he has served as Communications Director at the House Ways and Means Committee, and held senior communications roles for now-Republican Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, former Representative Tom Price and current Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Greg Walden. ○



Brendan Buck

B-M’s Felling joins Senate’s King

Matthew Felling, who was Senior Director at Burson-Marsteller’s Washington office, has joined the office of Maine’s Independent Senator Angus King as Strategic Communications Director.

It marks the return to Capitol Hill for Felling, who did a stint as Strategic Communications Director for Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). For Murkowski, Felling dealt with healthcare, military issues, sustainable fisheries and the needs of the Alaska Native population.

Prior to Murkowski, Felling was news anchor and lead political reporter for the CBS TV affiliate in Anchorage.

He also did a two-year stint at Hill+Knowlton Strategies in Washington. ○



Matthew Felling

Hotwire picks Paxton

Hotwire is bringing on Chris Paxton as Chief Strategy Officer.

Paxton comes to Hotwire from The Leading Edge, where he was CEO, EMEA. Both Hotwire and The Leading Edge are owned by Eneo Group Limited. At The Leading Edge, Paxton built a team of global strategists to help evolve the agency from an insights business to a global strategy agency.

In his new role, Paxton will work to accelerate ongoing collaboration between Hotwire and The Leading Edge as well as with other agencies in the Eneo network. He’ll assume leadership of Hotwire’s existing Strategy and Marketing Services Group along with US-based Executive Vice President Sahana Jayaraman. ○



Chris Paxton

The unspoken truth about Trump 2020

By Fraser Seitel

The good news for the 150 candidates promoting themselves for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States in 2020 is that while none can possibly win, neither could Donald Trump at this point in the last election.

The bad news for this motley group of socialists and semi-socialists is that unless they start to stand for something and not simply stand against Trump, they — and we — will be doomed to the unthinkable: President Trump 2.0.



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*.

To be clear, Trump, like Charles Barkley, is no role model. He's crude, rude and intellectually deficient. He doesn't read. He can't speak, and

he's grating in every way conceivable. He lacks common decency and self-awareness and never should have been President.

So, all those who yearn for the glory days of Barack Obama have a point. Now there was a moral, decent, inspiring man to admire.

But what the Trump haters aren't right about, and what they can't bring themselves to come to grips with, is precisely the reason those 150 Democrat candidates better start doing more homework.

The fact is — forgive me, haters — Donald Trump, as miserable a human being as he well might be, has nonetheless accomplished more in his first two years than any other President in our lifetime. That's a detail that few who oppose the President dare utter, but it's true.

Here's a partial list that includes not only the well-known initiatives to "help the rich" but also those lesser-known achievements that even the most ardent anti-Trumpers should appreciate.

Criminal justice reform. At the top of every liberal's "to do list" for the past decade has been prison reform, particularly adjusting the system so that minorities aren't continually disadvantaged. Neither Clinton nor Bush nor Obama could move the needle on changing the criminal justice system. But Trump, through the offices of the Jared/Ivanka wing, got a bill passed that finally begins to institutionalize reform.

Fighting for international gay rights. Trump's Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell is proudly gay and shaking up the diplomatic world to lead the effort to persuade Islamic nations and others to be more tolerant. Grenell's boss is wholeheartedly behind the effort, and all those liberals who see shrinks to deal with their Trump trauma should support the effort, too.

Making NATO pay for its own defense. Democratic candidates all agree that the way Trump has treated our allies is disgraceful, harsh and embarrassing. Yes, yes and yes. But ... isn't it about time that Germany, France, England and all the others whose national protection we subsidize began paying more for their own defense? Sure, when Trump says the U.S. "pays 90 percent of NATO's costs," he's lying. What the U.S. really pays is 72 percent, compared to England's six percent and Germany's and France's five percent. Once again, neither Clinton nor Bush nor Obama had the guts to tell the Europeans to put up their fair share. Trump may be a bully, but he's right.

Bringing home the troops. For years, liberals have decried the fact that poor people's children are the primary defenders of this nation, putting themselves in harm's way to protect the rest of us. But Trump is the only recent President with the guts to recall the troops from Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Predictably, the *New York Times*, which sadly has let its virulent anti-Trump obsession destroy its reputation for fairness, has castigated Trump's action and led the charge to expose the "danger" of the U.S. precipitously abandoning these war zones. Fortunately for publisher A.G. Sulzberger and executive editor Dean Baquet, neither has a child fighting in these overseas hell holes. Good for Trump!

