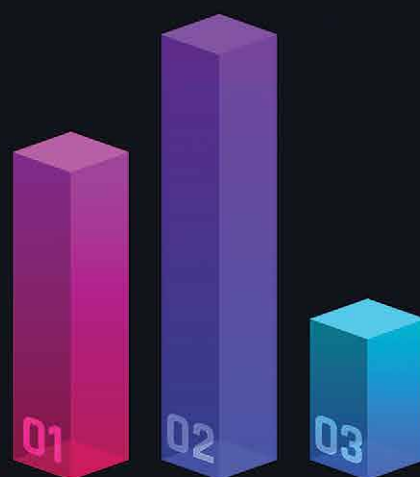


ANNUAL RANKINGS ISSUE

PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS RANKED BY NET FEES, ANNUAL GROWTH, PR SPECIALTY AND GEOGRAPHY



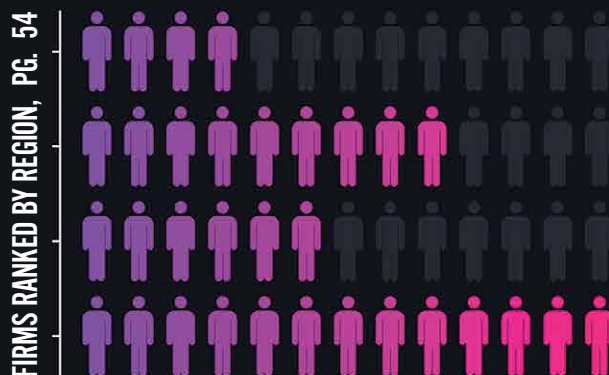
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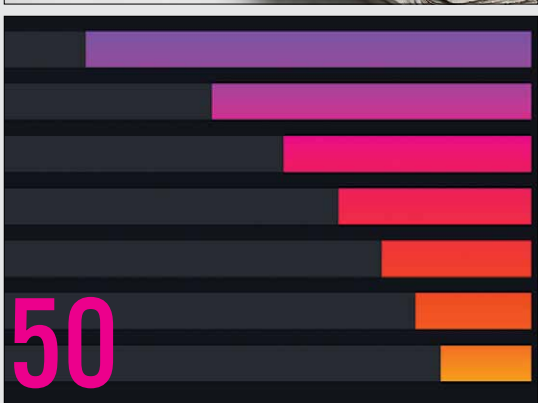
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Lies, lies and more lies

Love him or hate him, James Comey nails it. On the first page of his book, *A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership*, the former FBI Director clearly lays out the problem of living in our current post-truth era.

“We are experiencing a dangerous time in our country, with a political environment, where basic facts are disputed, fundamental truth is questioned, lying is normalized, and unethical behavior is ignored, excused or rewarded,” wrote Comey in the 300-page tome. “This is not just happening in our nation’s capital, and not just in the US. It is a troubling trend that has touched institutions across America and around the world — boardrooms of major companies, newsrooms, university campuses, the entertainment industry and professional and Olympic sports.”

The post-truth era makes a PR person long for the good old days of “spin,” where facts were repackaged to appeal to an audience’s emotions or instincts to prompt group action. Spin, at least, had facts at its core.

Donald Trump, of course, is the ringmaster of the circus of deceit and confusion.

The *Washington Post*’s Fact-Checker blog reported on May 1 that the President made 3,001 false or misleading claims in his first 466 days of office.

Perhaps feeling more comfortable — or desperate — in the job, the President has stepped up the pace of falsehoods, according to the WaPo. Trump averaged 4.9 bogus claims daily during his first 100 days. That jumped to 6.5 claims daily during the 466-day period.

Trump is a firm believer in the Big Lie theory, where the falsehood is repeated again and again.

The *Post* reported the President has made the same 113 false claims at least three times. They include whoppers such as he passed the biggest tax cut in history (actually it was the eighth largest) and that the Democrats really don’t care about the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that Trump killed.

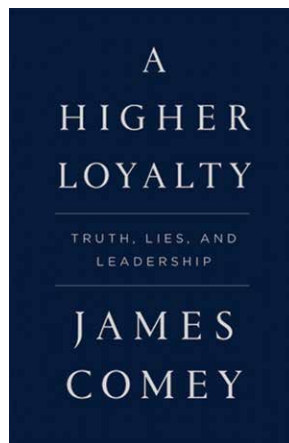
Comey, who may have the best insight into the mind of Trump, told CNN last month that Trump makes a “series of assertions about the great things that he has done” and they just “wash over you like a wave and even if you disagree the waves keep coming.” He numbs people into submission.

In Comey’s view, it’s pointless to try to correct every exaggeration that flows out of Trump’s mouth because you would be constantly interrupting him.

The former G-Man is wrong. That’s just what the nation needs.

My grandmother used to threaten me that she’d wash my mouth out with soap if I ever lied. The White House could use a shipment of soap right about now. ○

—Kevin McCauley



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Americans like Facebook, distrust Facebook

Two-thirds of Americans professed that they still like Facebook, yet more than half admitted they no longer trust the platform, according to a recent poll on Americans' perceptions of tech companies.

By Jon Gingerich

Facebook continues to face a major trust backlash in light of its ongoing Cambridge Analytica scandal, yet paradoxically, an overwhelming number of Americans said they still like the platform.

Two-thirds of Americans — 66 percent — professed liking Facebook, while 55 admitted they no longer trust the site, according to a recent poll on Americans' perceptions of tech companies released by San Francisco-based tech firm Bospar.

Overall, the study found that Americans' favorite tech company is Google. An impressive 88.9 percent of respondents said they like the search engine giant, and 78 percent said they also trust the company. Microsoft took a close second place, earning an 83.7 percent favorability rating and a trust rating of 77.6 percent. De-

spite its high rate of user distrust, Facebook came in third for most-liked company. LinkedIn, Uber and Twitter followed the social media giant, but of those companies, only Uber trailed Facebook in the distrust department.

The Bospar poll asked Americans how long is too long for a company to wait before responding to a crisis, and found that more than one in three — 35 percent — answered 24 hours. Nearly a third — 29 percent — said 48 hours, and 16 percent followed with 72 hours.

The poll's findings came as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified before Capitol Hill lawmakers last month, first appearing at a five-hour hearing before a joint session of the Senate Judiciary and Commerce Committees and then before

the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Facebook continues to face mounting criticism after data analysis and political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica improperly gained access to the personal data of 87 million of the site's users in a bid to pitch them Trump-related materials for the 2016 election. Facebook admits that it knew about the problem as far back as 2015, but didn't publicly confirm the leak until the *New York Times* broke news of the scandal in March.

When asked what recent tech-related PR crisis was handled the best, nearly half of respondents cited Apple's admissions in December 2017 that it had intentionally slowed down the performance of older iPhone models via its operating software updates. The least admired crisis response involved the recent security breach of athletic apparel brand Under Armour's MyFitnessPal app, which compromised as many of 150 million user accounts.

Bospar's study was conducted in early April by market research company Propeller Insights and polled more than 1,000 U.S. adults online. ○

TV news jobs top newspaper reporters

Local TV newsrooms employ more staffers than daily newspapers, according to a joint survey conducted by Hofstra University and broadcast and journalism organization Radio Television Digital News Association.

By Jon Gingerich

Reporting on the survey's findings, the RTDNA in a statement said it's the first time total local TV news employment has surpassed total daily newspaper employment in the annual survey's 25-year history. The average TV newsroom has had more staffers than the average daily newspaper for several years now.

The 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra report shows that local TV newsroom employment currently stands at 27,100, just below the industry's all-time high of 27,900 in 2001. By contrast, the report said total daily newspaper employment currently stands somewhere between 24,000 and 25,000.

The report mentions that total local TV news jobs actually declined slightly in 2017, dipping 1.8 percent from 27,600 employees in 2016. Median newsroom size and average full-time total TV news staffing had dipped slightly as well. The report cited a continued consolidation of local TV news for much of this loss.

According to the report, nearly 90 percent of news directors said they expect staffing levels to either increase or remain roughly the same within the coming year. The report found that the largest share of newly-created newsroom positions over

the past year were jobs dedicated to digital platforms (web, social media or other digital media positions). Nearly 20 percent of newly-created positions at newsrooms were digital-focused, and digital roles overall (web/mobile writer or producer, social media producer or editor and digital content manager) increased an average of .2 percent, from 2.1 in 2016 to 2.3 in 2017. The report also found that various web/digital responsibilities have become increasingly integrated into existing newsroom roles.

Finally, the report found that average hiring at radio stations has remained virtually unchanged in the last year, as has radio web staffing positions. Non-commercial radio stations were three times more likely to expect to add new staff than their commercial counterparts.

The 2018 RTDNA/Hofstra University Survey was conducted during the fourth quarter of 2017 and polled 1,683 operating, non-satellite TV stations as well as a random sample of 3,542 radio stations. Tallied responses came from 1,333 television stations (79.2 percent) as well as 415 radio news directors and general managers representing 1,110 radio stations. ○

Mobile ad spends to top TV in '18

Nearly 70 percent of all digital advertising is slated to appear on mobile devices this year, with mobile accounting for nearly 34 percent of total U.S. ad spends in 2018, according to recent estimates by digital market research company eMarketer.

TV ads, meanwhile, are expected to comprise a 31.6 percent share of total U.S. ad spends this year, meaning that mobile ads are now slated to outpace TV for the first time.

Overall, eMarketer said mobile advertising will grow at a rate of nearly 24 percent this year, surpassing total media's combined 6.6 percent growth by more than three times.

By contrast, eMarketer expects that only 14.6 percent of the total U.S. ad share will go to print this year, followed desktop/laptop's 9.1 percent and radio's 6.5 percent.

eMarketer's recent estimates predict that mobile's share will surge to account for nearly half — 47.9 percent — of the U.S. ad market by 2022. ○

Consumers leery about third-party data access

In the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, a new survey suggests fewer consumers feel comfortable about the prospect of third-party app developers acquiring and sharing their personal information.

By Jon Gingerich

Fewer than 17 percent— 16.7 percent — of consumers said they're comfortable with the idea of third-party app developers acquiring and using their personal information for marketing purposes, according to a recent survey by intelligence platform Vision Critical.

On the other hand, most consumers said they don't mind sharing their personal data if it adds value to their overall customer experience, and particularly if brands are open and transparent regarding how that information will be used.

The survey found that a majority of consumers — 66 percent — said they're comfortable with the practice of sharing their personal information, as long as brands proactively tell them how they're going to utilize that data. And nearly half of respondents — 42 percent — also said they'd be more willing to share that information if

they had an opportunity to edit or delete it.

Improving online consumer privacy protections has become a sort of clarion call in the weeks following Facebook's data crisis, in which Trump-linked data analysis and political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica illicitly harvested the data of an estimated 87 million Facebook users in order to pitch them political messages in the months before the 2016 presidential election.

Consumer data has always been social media networks' bread and butter, yet the Cambridge Analytica scandal has apparently caught many consumers in disbelief regarding the fact that the crumb-trail of data we leave behind in the digital realm is precisely why we're invited to establish online residences on these channels for free. As a result, consumers are now paying more attention to the data they share online and what companies do with it, with

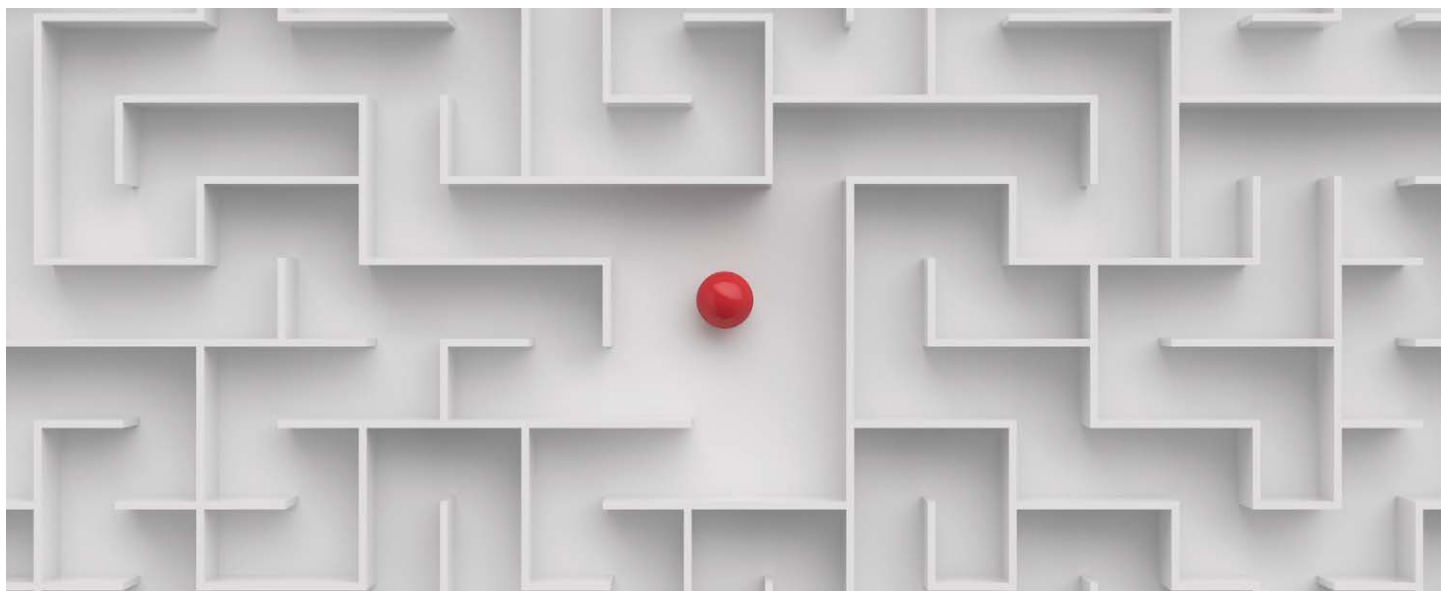
many calling for improved transparency guidelines regarding the information that networks and third-party app developers acquire and share.

The Vision Critical survey suggests that by adding a few transparency provisos, brands could go a long way in improving both how they treat consumers' personal information as well as the relationships they currently have with loyalists.

The survey found that an overwhelming majority of respondents — 80.1 percent — said they're comfortable sharing personal information directly with brands for the sake of receiving more personalized messages. Nearly half of those polled — 41 percent — said they're willing to share personal information if it results in more personalized service or faster conflict resolution.

More than half of those polled — 58 percent — also admitted that they're more likely to respond to personalized messages from brands.

The Vision Critical survey polled more than 1,000 adults in North America who said they'd made a digital purchase within the past year. ○



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Helping purpose-driven companies reach their goals

How to lead integrated communications campaigns that enhance the impact and protect the reputations of purpose-driven clients.

By Michael Roth

When articles began popping up about “purpose-driven companies” years back, I must admit that I found the concept kind of odd.

Having worked in life sciences for more than two decades in therapeutic areas like ALS, Parkinson’s, Depression, Gaucher’s Disease and Oncology, it was clear that the “purpose” of our clients’ work was improving and saving people’s lives. Similarly, the “purpose” of healthcare communications was to help people understand the value of these medical breakthroughs that impact them or their family members and help as many people gain access to the product or device as possible. We were under no illusion that profit — and sometimes, greed — played a big role in the industry, but above all of this was a greater “purpose.”

For this reason, many people in healthcare communications tend to cast a jaundiced eye at other industries: consumer goods, banking, travel. In our collective minds, their only “purpose” is to make money. The truth is, many other industries have a noble and purpose-driven heritage.

Let’s take two high profile American insurance companies as examples. MetLife’s “purpose” is to provide a financial safety net for American families that are looking to protect all that they have built in their lives. MetLife began its journey in 1863 when a group of New York City businessmen raised \$100,000 to found the National Union Life and Limb Insurance Company. The company insured Civil War sailors and soldiers against disabilities due to wartime wounds, accidents, and sickness. In anyone’s mind, a truly noble purpose. In 1868, the Company changed its name to Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and shifted its focus to the life insurance business. While the Company evolved, the purpose remained: to serve the community with real individual impact.

Similarly, Aetna had a purpose-driven heritage: to help victims of fires recover from devastation that seemed to be epidemic in American cities in the 1800s. Aetna was known for many years as Aetna Fire Insurance Company. While their business model has evolved quite a bit over time, a steadfast dedication to purpose and impact upon the community that they served was never an issue. In recent years, Aetna has evolved from a health insurance company to a healthcare company, focusing on its members’ wellness (versus sickness), their

personalized health ambitions, social determinants of health and the importance of localization of healthcare. They have become an ideal example of a purpose-driven company.

What is a real purpose-driven company?

There are, of course, numerous companies in other industries that share a purpose-driven heritage: industries like travel, utilities, transportation, professional services and even banking. But heritage is not a prerequisite for building a purpose-driven company. Many companies in the modern age are trying to figure out exactly where they fit into this not-so-new, conceptual paradigm. How can they be purpose-driven, and if it’s not about corporate heritage or even product or service output, what exactly is a purpose-driven company?

While there’s no definitive definition, it’s clear that “purpose-driven” companies of all kinds are born out of one simple idea: it is the obligation of every business (and every person) to improve the world in even the smallest way.

A purpose-driven business need not be totally selfless or philanthropic, but you must identify a genuine need within society (e.g., psychological, emotional, physical) and work hard to fill that need. Your work must have a positive impact on the communities that you serve including direct targets, employees and non-customers.

The rationale for becoming a purpose-driven business is also simple. When there’s a real emotional connection to a brand, there’s more trust between the customer, community and the company. And this relationship is more conducive to a fruitful business relationship. It makes common sense.

Purpose-driven doesn’t mean perfect

One would think that a company’s allegiance to positively impacting society would make it easier to map out its narrative, messaging, content, thought leadership and social media. Not so fast. There’s still the age-old nemesis of advocacy-based communications, which is the reality of the situation. Persuading the public that they need sneakers because it will help fix the dearth of inner city jobs, or that they need a five-dollar cup of coffee because fair trade and the rain forest is critical to us all, is a tough sell. There must be real connective utility, substance and transparency behind the brand promise, vision and “purpose.” Consumers must feel and see the impact.

Sometimes there are activities or incidents that fall outside of the company “purpose,” or even fly in the face of that purpose: the death of a patient because a health insurance claim was rejected, or a pill didn’t work right, or an exploding product that creates institutional mistrust. Even purpose-driven businesses are subject to failure because of human or other mistakes, in spite of a company’s best intentions.

Proving purpose after a setback

The biggest setback — and potential turnaround — that I’ve seen in recent years to a brand purpose started on April 12 in a Pennsylvania Starbucks. Two black men were wrongfully arrested in a racially-biased incident. Starbucks’ purpose is to inspire and nurture the human spirit: one person, one cup, one neighborhood at a time. And this incident directly contradicted that purpose.

Starbucks’ CEO acted immediately to make certain that their purpose was not compromised. In addition to firing the manager that used poor judgement and had the men arrested, their CEO met with the two men to apologize directly to them for the harm that his company has caused them and the community. Starbucks announced that it will close all its coffee shops on May 29 to provide racial bias training to nearly 175,000 employees. The training — aimed at preventing discrimination at Starbucks shops — comes in response to swift public outcry and the company’s commitment to accountability and change.

Interviews with Starbucks’ CEO after the meeting with the two men wrongfully arrested demonstrated his authentic distress and regret. Starbucks is vested in the community, and they will now work hard to make sure that racial discrimination is never tolerated in its stores or communities. We’ll see what happens in the coming months, but the corporate response of strong words, combined with clear action, seemed to be elevated by its institutional belief in its purpose.

Working with purpose-driven companies

Following are five tips to help map out an integrated communications campaign to



Michael Roth

— Continued on page 13



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Breaking down complex comms for the C-Suite

Public relations professionals fall in love with our own jargon, using words like “visibility,” “content,” “reach” and “frequency,” “impressions” and “channels.” It’s no wonder that sometimes C-Suite leaders don’t know what to do with us.

By Matt Kucharski

On the other hand, PR pros’ role has never been more critical. Important goals and initiatives will succeed if they are clearly understood and widely appreciated, and we make that happen. It’s a complex time for communicators, but we must avoid the trap of transferring that to the people and organizations we serve.

Clear purpose and well-defined stakeholders are foundational. After that, the keys to success break down into the Message, the Messenger and the Method.

Taking a different view of “the message”

The most common C-Suite complaint is “we need a better message.” Let’s unravel that. What makes them think it’s wrong? What does “better” look like? More importantly, the executive, by making the claim in the first place, demonstrates a lack of understanding of what good messaging really is.