Denuding the dictators. Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize for promises. Trump won't win a Nobel, but he neutralized North Korea and bombed ISIS back to the Stone Age. And if I were Vladimir Putin, I'd demand Trump return my collusion bribes, because Russia hasn't gotten much from this administration.

Bolstering the border. Obviously, Trump's wall phobia is nuts, and separating migrant parents from children is awful, but ... most Americans can see the wisdom in not letting too many people into the country who'll turn out to be net takers rather than net contributors. Should poor people and threatened people and sick people be allowed into the U.S.? Sure, but in an organized and limited manner. What most people oppose is wholesale immigration, where the U.S. imports anybody among the "tired,

poor, huddled masses" who wants in. That may not be what Democrats want either, but it sure is the perception of the current candidate crop.

Not playing the elitist game. People despise politicians. They detest elitists. And they deplore the McConnells, Pelosis, Schumers, Comeys, *Washington Posts* and all the others that make up the Washington establishment. Trump is rich but he sure ain't "elitist." Establishment Washington hates him as much as he does them. And that's another plus for the incumbent.

Supporting making money. Trump, thank goodness for anybody who's got to support a family, is pro-business. Democrats abhor the fat cats who make more money, and the businesses which support them. Trump's philosophy and policies have cut taxes, increased GNP, lowered unemployment, increased wages, ignited the stock market and caused the U.S. economy to hum at increasingly-higher levels. Sure, the rich have gotten richer, but so have the less rich. And that, too, wasn't the case under Obama. A political party that's vehemently "anti-business" shouldn't be running this particular country.

If you're still not convinced that Donald Trump could well be the next President of the United States, consider three final words: Amazon New York.

The tragedy of Amazon pulling all its employment, tax payments and ancillary jobs out of Queens is the greatest warning yet that the prevailing Democrat wisdom is dangerous for the country. When a few loudmouthed, anti-business socialists won the day, the real losers were all the Long Island deli workers and livery drivers and school teachers who would've made better lives for their families. Let's see who they vote for in 2020. **O**

PR news brief

Finn Partners acquires London's Moorgate

Finn Partners has acquired Moorgate Communications, London-based financial PR firm with 16 staffers, which represents clients such as Deutsche Bank, S&P Global and International Chamber of Commerce.

Peter Finn told *O'Dwyer's* that financial services communications and marketing offers "tremendous opportunities" for his independent firm in the US, Europe and Asia.

"Our global team offers deep expertise in reputation management, executive visibility, capital formation raises communications and crisis PR, among other areas," he said.

The deal bolsters FP's presence in London to about 70 staffers and 90 professionals across the EMEA.

Robert Kelsey, Founder of 18-year-old Moorgate, serves as Managing Partner-Financial Services for FP EMEA. His shop is recast as Moorgate Communications, a Finn Partners Company.

New tax benefits for PR agencies?

By Richard Goldstein

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act made many changes to both individual and corporate taxes. One of these new changes is the IRC Section 199A deduction. This is a new section of the Internal Revenue Code that allows a 20 percent deduction for “qualified business income (QBI) for owners of pass-through entities, which include S corporations, limited liability entities, partnerships and sole proprietorships.” Missing from this list is the “C” corporation.



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

This new deduction can be complicated even with recent IRS guidance. My purpose in authoring this

column is not to provide guidance on how to calculate the deduction, but to make you, the reader, aware of the benefit that Congress has given to the business owner and the possibility of a PR agency to claim this deduction.

Who gets the deduction?

The deduction is for individuals, not business entities. All entities mentioned above are “flow-through” entities. That is, income and deductions pass through to the individual owners of the business.

The deduction applies to individuals with QBI from flow-through entities as previously stated. That means the deduction is for individuals not business entities (thus, C corporations don’t get the deduction). In general, a taxpayer can deduct 20 percent of the amount of QBI allocated to them from the entity, subject to certain limitations.

QBI is the net business income from a “qualified trade or business” (more on this to come) conducted in the United States. To qualify, the business must be other than a “specified service trade or business” (SSTB). In general, an SSTB includes all service business other than architecture and engineering. The tax law defines an SSTB as any trade or business involving the performance of services in the fields of health, law, accounting, actuarial science, performing arts, consulting, athletics, financial services, brokerage services or any trade or business where the principal asset

of such trade or business is the reputation or skill of one or more of its employees or which involves the performance of services that consist of investing and investment management trading, or dealing in securities, partnership interests or commodities. A mouthful to say the least!