There’s never been a communications challenge that didn’t require changing opinions and behaviors of multiple groups of people, all with different interests and motivations. One message to get them all on board is wishful thinking. Instead, we need key message sets for each audience that all roll up under a common narrative.

At Padilla, we use a Message Pyramid that starts with a core theme or idea (what execs mistakenly refer to as “the message”), an elevator story (often termed “the narrative”), key message sets (organized by audience or topic), and proof statements (reasons to believe).

There’s been a shift in the types of messages that resonate with different audiences

— driven by a well-documented increase in skepticism and lack of trust in traditionally venerated institutions. Aristotle coined the words ethos, pathos and logos to categorize the three main persuasive methods. Ethos focuses on experience, pathos focuses on passion and logos focuses on logic.

C-Suite executives love ethos messages: talking about years of experience, market share, breadth and depth of product offerings, and other key points that demonstrate authority and longevity. They say, “trust me, I’ve been here and I know what I’m doing.”

The problem is, people don’t care. If you say you’ve been in business 150 years, a Millennial just thinks you’re old. If you talk about your market share, a consumer thinks you have too much control. A customer doesn’t want breadth and depth of product line; they want products specifically for their needs. When ethos messaging doesn’t apply, we fall back on logos messaging, citing scientific studies and test results to show why “we’re right.”

But as Richard Thaler, winner of the Nobel Prize for his work in behavioral economics has proved, it’s often our emotions that drive decision making, which has resulted in more need for messaging based on pathos. Not-for-profits have focused on pathos (probably to an unhealthy extreme) for years, and we’re seeing it emerge as an important messaging approach in corporate settings as well.

A “single message” is not only unrealistic, it’s also ineffective. Instead, we need to be using a mix of ethos, pathos and logos-based messaging, choosing the right mix with the help of research-based audience insights.

Don’t pick the wrong messenger

In contrast to “the message,” very few executives point to “the messenger” as a key part of the strategy, assuming it as a given or dismissing it as unimportant.

But a great message will be squandered if delivered by the wrong messenger.

Sometimes the CEO is the best choice. Sometimes not. When Facebook was called before Congress to account for its mishandling of user personal data, the only right messenger was CEO Mark Zuckerberg. When Tony Hayward, CEO of B-P during the Deepwater Horizon accident, said he “wanted his life back” in the midst of the company’s disaster response, he was fired.

That resulted in a shift to different messengers for different audiences.

Smart companies know when they are not the best messenger. We all know that a major corporation telling a teenager not to text and drive will have zero impact, which is why AT&T’s successful “It Can Wait” campaign uses stories from real people who have been victims — or perpetrators — of distracted driving.

Using the right messenger is fundamental to effective social media strategy. A brand that posts about itself will usually receive a less desirable response when compared to that same message delivered by more trusted and believable members of the social media community. It’s urgent for brands and companies to build their network of social media followers before a critical issue occurs, so that they can be leveraged as advocates during difficult times.



Matt Kucharski

The right method among the madness

And then there’s the method. We all know the PESO model, where an “integrated” campaign is supposed to have paid, earned, shared and owned channels.

The problem is, the PESO model isn’t like choosing a sandwich at the deli: pick your bread, pick your meat and cheese, pick your condiments, warm it up or take it cold. It’s about picking the method of communication that is going to achieve the most effective outcome.

Companies today are no longer breaking news with national business outlets like the *Wall Street Journal* or the *New York Times*, but instead are opting for the most influential online trade publication because that’s what their customers and employees are reading. Likewise, a public service announcement that used to be pitched to numerous television news outlets now has just as much chance of getting viewed by making it available on Vimeo, YouTube, Amazon, iTunes, or Hoopla (or a combination of all).

So, when the CEO comes to you and tells you that the company needs your help in communicating a major initiative, instead of discussing the complexity of the challenge, break it down into the Message, the Messenger and the Method. Not only will he or she appreciate your ability to simplify the complex, you’ll improve the likelihood that Communications is seen as an essential part of the company’s success.

Matt Kucharski is President of Padilla. ○

PR news brief

Joele Frank backs Germany’s Knauf in fight for USG

Joele Frank, Wilkinson Brimmer Katcher supports Germany’s Knauf in its proxy fight with building products competitor USG Corp. of Chicago.

Knauf, which has made a \$5.9 billion bid for USG, is urging shareholders to vote against four USG director nominees at the May 9 annual meeting.

USG, which relies on Sard Verbinen & Co., said Knauf’s bid is “wholly inadequate, opportunistic and does not reflect the intrinsic value of the company.”

Knauf, which owns about 10 percent of USG, knocks it for failing to engage in serious negotiations or show “substantive evidence to support its claim that the company is worth more than \$42 per-share.”

Joele Frank, Ed Trissel and Annabelle Rinehart represent Knauf. SV&C’s Jim Barron and Pam Greene work the media for USG.

You need the right people today to succeed tomorrow

Having the right people on your leadership team when growing and scaling advertising and PR companies is paramount in today's constantly-evolving communications industry.

By Christine Barney

Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there.” This quote from Will Rogers is a humorous warning to today's business owners. What got you where you are today is often not enough to ensure you'll be successful tomorrow.

Continued growth is a challenge every business faces and the ability to scale is often heralded as proof of success. As rbb embraced its aggressive growth plans to create the communications agency of the future and double in size by 2020, we knew those plans required broader shoulders.

That's why we invested in growing our leadership team over the last decade and are excited that nine senior members have become equity partners at the agency. These aren't phantom stock partners: they jumped in with both feet and bought their stock in rbb to get real equity.

The importance of “having the right people on the bus” was a hallmark of Jim Collins' book “Good to Great.”

“If you have the right people, you can change direction faster and will have self-motivated leaders who produce the best results to do something great,” Collins said. “Great vision without great people is irrelevant.”

These new partners not only believe in rbb's ability to grow, they also understand that what has worked before is not the roadmap for the future. The trains coming down

the communications track are moving faster than ever. Far too many companies have jumped off the tracks and remain stranded on the sidelines offering the same traditional advertising and PR services.

Those companies who embrace technology, understand the changing information needs of today's consumer and are flexible enough to bring the right tools to each situation are the ones who will succeed. That's why rbb has consciously evolved to become a fully integrated communications firm offering marketing, digital/social, advertising/creative, PR and reputation management.

When it comes to solving a client's problems, we start with a strategic consulting process that determines the best combination of tools. Otherwise, the adage holds true: If you only have a hammer then everything looks like a nail.

Brands today require and deserve a 360-degree view of how to use communication to build their bottom line. rbb's Breakout Brand philosophy is based on the idea that communication success — for both internal and external audiences — comes from creating emotional connections.

Today that means using video, third-party influencers, apps galore, crowdsourcing and employee engagement tools, as well as having the skills of a digital ninja to cut through the clutter.

That doesn't mean the focus is all internet and apps. Being able to put experienced,

thoughtful, senior executives in the same room with CEOs, COOs and CMOs and give them straight counsel is just as critical. Smart counselors bring new perspectives to help C-level execs forge new business strategies, create new revenue streams and protect their brands.

We can only imagine what will be in our communications arsenal tomorrow. In fact, at rbb we spend quite a bit of time imagining and creating the tools and strategies we believe brands will need to grow and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

With a leadership team aligned for the future, rbb expects to help clients stay on track and take the curves with flair.

Christine M. Barney, APR is Chief Executive Officer and Managing Partner of rbb Communications. She is also author of the Breakout Brand strategy, is accredited by the Public Relations Society of America and oversees the strategic development of all client programs. ○



Christine Barney

Purpose-driven companies

— Continued from page 10

further a purpose-driven client's business objectives and enhance and protect its corporate reputation.

Executives exposed to media must be authentic, believable and transparent. The death knell of any purpose-driven corporation are people that don't carry the brand purpose with them during interviews, regardless of the audience. Similarly, employees that appear to be oblivious to their brand promise can hurt the reputation of the entire company.

Corporate narrative and messaging must be tied to the purpose. Top down: demonstrate with words and actions how you're fulfilling your purpose.

Have the courage to tell your client

when they're “off purpose.”

Leverage your target audiences: the beneficiaries of your purpose-driven work. If there is a true positive impact, your customers should want to speak about it. Leverage their words and personification of your purpose. SHOW how you impact the community.

Don't be afraid to acknowledge other purpose-driven companies. You're part of a community. The old idea of competition isn't all that appealing to the next generation. Companies are less like a football game than a giant music festival. There are no enemies, just different companies playing in different places. Wish everyone well.

Michael Roth is a Partner and Head of the Healthcare Practice at Bliss Integrated Communication. ○

PR news brief

Tusk pitches world's first legal tender cryptocurrency

Tusk Ventures is promoting the Republic of the Marshall Islands' plan to introduce the world's first legal tender cryptocurrency.

RMI has partnered with Neema Ltd, an Israeli start-up that facilitates global money transfers via app and has used blockchain technology to create a digital currency called the Sovereign (SOV).

The Pacific Ocean nation has passed a law making the SOV its official legal tender and is working with Neema to ensure a smooth roll-out.

Tusk's statement of work says the firm is shaping the narrative to build support from the media, regulators, investors, pundits and crypto advocates/skeptics.

It will pitch the SOV's value proposition and show how it will benefit the people of the RMI by promoting transparency and good government. Tusk also will demonstrate how legal tender cryptocurrencies could help other small countries.

The New York-based firm will educate the US Treasury, State Dept., Securities and Exchange Commission and Internal Revenue Service about RMI's strategy.

Tusk's compensation will be split 50/50 between U.S. dollars and SOVs.

Bradley Tusk was New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg's campaign manager and New York Senator Chuck Schumer's communications director.

Influencer marketing: choose wisely

Online influencer programs always carry an element of risk, leading many to rethink whether influencer marketing is the right strategy for their brand.

By Ashley Butler

For a while now, you may have heard the mantra that influencer marketing is a staple in any well-rounded social media program. Yet, you've seen cases where it's gone bad. From headlines about fake news, to "bots" posing as followers, to celebrity endorsements hurting big brands. Many savvy marketers are left questioning: is influencer marketing a fad or a solid strategy?

Like any successful communications effort, an influencer marketing program requires a focused approach and disciplined execution. When done right, influencer marketing can add third-party credibility to a brand, help companies become more accessible to consumers, and, depending on the type of influencer, amplify your content without heavy paid media dollars. However, there's risk in putting a brand in the hands of a stranger and, therefore, influencer marketing requires an investment in time and resources to execute properly.

Consider the macro and micro view

As most marketers know by now, influencers are commonly categorized by reach, or audience size, and status, and fall into one of three groups: Celebrity, a well-known superstar who has mass reach; Macro-influencer, a person with a large following grown from building their online personal brand; and Micro-influencer, someone with a following of fewer than 10,000.

While celebrities and macro-influencers have gotten much of the fanfare to date, micro-influencers are proving their value. Micro-influencers have a hyper-engaged audience in a targeted topic area that engenders strong communication and engagement and, in many cases, higher conversion rates.

Research supports several advantages to working with micro-influencers. In the case of quality over quantity, a study by Markerly found that as someone's number of followers increases, the engagement rate decreases. Furthermore, research from Expercify shows micro-influencers' conversion rates are 22.2 times higher than other influencers, perhaps because they are found to be 74 percent more likely to encourage followers to buy or try a product or service.

Finally, the cherry on top as regards working with these influencers—they are often more affordable. According to Bloglovin', 97 percent of micro-influencers charge \$500 or less for a sponsored post on Instagram, compared to Kylie Jenner, who can reportedly get hundreds of thousands of dollars

for a promotional post on the platform.

Picking the right influencer for your brand

Whether you are considering micro- or macro-influencers, there's a science to selecting the right ones. Doing your homework upfront to identify the appropriate influencers to partner with will pay dividends on the back end.

Start by aligning the evaluation process to your overall social media strategy. Ensure you identify partners who will elevate your brand message, not dilute it. Outline program objectives, target audiences, content themes and guidelines for influencer content, as well as key performance indicators. These elements will directly inform the influencer selection criteria. From there, follow these best practices for developing effective partnerships and content that deliver your brand's message to the right people.

Think relevance. Relevance measures the contextual fit for your brand and is critical when thinking about the parameters of selecting influencers. Starting with a large list of influencers, assess those who would be most relevant to your audience based on your brand. This can be done by applying brand personas to determine who is appropriate to engage with based on the categories and topics they are discussing. Define your campaign's purpose and slot influencers into those categories based on their content themes, persona and audience engagement. Find people who naturally connect to your mission, topics, product or service.

Determine resonance. Identify the influencer's level of engagement to determine resonance. Focus on influencers who have a committed and engaged following as this is a strong indication of authenticity. A strong influencer posts content that is consumable and likeable. As they say, it's not how many friends you can count, but how many friends you can count on to create engagement and build brand awareness.

Evaluate the message. Be sure to vet the influencer's content, thoroughly. As engaged as followers may be, sometimes an influencer's content doesn't fit your brand. For example, does the influencer have a strong following and post beautiful photos that would speak to your audience, but also employs controversial commentary? Might not be a good fit. Be vigilant when vetting content for highly political posts, obscenity, and competitor mentions, otherwise your campaign could quickly backfire.

Personalize your outreach approach.

Once you find the right partner(s), tailor your communication and invitation to work together based on what you've learned about them. Show this person you've done your homework and how your brand is a good fit for their community. This is the first step to developing a strong relationship.

Build in backups. Cast a wide net for your search initially to account for influencers who decline to participate, which could be as high as 80 percent. There are many factors that play into influencer participation, including level of effort of the request (are you asking for a video or just a text-based tweet), turnaround time (influencers have busy personal and work lives, too; make sure the production schedule allows for at least a week or ideally two) and content topic (is it sensitive in nature). Just like your brand on social media, many influencers follow their own content strategy and scheduling to build an engaged follower base.

Establish your goals and how to track them. Essential to tracking results is setting clear goals and metrics upfront. Define your metrics, including the targeted quality and quantity of interactions. Then closely monitor community engagement. Ask yourself: Does the influencer engagement feel authentic? What are the comments and questions from the community? Did the overall effort drive the desired levels of reach, click throughs or other impact? Based on your learnings, make changes and optimize your program in real time.

Employ technology. Once you define your influencer parameters, consider using tools such as GroupHigh, TapInfluence and IZEA to tap into influencer databases to build a long list of influencers. These tools can help you parse the digital landscape to get access to influencer names, social footprint, personal performance metrics and contact information. Some of these tools also facilitate outreach and can help manage the full transaction.

Influencer marketing programs remain a highly viable yet evolving opportunity. Know the risks and rewards before diving in too deep. Invest the hard work to choose social media mavens wisely so that these influencers actually influence to your advantage.

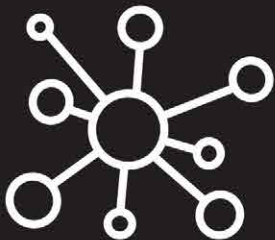
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Ashley Butler



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Why marketing and PR need each other

The most successful organizations are the ones in which marketing and PR programs share strategies and messaging, and coordinate on tactics as they work side-by-side to provide optimum results for a business.

By Jessica Tiller

Who feels like they're an expert in both marketing and public relations? Or better yet, who within the communications industry can clearly describe the difference to someone at a networking event? We've all been in that situation at some point in our careers. And to add to the complications — and blur the lines even further — today's communications pros are usually juggling a mix of online marketing, advertising, and public relations.

All too often, businesses tend to think of marketing and PR as one and the same. Even worse, some companies tend to define marketing as responding to RFPs, while public relations is often reduced to sending out news releases and securing media coverage. Obviously, that approach is doomed to failure (and probably the reason some executives discount the importance of both disciplines).

Given that, let's start with some basics. While today we hear about everything from relationship marketing to content marketing, marketing ultimately comes down to developing a demand for a specific product or service, analyzing data to determine what is or isn't work and fulfilling the customer's needs. Public relations, on the other hand, is defined as the strategic communications process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their audiences.

Clearly, you can see how PR and marketing tend to — or should — be joined at the hip, with both supporting a company's sales efforts and/or advancing an organization's overall business objectives. To have marketing and public relations departments operate within individual silos at any company, large or small, really does a disservice to the organization. While we may be a little biased, the most successful organizations tend to be the ones with cohesive marketing and PR programs working side-by-side to promote a business. Think of marketing and PR like peanut butter and jelly or milk and cookies — they just go together.

What, then, are the benefits of a coordinated communications program, incorporating both marketing and PR?

Credibility

Utilizing marketing activities, such as compiling and analyzing data, informs

public relations in order to create meaningful content. Having hard data from the marketing department can help PR to sharpen its audience focus and refine the tactics it employs. That, in turn, brings added credibility to the PR effort and a direct correlation between activities and results.

Consistency

Today's business prospects and clients are bombarded with a seemingly limitless stream of information and an endless number of options. Surprising as it sounds, the average individual is hit with between 4,000-10,000 brand messages per day! As a result, psychologists have determined that it takes a minimum of seven mentions for a brand to even begin to register with the intended target.

To cut through all of that "noise," businesses need to constantly remind their key audiences who they are, what products or services they offer, and why those products/services are preferable to those of competitors. Creating and then maintaining ongoing marketing and PR initiatives will help organizations to do exactly that. No initiative will have true success without the consistency.

Greater awareness

By employing complementary marketing and PR tactics, you will gain greater visibility for your business, helping you stand out from your competition. Marketing's tactics are often focused on self-generated activities, such as company newsletters, electronic and printed materials, and brochures, while public relations activities are focused on earned opportunities, such as media coverage, awards, and speaking engagements.

Through a cohesive communications strategy — utilizing both marketing and PR — a business will be able to expand awareness of their organization's products or services.

Allow for synergy

Marketing and PR can, and should, work together to better reach an intended audience. Because marketers and PR professionals already work in many of the same areas, it makes sense that their work could be done cooperatively. Marketing and PR need to share strategies, messaging and information, and then coordinate on the tactics moving forward.

Unifying messages

Both marketing and PR departments need to be on the same page — and use the same messaging — in order to optimize efforts and initiatives intended to reach current and prospective clients. What is the point of pushing out an e-newsletter or updating the website if the PR team is using messages that are outdated, focusing on the wrong aspects of the business, or describing the company in completely different terms?



Jessica Tiller

Here's a case in point: Several years ago, we were helping a client in the benefits space to develop a strategic communications plan. The top two executives could not understand why no one in their market seemed to know what they did. Some even mistook the company for a law firm, given its name.

In speaking to each of the executives, neither could quickly identify what their company was about or who their key audiences were. When they did start discussing these topics, they disagreed with each other. Clearly, if there's no agreed upon internal messaging, how will key audiences, who are bombarded daily with other brands, be able to understand who you are and what services you offer?

The bottom line: marketing and public relations need each other to provide optimum results. It's not a line item that is negotiable. In today's competitive business climate, a comprehensive, ongoing marketing and public relations program is a must.

Worth remembering are the words of Bill Gates: "If I was down to the last dollar of my marketing budget, I'd spend it on PR."

Jessica Tiller is Executive Vice President and Co-Founder of Weiss PR, Inc. Celebrating its 10th year in business, Weiss PR helps businesses and non-profit organizations reach, engage, and influence the right audiences in order to achieve their communications and business objectives. For more information, contact the author at jtiller@weisspr.com or visit the website www.weisspr.com. ○



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Using chatbots to support social media storytelling

How communication pros can leverage chatbots in their arsenal of storytelling and strategic communications tools.

By David Perez

Chatbots are the newest trendy toy everyone's talking about, and a technology that PR pros are racing to test out on their marketing campaigns. But how you use chatbots and the ways in which they're integrated into your communication strategy makes all the difference insofar as whether you're utilizing this powerful tool effectively.

Chatbots are artificial intelligence designed to emulate human interaction. The digital era has grown to intertwine public relations and marketing. Social media has erupted as one of the ultimate ways to communicate and reach your target audience. New and creative ways of reaching our audiences can be seen through responses on messaging apps like Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp. Chatbots are here to stay, and as communications professionals, here are simple ways to integrate chatbots into your communication plans.

Storytelling

Using chatbots to communicate with your audience is an effective way to let them know your story. It is ultimately still good-old-fashioned storytelling. Get personal and guide them through your journey. People connect with people, but one thing hasn't changed, and it's the power of stories. As professional storytellers, we can develop the bot to guide our Facebook user to pick their own adventure within our story. Guide the customer through the journey with an end goal. People like to share stories with value. They share stories that make them feel like insiders and stories of emotion. The more creatively we build our own story of adventure, the more memorable it becomes. Chatbots can help communicate our message, building an engaged following.