So, does a PR agency lose out based on the above definition? Is a PR agency a consulting firm or does it fall under the “reputation or skill” as defined above? At first blush, one might conclude that a PR agency is out of the box on this deduction unless a threshold amount is met.

The threshold amount

Business owners whose taxable income for 2019 is less than a threshold amount of \$321,400 for those filing married filing jointly, \$160,725 for married filing separately, and \$160,700 for single and head of household will not be subject to the SSTB rules. There is a phase-in rule for those taxpayers whose taxable income exceed the above amounts. (The deduction is also available for 2018.)

Where do we stand?

So, is a PR agency an SSTB? It may be easy to conclude that a PR agency is a SSTB under the “consulting” or “skill” definition. According to a definition I found on the Internet, “a PR firm is a professional service organization, generally hired to conceive, produce and manage un-paid messages to the public through media on behalf of a client, with the intention of changing the public’s actions by influencing their opinion.”

Under proposed regulations involving the reputation or skill as discussed above, the following is added... “in which the person receives fees, compensation or other income for endorsing products or services, licenses or receives fees for the use of an individual’s image, likeness, name, signature, voice, trademark or any other symbols associated with the individual’s identity or for appearing at an event or on radio television or other media.” Well, this does not seem to fit the definition provided above and PR seems to pass this test. (See caveat below.)

The next problem area is “consulting.” Consulting is defined in the proposed regulations as “provision of professional advice and counsel to clients to assist the clients in achieving goals and solving problems. The proposed regulations also indicate that consulting “includes providing advice and counsel regarding advocacy with the intention of influencing decisions made by a government or governmental

agency and all attempts to influencing legislator and other similar professionals performing services in their capacity as such.” So, it seems to me that a PR agency could have a hard time arguing that it doesn’t provide consulting services.

The De Minimis exception

This exception provides that a trade or business is not an SSTB if the business has gross receipts in any tax year of \$25 million or less and less than 10 percent of the gross receipts of the business is attributable to the performance of services. This will be a difficult argument in my view for a PR agency to overcome.

If you read the definition of a public relations firm in the “Agency Name finder,” (not provided here due to space limitations), you may be able to make an argument that PR is not an SSTB. (Please let me know your thoughts on this.)

This column isn’t intended to provide legal, accounting or tax advice. You need to seek the advice of your own CPA and/or attorney on the best course of action to take. Nevertheless, even if your agency would be considered an SSTB, you should be able to claim the deduction based on the taxable income thresholds as discussed above. If not and the deduction is claimed, a disclosure statement attached to the tax return could avoid certain penalties. This may consist of a disclosure statement, Form 8275, attached to your tax return to avoid penalties if audited by the IRS or even seeking a revenue ruling from the IRS. I will keep you informed on this issue as I see it developing. ●

PR news brief

Job-cutting GM turns to Ballard Partners

General Motors has hired Ballard Partners, which has close ties with the Trump White House, for federal representation on labor and fuel efficiency matters.

GM is in the midst of a \$2.5 billion corporate restructuring that will lead to the shutdown of plants in Detroit-Hamtramck, Warren (MI), Lordstown (OH) and Baltimore and the loss of thousands of jobs.

President Trump told GM CEO Mary Barra in November that he wasn’t happy about the planned job cuts, especially in light of the US bailout of the automaker.

Brian Ballard, who chaired the Trump Victory organization in Florida during the 2016 presidential campaign, heads his firm’s four-member GM team.

Syl Lukis, Ballard’s DC managing director; Susan Wiles, senior strategist in the Trump campaign and former campaign manager for Florida governor (now Senator) Rick Scott; and Pamela Bondi, ex-attorney general of the Sunshine State and a member of the Trump transition team, also rep GM.

Lobbying topped \$3.4 billion in 2018

Clients spent \$3.42 billion on lobbyists last year, the highest levels in nearly a decade, according to a report from nonpartisan research group the Center for Responsive Politics.

It's the largest sum spent on lobbying activities since the industry's record-breaking peak in 2010, when Obamacare was passed by Congress and signed into law, according to the CRP's report.

Shelling out \$280 million, the pharmaceutical sector spent more on lobbying than any other industry last year, surpassing its previous 2009 lobbying record of \$272 million. The trade groups and companies inside this sector also broke records: the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America spent \$28 million in 2018, beating its 2009 record of \$27 million. PhRMA members Pfizer, Amgen, Bayer, Johnson & Johnson and AbbVie were ranked as top pharmaceutical-industry spenders.

Insurance followed pharmaceuticals at a distant second (\$157 million) and the equipment and electronics manufacturing industry took third (\$145 million). Business associations and oil & gas rounded out the top five spenders, at \$142 million and \$124 million, respectively.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce was the top single spender, dropping nearly \$95 million on lobbying expenditures last year. The National Association of Realtors came in at second place with a record-setting total of nearly \$73 million, spending \$19 million in Q4, more than any other group reported. The Open Society Policy Center (\$32 million), PhRMA (\$28 million) and the American Hospital Assn. (\$24 million) filled out the top-five single spenders for 2018.

Law and lobbying giant Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld continued its reign as K Street's most profitable firm, bringing in \$37.6 million in billings last year, even though this revealed a nearly \$1.4 million year-over-year decline from 2017's \$38.9 million. Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck took second place, at \$31 million, followed by BGR Group (\$27 million), Squire Patton Boggs and Holland & Knight (both \$24 million).

Conservative groups saw their lobbying spending grow by a whopping 78 percent last year, while liberal groups' spending shrank by 35 percent, according to the report. ○

Squire Patton Boggs hauls in Crowley

Former Democratic Congressman Joe Crowley, once viewed as a successor to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, has joined the global public policy practice of Squire Patton Boggs.

Representing the Bronx and Queens, Crowley lost a shocker primary challenge launched by 28-year-old newcomer Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

As the No. 4 ranking Democrat, Crowley was senior member of the House Ways and Means Committee and Chair of the House Democratic Caucus from 2017-2019.

First elected in 1999, Crowley called his Congressional service "an honor of a lifetime" and "looks forward to working on many of the same issues in this new role."

Crowley joins SPG with another former Congressman, Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania.

Ex-Senators Trent Lott (R-MS) and John Breaux (D-LA) co-Chair SPG's public policy practice. ○



Joe Crowley



Moonwalker targets space junk

Moonwalker Associates, the firm recently launched by former Republican Congressman Bob Walker, wants to clean up outer space.

The former Chair of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee and writer of the Trump campaign's space policy, has signed Launchspace Technologies as a client.

Walker, 75, retired from Congress in 1997. He co-founded Wexler and Walker Public Policy Associates in 1981. Hill + Knowlton acquired the shop in 1990.

Based in Bethesda, Launchspace says it has a low-cost and technically feasible solution to the orbital debris problem in low Earth orbits and has its eye out for aerospace industry partners.

Marshall Kaplan, Launchspace Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder, is a pioneer in space debris research and carried out the first study of space junk retrieval while a professor at Penn State.

Walker opened Moonwalker after WPP shuttered Wexler|Walker lobbying firm at the end of last year. ○



Bob Walker

Trump White House aide joins Federal Advocates

Jennifer Arangio, former Senior Director of the White House National Security Council, is joining D.C. lobbying firm Federal Advocates as Vice President.

Arangio first started worked for the President during the 2016 campaign, serving as its Director of Women Engagement. She then served on the presidential transition team and joined the administration as a Senior Director on the NSC staff. Her responsibilities included multilateral affairs, women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship and strategic communications.

Before working for Trump, Arangio was a Principal at security and intelligence consulting firm Command Group. She also served as Senior Counsel for the House Committee on Homeland Security from 2006 to 2014. ○

Venezuela opposition leader retains lobbying support

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó has signed a pact with international law firm Arnold & Porter Kaye Scholer for strategic counsel and U.S. relations work in light of that South American country's ongoing presidential crisis.

Guaidó, who heads Venezuela's National Assembly, in January declared himself Interim President of the oil-rich country per the rules of its constitution, after a widely-contested 2018 election saw current Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro win another six-year term. That election was recognized by the international community as fraudulent, yet Maduro, a protégé of deceased former President Hugo Chavez, refuses to abdicate and still retains the backing of Venezuela's military.

The ensuing crisis since has seen Venezuela rocked by food shortages, rampant inflation and a lack of medical supplies, and leaves the nation on the brink of collapse. Violent protests recently erupted with soldiers near Venezuela's border with Colombia, after Maduro's national guard blocked humanitarian aid shipments into the country.

The international community—currently more than 60 countries—overwhelmingly recognizes Guaidó as Venezuela's rightful president, as does President Trump, who recently signed legislation imposing sanctions against Venezuela in an attempt to oust Maduro.

According to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed in February, Arnold & Porter will advise Guaidó's team on matters regarding U.S. economic sanctions, corporate and banking law, U.S. litigation and international arbitration, and may also initiate contact with U.S. government officials concerning the preservation of Venezuela's assets in the U.S. as well as economic and humanitarian

assistance.