Direct communication

Email marketing 2.0 has been a term used to describe how to generate more interest, awareness or sales for a product. While many communication gurus continue to practice the art of email marketing, some have moved into direct communications through messenger platforms such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, via chatbots. The ability to connect "one to one" is more powerful than the "one to many" approach. This form of communication creates the ability to build brand loyalty and establish a relationship with your audience. Of course, you will get those people who opt out eventually, but your audience becomes an engaged audience, ultimately

evolving into brand ambassadors. Building the perfect conversation takes practice, research and occasionally updating the bot as necessary.

Content distribution

Ever wonder why you only have 10 views during your Facebook Live event? The ability to send direct information to your followers has been simplified. With platforms that are used to create chatbots like ManyChat and Chatfuel, communications pros can send direct information to their audiences. The chatbot can distribute a new piece of content, statement from the company or product launch right into your user's notification. When building a chatbot, help guide your user by asking them questions. Simple buttons can be added when building the chatbot. Understand where your audience wants to end. Your end goal is imperative when mapping out the journey. Ask for their permission to be able to receive notifications and exclusive company news. Making them feel part of an exclusive club, receiving items they can only view on Messenger, creates bigger want and a driving force to join in on the fun.

Data collection

What is it your audience really wants to hear? What type of content should we create and share? We all have heard that content is king. As we move into a new era, quality content targeted to a specific audience becomes more imperative than the quantity produced. Communications professionals need to understand what content will resonate with a specific audience. As your bot interacts with your audience, you can start developing custom content built on your audience's responses. Instead of asking a question through your newsfeed, create a question on Messenger. Build exclusivity and have interactions. Build your bot to walk through a series of questions that will generate more data. As communicators, we are always talking and looking for ways to reach new audiences. We need to listen and understand what our audiences want. Once we understand our target audience, we can create a fluid distribution method generating an increase in buzz. A specific post may be shared and engaged in more due to the "How to..." video clip you created. All generated from your chatbot. Your audience will continue to build and create the ability to awareness.

Customer service

Make the user feel heard. Communica-

tion is a two-way street. Understand how to communicate with your audience. Build a customer service bot to help your current customers. Do not ignore those relationships. Chatbots are an ideal way to engage with your audience as a customer service. Spreading awareness is important, but building loyalty is imperative to reaching out to new customers. We have returned to our favorite store because of exceptional customer service. As more people are shopping online, we want to build a communication network that helps and continues to strengthen relationships. Pre-loaded messages can be drafted to contact customer service or send a link to the latest article to fix a minor concern.

This time saving tool can help increase consumer satisfaction. Making the consumer feel heard is important when retaining those relationships.

Building your virtual assistant can bridge your communication gap. Strategize on where and how to integrate your chatbot into your plan. Understand your communications goal and use this tool to create a better line of communication. Whether you are telling your story, distributing content or asking questions, this powerful tool will help you distribute to a new range of audiences and create ambassadors.

What story will you program your bot to tell?

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



David Perez

PR news brief

Comcast taps Tulchan in bid for Sky

Comcast is using Tulchan Communications to handle its \$31 billion offer to buy Sky, European pay TV operator, setting up a potential bidding war with 21st-Century Fox.

Sky, which had agreed to a takeover by 21CF, has now ended that pact because of the superior Comcast offer. 21CF, which owns a 39 percent stake in Sky, says it's committed to acquiring the remaining shares.

Comcast sees Sky's 23 million customers in the UK, Italy and Germany as a platform for further growth on the Continent.

The Philadelphia-based owner of NBCUniversal says the addition of Sky's customer base will enable it to invest in more original and acquired programming.

Comcast CEO Brian Roberts pledges to preserve Sky's editorial independence and refrain from acquiring a majority interest in any British newspaper for five years to help ensure media diversity.

Tulchan's Andrew Grant and Tom Murray are working the Comcast bid.



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O'Dwyer's Industry Rankings: #7 Healthcare, #17 Environmental and #28 Overall

PR pros on startup growth impact, community trends

By Lisa Astor

As we reflect on the first quarter of 2018, some interesting trends have started to evolve in the VC and startup communities. I took some time with my colleagues to dig into what markets are trending and how PR pros can better establish relationships with the movers and shakers in the VC community.

What are some of the markets or industries you are seeing funded today?

Ryan Wallace, VP & GM, New York: Advanced Manufacturing is a critical industry. In fact, NYC is the number one market for 3D printing. Robotics, cybersecurity and health & life sciences are also burgeoning markets in New York right now.

Jennifer Malleo, VP & GM, San Francisco: I see money flowing into any company that's got a security play, and lots of "middleware" brands, i.e., the companies that create the connections between other B2B businesses. Middleware has been a dirty word in PR, but the acquisition of MuleSoft, Twilio's IPO, the much-anticipated Palantir IPO, and our own SF client roster tell a different story. These companies are printing cash and investors know it.

Katie Blair, VP & GM, Orlando: In the Southeast, the biggest opportunities are in the fintech, biotech, healthcare, martech and cybersecurity markets.

Lisa Astor, SVP & Co-Lead, Client Relations, Boston: Boston has always been a hub of innovation for healthcare IT and traditional data and security technologies. We're also the home to robotics since the launch of iRobot and MIT's significant investment in the space. And of course, biotech continues to be a cash cow with more than 1,000 biotech companies in Massachusetts.

How has this changed over the past few years? What are the next hot markets?

Wallace: Manufacturing in particular has started to grow and expand in "Industry City," Brooklyn. Robotics has found a new home here as well. There is a real renaissance for manufacturing — from retail and apparel to biomedical to tech. It's exciting to see this evolving in real time. We have seen heightened investment and significant deals closing in the New York market and, generally speaking, people are excited to see the cash flowing again in "Silicon Alley," at a level we haven't seen since 2015.

Malleo: I can tell you who it isn't. First, apps are out of luck: They were the hottest funding sector up until a few years ago, and the money has dried up. SaaS—anything is also dead in the water because new en-

trants are now competing with established players. The industry that showed the most promise — fintech — has also fallen. Anything related to blockchain is super hot, and I expect it will stay that way for some time. Digital currencies are skyrocketing (overall) and VCs are falling over each other to get in on the underlying technology. Trusted social networks, or even niche social networks, are another potential area of interest that have gotten some play. Facebook may be the sacrificial lamb in a much broader trend relating to the security of individual data — what they're willing to share vs. pay for, and whether communities can and should be trusted or accountable to users.

Blair: I think we will continue to see growth in SaaS organizations. With a growing presence of *Fortune* 500 companies located in the Southeast, B2B SaaS startups continue to attract large amounts of investor capital, commanding over \$4.5 billion in more than 1,600 deals since 2012. Biotech/pharma and consumer technology also are growing sectors in the Southeast, with over \$7 billion invested collectively, since 2012.

Astor: Advanced data analytics is the future of tech in Boston. Our great universities attract and retain a lot of talent and interest in technologies such as blockchain, IoT and big data. Data analytics and advanced manufacturing technologies will continue to grow as they are fueled by major tech brands funding innovation centers and labs across the city.

From an Integrated Marketing and PR perspective, are there particular strategies that play best to the VC communities and startups in your region? What tips do you have for PR pros?

Wallace: PR pros should try to connect with their counterparts at VCs to identify market needs and understand their local marketplace. Connect with your communication counterparts at the leading investment firms that are shaping the stories and the markets. To get in at the startup level and reach the "next big thing" you need to network and form relationships with the VCs. Become a player in the VC community, not just an observer. And to reach the investment community, we need to talk to VCs in their language through contributed content that 1) establishes the business impact your client can have and 2) spotlights the unseen financial benefits of your solution to investors and customers.

Malleo: VCs in the Bay Area are PR savvy. If you want to win them over, send in your best people to talk to them. They probably have better media relationships than the

best PR agencies. For startups looking to draw attention to their brands from the VC community, dial down the product rhetoric (that's sales' job) and make sure you've got a great story. Every VC and reporter has heard it all before — you're not going to teach them anything new. But you can bring them around to a new way of thinking about your business if you have a solid story. You have to know why you matter to the world, what big problem you're solving.

Blair: It's an exciting time for the Southeast as opportunity is knocking. The majority of companies here are looking for ways to differentiate their products/solutions and compete on a national and global scale. Messaging and product positioning

are paramount as many of these organizations may have never worked with a PR pro before and are looking to build visibility for their brand for the first time. It's important to be aware that you will likely be starting at the ground level. For PR pros looking to break into the Southeast VC community, it all comes down to good old-fashioned networking. The Southeast is made up of tight-knit tech communities that support each other and thrive on two-way collaboration. Dust off those mingling chops and get to know your local tech and VC communities.

Astor: A big opportunity is to attend the wide range of tradeshows that Boston hosts, including the Cloud Foundry Summit, BIO, the *Forbes* Under 30 Summit and INBOUND, to name a few. The greater Boston area is also home to hubs of the major analyst firms, including Gartner and Forrester. There's opportunities to network with these analysts who have their eyes on the trends and companies that are important in the local markets. When looking for opportunities to further establish your clients' brands, our local reporters and influencers know these markets better than anyone and developing relationships with them is critical.

In sum, 2018 is setting up to be an exciting year for investments and growth in the startup industry nationwide. We'll be keeping a close watch on how things shake out and the ones to watch.

Lisa Astor serves as Senior Vice President & Co-Lead of Client Relations at PAN. In this role, she manages client engagement and strategy across the firm's technology and healthcare portfolios. ○



Lisa Astor

The next chapter: considering your post-sale plans

Serious reflection is in order regarding your plans and future options before signing the dotted line on an agency merger or acquisition.

By Art Stevens

Are you planning to sell your agency sometime soon? Have you thought about where you see yourself four years after the ink dries?

With any public relations agency merger or acquisition, there are numerous questions you must ask yourself before signing on the dotted line, including getting smart about your future options.

For example, are there any distinct landing spots with a clear path to advancement for you in the combined entity? You also may wonder how the merger will affect your agency's overall position in the industry and its reputation, as well as its financial standing.

When I sold my agency after many years in the business, I had a very clear vision about what I wanted to do moving forward: I wanted to give something back to the industry that had been so good to me by providing consulting work and facilitating agency acquisitions. My goal was to remain in the PR space, yet serve it in a new, more pertinent capacity.

Keep your eye on the prize

As someone who's worked closely with more than 100 PR agencies over the last 12 years, I encourage any agency owner to carve out time for some serious reflection about what they want to do with the rest of their life following a sale. I believe it is essential to figure out what is really important to you in life, including why you are working so hard in the first place.

I can personally attest that owning and operating a PR agency can be all consuming. And being thrust into the world outside of your agency life following a sale can often lead to culture shock and disorientation if you are unprepared.

Yes, there's life after agency business

Developing a plan that tackles how you want to monetize your business — and factors in your future ambitions — can yield significant dividends, both financially and personally. Of course, the options and combinations vary from one person to the next.

For instance, if you're hoping to make a solid break from the industry, the scenario will obviously require a different exit plan strategy versus someone who simply wants to "slow down" for a few years, gently bow out of the business and remain fairly active in the PR industry.

I've met many CEOs who knew from day one of the sales process that they wanted to get out "while the getting's good." The majority of these owners started the retirement process over the course of the two to three years "burnout" phase following the sale of their agency.

Other executives have different plans they hope to pursue after selling their agency. For example, one head of a firm I sold a few years ago wanted to start a consumer product business with her daughter. Another owner said she'd always dreamed of moving to Israel from New York and eventually followed her path there.

There's also another category of agency sellers: those executives that are in the prime of their lives and want to join forces with an organization that will help them enhance their career, giving them the opportunity to make a quantum leap into a more integral role — on a higher level — within the newly formed entity.

Finally, there's the scenario that I can relate to the most: that it can get very lonely at the top. Some agency owners pursue a merger because they just don't want to work alone anymore (assuming they own 100 percent of the firm).

This circumstance is precisely what happened in my experience as an agency owner. After realizing that I didn't have anyone within my firm on an equal level to make decisions with, I started investigating options to merge with another agency. The rest is history.

Brainstorm your options

There are several things I urge you to consider as you think about your post-sale plans. For starters, learn how to say "no." Just because you want to step back from the business eventually doesn't mean that your appetite to create and contribute to the world of PR has disappeared altogether. If anything, your passions may accelerate once you have time to rest and regroup.

In many cases, after an agency sale, industry peers will line up to share new opportunities and partnership ideas, including board of director positions, industry organizations and more.

I also recommend paying it forward. After taking the time you need to rediscover your personal and professional desires, you may find fulfillment serving as an industry advisor or mentor, or dedicating volunteer

hours to support peers or non-profit organizations.

For those of you who may be considering retirement, as someone who created a "second" career more than eight years ago — and still loving it — I urge you to think twice. Some people believe that retirement will allow them the luxury to sit back and smell the roses. However, after some time has passed, I believe those roses don't want to be smelled. In other words, it's important to realize that retirement may not ultimately resolve all of your quality of life issues.



Art Stevens

As an alternative, I suggest either starting a second career — as I did — or think about re-engaging and dedicating your time to related activities, with a goal of contributing to the perpetuity of the industry.

Go with the flow, but go for what you want

If you're in the process of selling your PR agency, you should start to lay the groundwork for your future life now. Be sure to factor in enough time to allow yourself to slow down in stages so that you can try your hand at different things.

Remember, some people have very concrete reasons as to why they're selling their agency, especially because they have a solid post-sale game plan in place. However, others don't always have all of the answers.

In my case, after my PR agency was acquired and before I started formally consulting, agency owners almost immediately began reaching out to me for tips and advice. They shared their stories, asked me questions and appreciated my advice. It was at that point that I realized I had something to contribute.

The bottom line: by exploring and pursuing your true interests during any transition period or agency sale, you will allow yourself time to figure out your true passions, helping you to ultimately rediscover the greater world around you and your agency.

Art Stevens, APR, Fellow PRSA, is Managing Partner of The Stevens Group consultants to the PR agency profession, focusing on mergers, acquisitions and management consulting. ○

5G: are we asking the right questions?

Advances in 5G technologies could alter the very fabric of innovation, yet a significant distance remains between the hype surrounding 5G and the technical, financial and political challenges facing the technology.

By Peter Prodromou and RJ Bardsley

The promise of 5G is bright: it offers a host of possibilities for the world in everything from medicine to autonomous vehicles to entertainment. Indeed, it's the talk of the technology world these days. So far in 2018, both major industry trade shows — CES and MWC — highlighted a number of advances in 5G technologies. It seemed you could hardly move without bumping into a sign regarding the latest promise of unfettered access and a super-fast IoT. In the U.S., AT&T and Verizon have both announced the rollout of 5G networks in 2018, and while they haven't given specifics around speeds, they have likened performance to wired networks and promised vast improvements over 4G LTE products.

A cloudy horizon

So, what will life on 5G be like? Greater speeds and greater bandwidth mean that things like remote medical operations will be possible; instant super-high-def entertainment will be an everyday occurrence; fully functioning driverless cars and maybe even aircraft will be the norm. It also opens up the door for a host of less dramatic but still impressive feats: massive enhancements to the Internet of Things that will result in new levels of connectivity. But perhaps the true promise of 5G is how it could change the very fabric of innovation. The increase in speed and bandwidth that 5G brings is so critical that it has the potential to alter the way we design everything from apps to networks to operating rooms.

To provide some context for 5G speeds, the average internet speed in the U.S. today is 6.5 megabytes per second. At MWC last year, Samsung showed off a new 5G router with speeds of 500 megabytes per second (4 gigabits per second). This is the equivalent of moving from an economy driven by horses and steam engines to one driven by internal combustion and jet engines. At the turn of the last century, we lived in a world designed around horses; everything from public space to grocery lists changed with the move into advanced modes of transportation. It's not impossible to comprehend the scale of potential change, but it is a little challenging to imagine exactly what new things will come to pass in a world of innovation powered by 5G.

The clouds

However, there's a significant distance between hype and reality around 5G today. As Semiconductor Engineering EIC, Ed Sperling recently wrote, "5G is coming, but not everywhere and not all at once, and not the fastest version of this technology right away." While the 5G promise is out there and the commitments from giants like Huawei, AT&T, and Verizon are solid evidence that a 5G world will come to pass, there are still several challenges that need to be solved before it becomes a reality.

Technical challenges start with reception issues. 5G signals run at high frequency, which means that trees, shrubs, buildings, cars, even people can disrupt the signal. This leads to the need for a larger physical footprint for base stations, repeaters and small cells to establish reliable access. It also means that the rollout will take a lot longer and require more investment than previous 3G and 4G LTE rollouts.

The need for backward compatibility and the ability to process much more data at faster speeds also requires close collaboration between a variety of segments in the technology industry, from networks to chip makers to device manufacturers.

Even at the device level, 5G technology is still coming into its own. Issues from antenna efficacy to battery drain pose new challenges for device makers. The handoff from older networks to newer ones will have to be seamless, and the 20-plus hour battery life that consumers have come to expect must remain table stakes in the mobile market.

Finally, at the political level, different countries are vying to own 5G in ways that we didn't see in earlier network evolutions, at least not so publicly. The truth about 5G is its development relies on a global ecosystem of partners. If governments implement protectionist policies to help boost a single country's advantage in 5G, it's likely that the exact opposite will happen.

Dreaming about what's next

The technical, financial and political problems will be solved by different camps. What remains after those solutions are found is the biggest challenge of all: how to reinvent the way we dream. There are better words than "dreaming." After all, dreaming

is something for children and poets, not telcos and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs. Or is it? 5G will change our world: it will bring the IoT, mobility, the auto industry, medicine, education and AI forward in new and fantastic ways. What's left for people to do is to reimagine what we can invent and how we can apply this to less agnostic challenges we face today. For instance, how will we use 5G technology to solve poverty? How will we use it to improve privacy? Safeguard human rights? Secure IP? Prevent theft? Ensure personal freedoms?

We're not sure about you, but we don't read a lot of these issues when we read about 5G. Perhaps that's really where we're falling down. Don't get us wrong, we're excited about the prospect of downloading a high-def movie in less than a minute, but if we're truly looking at the horizon of a new technology this big and this far-reaching, shouldn't we be thinking of solving more than the technical challenges of today?

Peter Prodromou is President and CEO of Racepoint Global and RJ Bardsley is Chief Strategist, Global Tech Practice at Racepoint Global. ○



Peter Prodromou



RJ Bardsley

PR news brief

Finsbury works Takeda's sweetened bid for Shire

Finsbury is handling Takeda Pharmaceuticals' fifth bid for rare drug specialist Shire PLC of Dublin.

If successful, the sweetened \$60 billion cash/stock offer would mark the largest-ever Japanese acquisition of a western firm and propel Takeda into the top-ranks of global drug companies.

Takeda notes the improved bid represents a 58 percent premium over the closing price of Shire shares on March 23, the day before rumors surfaced about a takeover bid.

It said that completion of the deal would give Shire shareholders "a very meaningful stake in a leading global biopharmaceutical company" and benefits from the synergies flowing from the deal.

Shire is considering Takeda's latest bid.

Finsbury's London team of James Murgatroyd Rollo Head and Anjali Unnikrishnan are working the Takeda bid with Kal Goldberg and Chris Ryall in New York.



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– Kenneth H. Blanchard, Author

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How agencies can ride the continuing tech wave

With consumers, products and services transforming at lightning speed, PR professionals must adapt to new ways of addressing audiences as well as understand the brave new world that the tech marketplace has become.

By Steve Barnes

In today's world, the tech sector encompasses much more than just technology, making it both a daunting challenge and a big opportunity for PR professionals working with tech-based companies and clients. From self-driving cars to currency that only exists in the digital space, technological developments are changing both what consumers buy and the methods they use to buy it. They are also transforming the political and personal arenas, resulting in consumers who are every bit as changed as the products and services they use.

"Activity across a number of areas has fueled tech sector growth," said Bo Park, who leads the tech, media and telecom practice at ICR. "We've seen an explosion of blockchain and cryptocurrency that is still coming into focus, while areas such as food delivery and 'last-mile' delivery have matured to the extent that they are spurring sub-sectors supporting them." Park also sees the increasing globalization that e-commerce has made possible as a pivotal development in the sector.

But the changed consumer, as well as the changing rules for communicating with that consumer, is also a force to be reckoned with. "Technology is moving from learning to lifestyle," said W2O Chief Innovation Officer and Vice Chairman Bob Pearson. "In communications, we can speak directly with a brand's customers and influencers, shaping their ecosystem via new digital techniques, insights-driven analytics, strong listening tools and compelling stories." As a result, he adds, "there has never been a better time to align the desires of an audience with a brand's benefits and purpose."