FARA filings name the foreign principal organization as Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela under President Juan Guaidó, and listed its representative as Carlos Vecchio, who in January was named by Guaidó as Venezuela's diplomatic envoy to the U.S.

A formal written agreement for the work, which currently sees the pro-Guaidó group paying the white-shoe firm on an hourly fee basis, has yet to be filed with the Justice Department. ○

Poland picks BGR to pave way for more U.S. troops

Poland, which is pushing for a bigger deployment of US troops, has hired BGR Government Affairs for strategic counsel and tactical planning advice and services on military and defense-related issues before the U.S. Government.

The central European nation has offered to pay up to \$2 billion for construction of a permanent U.S. base (Fort Trump) in an effort to entice the White House.

The US already has about 4,000 troops in Poland, which guard its border with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. The country has also agreed to a \$400 million-plus contract for US mobile rocket launchers.

BGR's \$70,000 per-month consulting agreement kicked off Feb. 1 and runs for a year.

Besides lobbying U.S. Government officials, the shop will provide PR support and digital communications savvy to Poland's defense ministry. Crisis communications services are available on request.

BGR is the firm of Haley Barbour, long-time Republican operative and former Mississippi governor. ○

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.

Sonoran Policy Group, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 11, 2019 for Mr. Saud Abdul Aziz Al Arfaj**, Kuwait, regarding promotion and counsel for him and Al-Arfaj Group Holding Company, including on disputed oil region between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP, San Francisco, CA, **registered Jan. 30, 2019 for Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy**, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, regarding potential bilateral agreement on cooperation with the U.S. concerning peaceful uses of nuclear energy under Section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and related legal matters concerning the development of a commercial nuclear program with Saudi Arabia.

White & Case LLP, New York, NY, **registered Feb. 4, 2019 for The Republic of the Sudan**, Washington, D.C., regarding legal services in connection with pending litigation in the US.

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.

The Raben Group, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 22, 2019 for Muslim Public Affairs Council**, Los Angeles, CA, regarding Muslim ban and other issues impacting the American Muslim community.

Cornerstone Government Affairs, Inc., Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 22, 2019 for National Ocean Policy Coalition**, Houston, TX, regarding advancing sensible oceanic policies.

Avenue Solutions, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 21, 2019 for Illumina, Inc.**, San Diego, CA, regarding issues related to the genetic sequencing industry and the use of genetic information in research and clinical settings.

United by Interest, LLC, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 20, 2019 for The Blackstone Group**, New York, NY, regarding issues related to banking and access to capital.

Holland & Knight, LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered Feb. 19, 2019 for Immigration Voice**, San Jose, CA, regarding the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act to create a fair and equitable system for receiving employment based green cards.

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letstalk@jpublicrelations.com
www.jpublicrelations.com
Employees: 65. Founded: 2005.

Agency Statement: J Public Relations (JPR) is an international luxury PR and social media agency specializing in hospitality, travel and luxury lifestyle brands with offices in New York City, London, Los Angeles and San Diego. JPR is a trusted leader in media relations and brand strategy, trend forecasting, brand partnerships, influencer relations, social media strategy and unparalleled media placements worldwide.

Established in 2005, the award-winning agency has consistently risen to become the country's fastest growing, bi-coastal agency in the travel and hospitality spaces. JPR's global roster includes more than 125 hotels in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Dubai, Europe, New Zealand, Asia and more. JPR steadily garners and retains notable clients including Relais & Châteaux, Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts, Vail Resorts Hospitality, Grace Hotels, InterContinental Los Angeles Downtown, Newport Beach & Company, Four Seasons Lanai and 15 Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

JPR is listed on the Observer's annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms. The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by PR News and "Agency of the Year" by *Bulldog Reporter* in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success.

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

Locations:

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530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018
212/924-3600

San Diego

2341 Fifth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101
619/255-7069

Los Angeles

429 Santa Monica Blvd., #280, Santa Monica, CA 90401
310/722-7066

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Jumeirah Hotels & Resorts
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Regent Seven Seas Cruises (project work)
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The Palms and The Shore Club, Turks & Caicos
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Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London.

The firm combines 24 award-winning years of expertise serving blue chip and breakout clients with forward-thinking new service offerings and the freshness of a start-up.

This unique mix of experience and energy attracts and empowers teams with a creative edge, drive and a passion for promoting, protecting and connecting clients in a fast-changing marketplace.

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