Helping tech companies tell their stories and make productive connections with audiences requires a more complex understanding of how consumers form opinions and make decisions. "We are moving from a Coverage model (traditional media) to an Influencer model," Pearson said. "This new model shifts the power of opinion formation to those who are actively engaged in social and digital."

Because of that, agencies must be able to hit the ground running when it comes to the digital sphere. "No one has time to micromanage or second guess their PR partner," said Highwire principal Carol Carrubba. According to Carrubba, agencies must work fast to gain the trust of tech partners. "Perhaps because of the complexity of subject matter, the pace of innovation and the extremely competitive market," she said, "technology clients consistently look for expertise, experience and a sense of personal accountability when picking a PR partner."

Park also noted the "lightning pace" of the tech sector, and the unique communications practices which that pace makes necessary. "Making these programs effective means firms must bring a deep understanding and 360-degree view of where their clients stand in the corporate lifecycle and what their primary pain points are."

Park said the level of speed at which the tech market operates means that not only is there a constant level of change in the products and services being offered by clients, there's also a shifting definition of who is a tech client and who is not. "One of the more remarkable trends that has and will continue to have a major impact on the tech sector is established companies wanting to reinvent themselves as tech companies."

Heather Kernahan, Hotwire's President of North America, also sees that process of reinvention at work. "Markets like retail,

healthcare and construction — areas that have historically been slower to evolve — are now embracing innovation," she said.

The widening scope of what it means to be tech company should result in a steady wave of growth for the sector, according to W2O's Pearson. "Our definition of technology will continue to evolve and drive every industry," he said. "The tech sector should drive growth for the entire economy."

So, if the tech sector is entering a solid wave of growth, what are the best methods firms can use to help tech clients get out that message? What are the best channels to use to make that connection with consumers?

"It may be far from an original statement, but any one-size-fits-all standardized approach to communications is rarely a recipe for success," ICR's Park said. "With that in mind, there are no best or worst communications channels for tech companies."

Tailoring the communications channel to the desired audience becomes even more pivotal in a digitally connected world. "If you're aiming to connect with a 'deskless' audience," she said, "then traditional media may not make sense as your primary communications channel." On the other hand, she notes that for audiences such as institutional investors, relying on channels like social media is likely not the way to go.

Hotwire's Kernahan also said that the increasing number of communications channels makes the one size fits all approach increasingly a thing of the past. "Everything is now integrated," she said, "and it often begins with earned media, which is then supported by paid, shared and owned. The brands seeing the most success understand this and are able to utilize each of these elements to establish authority, extend their reach and educate prospects."

Pearson said that the increasing complexity and number of channels is throwing attention back on the human factor present in all communication. "The new channel is a network of humans who determine the relevance and importance of your brand



Bob Pearson



Carol Carrubba



Bo Park



Heather Kernahan



O'Dwyer's technology PR rankings, pg. 26

Continued on page 37

Agencies shouldn't just talk diversity, they should act

PR companies that continue debating the role diversity plays in their organization may ultimately find themselves playing catch up with the rest of the industry.

By Aerial Ellis and Rick Gould

Efforts to bolster diversity throughout the PR industry have begun to accelerate.

In February, the Public Relations and Communications Association — Europe's equivalent to the Public Relations Society of America — launched its Diversity and Inclusion Guidelines.

The guidelines were developed in response to the PRCA's commitment to improve diversity within the UK industry, after its 2016 PR Census showed that the industry is still 91 percent white and 83 percent British.

Agencies are stepping up to the plate as well. London-based Dynamo PR, for example, recently debuted what it calls the PR industry's first "blind recruitment scheme," deleting name, education and gender requirements from job applications in a bid to end bias and boost diversity, according to *PR Week*.

These types of programs must proliferate. The future of the PR profession depends on it. Just take a look at U.S. population projections, per the Pew Research Center, showing profound changes in the country's demographics.

The time for chatter regarding diversity is past, and companies that continue to debate diversity may ultimately find themselves playing catch up.

The Ketchum-Fast Company survey of 500 creative professionals released last summer uncovered an important dichotomy: Respondents believe diversity of thought is valued by their organization (72 percent), yet an overwhelming majority think their organization still needs to do more to encourage diversity of ideas (85 percent).

In order to truly build a more diverse industry, PR firm owners and C-level executives must get out of their comfort zone, which tends to hover near Caucasians with degrees in PR, marketing or communications.

Rather, PR managers and C-level executives have to create their own bridges to encourage blacks, Latinos, and Asians to join the industry; and not just people possessing PR and media savvy but folks who are adroit at videographer, digital analytics, paid media and other skill sets that are becoming core to PR services.

Diversity, of course, is good for business,

and helps to create new revenue opportunities that might not otherwise be available.

However, in order to create those opportunities, PR agencies must commit to providing the resources to ensure diversity is baked into the firm's business operation, from hiring to retention to promotion.

With that in mind, here are three ways PR firm owners and C-level execs can make diversity part of the company's overall business strategy. Stick-to-itiveness is key.

Budget for training programs

PR pros rarely receive the education needed to navigate the issues related to diversity and inclusion. PR firm owners must budget for training, whether in-house or outsourcing. Before starting any diversity training initiative PR firm owners and C-level execs must decide how they are going to measure the program(s). The goal of these programs is so agencies learn the cultural nuances of audiences and employees who come from nontraditional backgrounds and bring a different frame of reference to the table. PR firms have made adequate investments in time and money so that all their employees understand the historical, theoretical and societal issues related to diversity and inclusion. Resources are available via the PRSA, Institute of Public Relations, PR Council and The Plank Center for Public Relations, among others.

Recruit with a multicultural mindset

As demand for more diverse firms grows among clients and prospects, firm owners must create an inclusive work environment that attracts, develops and retains talent from diverse backgrounds. It's crucial that PR firms and corporate communications departments reflect the audiences and communities they serve. To ensure a more diverse pipeline of talent, agency owners should connect with historically black colleges and universities as well as schools with emerging-majority populations. Firms can align with these institutions via sponsorships and/or participation in student-focused events, for example. Diversity and inclusion is much more effective when PR firm owners recognize the value of multicultural employees; go beyond stereotypes of race, age and gender; and avoid putting a person in a box based on his or her identity.

Partner with diversity advocates

Senior PR execs must actively build partnerships that promote a deeper understanding between the PR industry and diverse publics. In order to tap into the needs of a multicultural consumer base, C-level execs must align with membership organizations that serve specific cultural groups and advocate for diversity. These groups include chambers of commerce, Small Business Development Centers and civic organizations. PR firm owners can help to create networks of colleagues from various backgrounds, scout smaller minority-owned agencies to assist with projects, and ask for referrals among these various groups. Agency leaders also can host client roundtables periodically as a way to cultivate diverse partnerships, build new alliances and share what's working (and what's not).

Of course, there are other types of diversity initiatives. Much depends on the firm's culture and the level of resources allotted. The larger takeaway is that owners must start to put these programs in place and let them evolve. Otherwise, buyers will start to look upon PR firms as antiquated.

Aerial Ellis is Managing Principal of Advisory 83, a communication consultancy specializing in strategic planning and diversity/inclusion. She is the author of "The Original Millennial" and PR professor in the department of communications and journalism at Lipscomb University.

Rick Gould, CPA, J.D., is Managing Partner of Gould+Partners, a management consulting firm specializing in creative services firms and M&A. He is the author of "Doing It The Right Way: 13 Crucial Steps For A Successful PR Agency Merger or Acquisition," and "The Ultimate PR Agency Financial Management Handbook: How To Manage By The Numbers For Breakthrough Profitability Of 20% Or Greater" (4th Edition). ○



Aerial Ellis



Rick Gould

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN TECHNOLOGY

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Firm	2017 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$259,839,000	36. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	\$1,348,738
2. Hotwire, New York, NY	33,249,507	37. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	1,300,000
3. Finn Partners, New York, NY	26,420,000	38. 360PR+, Boston, MA	1,251,553
4. W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	20,037,000	39. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	1,035,000
5. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	19,348,817	40. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	955,179
6. ICR, New York, NY	17,168,965	41. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	922,953
7. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	17,019,030	42. Greenough, Boston, MA	869,432
8. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	15,080,445	43. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	830,000
9. Spark, San Francisco, CA	13,000,000	44. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	801,411
10. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	12,875,000	45. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	631,620
11. The Hoffman Agency, San Jose, CA	12,719,000	46. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	527,620
12. Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	12,447,340	47. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	500,151
13. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	11,440,000	48. Dale Curtis Communications LLC, Washington, DC	481,363
14. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	11,196,700	49. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	375,015
15. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	10,365,568	50. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	305,199
16. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH	9,613,606	51. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	300,000
17. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	8,932,702	52. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	273,000
18. Walker Sands Communications, Chicago, IL	8,678,584	53. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	234,459
19. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	7,295,844	54. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	229,245
20. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	5,700,000	55. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	212,000
21. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	4,474,331	56. The Hodges Partnership, Richmond, VA	204,000
22. March Communications, Boston, MA	4,077,235	57. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	195,727
23. Peppercomm, New York, NY	4,064,635	58. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	192,602
24. McNeely Pigott & Fox PR, Nashville, TN	4,034,810	59. The Power Group, The, Dallas, TX	166,726
25. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	4,016,802	60. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	156,000
26. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	3,964,357	61. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	144,322
27. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,205,075	62. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	100,000
28. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,500,000	63. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	96,483
29. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	2,410,195	64. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	91,435
30. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	2,173,034	65. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	91,322
31. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	2,016,260	66. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	62,000
32. Lambert, Edwards & Assoc., Grand Rapids, MI	1,605,000	67. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	60,827
33. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	1,576,984	68. LANE, Portland, OR	32,783
34. Hunter PR, New York, NY	1,500,000	69. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	20,000
35. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,400,882		



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Volatile markets, social purpose test financial firms

Financial PR firms faced a watershed year in 2017 as clients were impacted by extreme market volatility, corporate tax cuts, threatened trade war with China, cyber-threats, increased stakeholder activism, deregulation and the growing demand to highlight corporate social responsibility.

By Kevin McCauley

President Trump's willingness to use his Twitter platform to criticize individual companies added another challenge for financial PR firms. Amazon, for instance, lost billions in market valuation following a Presidential tweetstorm.

Richard Dukas, Chief of Dukas Linden Public Relations, told *O'Dwyer's* his firm put a strong focus on financial broadcast news to help clients gain visibility in a media landscape increasingly crowded by 24/7 Trump reports.

The New York-based firm, which generated \$5.2 million in financial fee income, arranged guest hosting segments for clients on business programs such as CNBC's "Squawk Box" and "Closing Bell," Fox Business Network's "Mornings with Maria" and PBS' "Nightly Business Report."

During 2017, DLPR got more than 600 broadcast interviews for clients, primarily on CNBC, Bloomberg and Fox.

Dukas said his firm's knowledge of investment trends also drove market-moving media placements.



Richard Dukas

At a time of investor activism, DLPR showcased campaigns by activist short-sellers Muddy Waters Research and Spruce Point to uncover corporate wrongdoing.

The firm presented Okapi Partners, a top proxy solicitor for companies and investors, in activist situations.

As the financial world continues to debate "passive versus active" investment strategies, DLPR raised the visibility of ETF investors such as Global X Funds and ARK Invest.

Looking ahead, Dukas said renewed equity market volatility may increase investment in non-correlated assets such as real estate, private equity and hedge funds, causing alternative investment firms to seek PR assistance.

He noted that financial services firms are showing more interest in digital communications, although they remain cautious about using tools such as LinkedIn, HubSpot, Twitter, etc. due to compliance issues.

Crisis communications will take center stage, as companies seek to develop "what if" plans to address cyber-threats, #MeToo issues, regulatory shifts and volatile markets.

"Given the information overload from

social media, tweets, blogs and 24/7 news, management must do a better job of positioning — with clear and compelling messages that convey a company's distinctive value proposition," Dukas said. "In this context, DLPR believes earned media remains a highly influential and effective channel and should have a prominent role alongside the newer trend of 'content creation' campaigns."

Developing social purpose

Corporate boards will look back on 2017 as a time when managing reputational risk became significantly more challenging, said Bill McBride, Senior Advisor at RF|Binder Partners, which registered \$4.6 million in financial fees.

"After spending 2017 dodging Presidential Twitter darts, corporate boards entered 2018 with a warning from the biggest global asset



Bill McBride

managers — the titans of index investing — to expect more intense scrutiny of the social impact of their business models," said McBride. "Adding to the pressure was new research refining the concepts of the 'materiality' of environment, social, and governance factors in corporate performance, tightening the connection between social impact and company valuations."

He noted that the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School thrust weapon manufacturers, retailers, logistics companies and financial service companies into the center of a public debate on gun violence, one of society's most contentious issues.

"In the wake of Stoneman, the surge of

such Twitter hashtags as '#BoycottDelta' or 'BoycottNRA' underscored how quickly public opinion forms and surges — and also can fade — in the era of social media," said McBride. "This volatility can have significant effects on the perceptions and behavior of customers, employees, shareholders, distributors, regulators and the legal community."

Data from RF|Binder's whitepaper, "Navigating Risk in the Age of Corporate Purpose," shows that boards will not easily sidestep the public's increasing tendency to see corporate behavior through the lens of social impact.

More than three quarters of respondents said they either "strongly support" or "somewhat support" companies taking a stance on increased access to health care or on environmental sustainability.

Seventy percent "strongly support" or "somewhat support" companies that adopt a position on gender equality.

"In this volatile, fractious communications environment, corporate clients are coming to understand the importance of developing 'purpose' as the touchstone for all their internal and external relationships," said McBride. "Successful companies in this new era of hyper-connectivity will be those who develop an authentic, purpose-driven approach to communicating the value of their organization."

Consider entire value chain

Luke Lambert, CEO of G&S Business Communications, said his firm's approach to financial communications is based on a modern definition of business value as measured by the three R's: Reputation, Risk and Return.

The goal is to add greater dimensions to client strategies by providing data-driven insights that differentiate a company's financial performance or investments.

"In today's hyper-connected, hyper-competitive marketplace, our goal is to identify meaningful advantages for clients by considering their entire value chain," said Lambert. "Because our agency's business communicators bring in-depth knowledge



Luke Lambert



O'Dwyer's financial PR rankings, pg. 30

— Continued on page 34

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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN FINANCE

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Firm	2017 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$78,688,000	24. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	\$842,000
2. ICR, New York, NY	39,918,042	25. 360PR+, Boston, MA	834,369
3. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	36,039,367	26. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	816,632
4. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	11,996,400	27. LANE, Portland, OR	813,344
5. Peppercomm, New York, NY	7,070,280	28. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	808,019
6. Vested, New York, NY	6,171,277	29. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	772,229
7. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	5,374,600	30. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	740,832
8. Dukas Linden Public Relations, New York, NY	5,288,592	31. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	704,800
9. RF Binder Partners, New York, NY	4,600,000	32. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	424,302
10. Intermarket Communications, New York, NY	4,050,000	33. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	375,000
11. Bliss Integrated Communication, New York, NY	3,682,000	34. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	250,445
12. BackBay Communications, Boston, MA	2,798,142	35. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	222,082
13. Lambert, Edwards & Assoc., Grand Rapids, MI	2,650,000	36. McNeely Pigott & Fox PR, Nashville, TN	221,104
14. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	2,410,000	37. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	200,000
15. Finn Partners, New York, NY	2,100,000	38. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	187,610
16. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	1,548,175	39. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	176,000
17. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	1,400,000	40. Hunter PR, New York, NY	100,000
18. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,268,889	41. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	95,309
19. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	1,204,306	42. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	81,333
20. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	1,067,888	43. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	50,000
21. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	1,023,041	44. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	35,075
22. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	1,009,797	45. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	28,655
23. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	937,624	46. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	19,000



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Healthcare PR thrives amid historic disruption

Shifts in the policy and technological landscapes have ushered in big changes and bigger challenges for communicators working in today's healthcare sector.

By Jon Gingerich

Healthcare is a multi-trillion-dollar industry. The organizations and companies inside this ecosystem are invested in solving some of the world's most complex issues, and this landscape is being upended by historic changes, among them myriad policy and technological developments affecting the industry both externally and internally.

Coinciding with this disruption is the notion that today's healthcare industry is also breaking down virtually every silo we've known. Healthcare clients want to leave a legacy of meaningful change; they demand unique experiences from communications pros who understand today's commercial, healthcare, public policy and patient advocacy environments and can help them solve complex challenges while delivering results they can't find at other agencies.

In the middle of this are the 68 firms boasting major healthcare operations in *O'Dwyer's* 2018 rankings of PR firms, all of whom have undoubtedly learned that innovation and integration are paramount for success in this competitive, constantly changing environment.

Global health consultancy and communications agency Health Unlimited was ranked #4 in healthcare by *O'Dwyer's*, taking in nearly \$26 million in healthcare-related net fees in 2017.

Health Unlimited was founded when U.S. agencies Cooney Waters Unlimited and Corkery Group Unlimited, as well as UK consultancies Red Door Unlimited, Rock Unlimited, Looped Unlimited, DJM-PAN Unlimited and Search Unlimited, formally united in a bid to deliver a wide array of client solutions across varying health-related disciplines.

Global CEO Timothy Bird said clients have more choice nowadays, and as a result, the healthcare PR industry needs to compete harder for new clients and work more diligently for existing ones. More and more of today's clients want a full-service agency under one roof and one P&L that provides efficiencies beyond the mere financial benefits; they want teams with nuanced perspectives and multi-disciplinary experience they can rely on to deliver results and succeed.

"Talent engagement, retention and recruitment remains key," Bird said. "Our success depends not just on our ability to recruit experienced healthcare specialists from diverse backgrounds in science, medi-

cine, law, and public health but also inclusive of the audiences we and our clients seek to reach with health messages — people from differing cultural and ethnic backgrounds and experiences who bring perspectives, fresh new thinking and creative ideas."

Already, the newly-minted agency has signed a portfolio of new clients, including opioid addiction treatment specialist Indivior, Sickle Cell Disease therapeutics company Global Blood Therapeutics, women's reproductive research and policy organization Guttmacher Institute and autism research specialist SPARK.

Bird said client satisfaction remains high because the agency makes it easy for them to get an agile PR-led team of specialists who can demonstrate ROI and deliver results vital to improving and saving lives.

"It is a key focus for us as a health-specialist agency," Bird said. "Our clients cannot continue to make investments in delivering new treatments, improvements

to existing approaches and public health interventions without seeing measurable improvements in health outcomes. We take that responsibility very seriously."

Spectrum, the D.C.-based health, life sciences and consumer PR firm, accounted for \$24 million in healthcare-related net fees in 2017, ranking #5 for healthcare PR in *O'Dwyer's* rankings this year.

Spectrum President and CEO Jonathan Wilson told *O'Dwyer's* that a crucial part

of the agency's strategic growth comes down to its staff, and fostering an environment that inspires employees to make a difference in the lives of patients and caregivers while meeting the needs of its health and science clients.

"This philosophy has attracted a team of experienced, passionate and focused communications leaders who, in turn, inspire all our teams to champion client needs," Wilson said. "Combined with the flexibility of being independent and our integrated model, teams are empowered to focus on exceeding expectations in their work to improve the health landscape."

Wilson also noted that while "innovation" has become a buzzword, there's no denying it's needed in every facet of today's healthcare industry.

"While a perceived inertia amongst industry outsiders has driven them to engage to try accelerating healthcare innovation, ultimately, the industry still plays a large role in driving progress in all areas from drug development to caregiver support," Wilson said. "To keep innovation coming, pharma needs to look both within and to external players in order to inspire continuous, meaningful innovation — and, as health communicators, it's part of our job to assist."

Healthcare specialist Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Inc. accounted for \$9.8 million in healthcare net fees in 2017, ranking #9 in *O'Dwyer's* rankings of healthcare PR firms this year.

David Jarrard, President and CEO of the Nashville-based agency, believes healthcare will continue to outpace many other communications sectors this year and beyond as the healthcare landscape is roiled by internal change as well as a new breed of external competitors such as Amazon, CVS and WalMart.

Jarrard also believes that PR agencies known for their strong data analytics will



Jonathan Wilson



Timothy Bird



David Jarrard



O'Dwyer's healthcare PR rankings, pg. 36

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Healthcare roundup

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prove highly competitive in the coming year.

“In the big picture, the ongoing convergence of siloed communication practices — public relations, marketing, content management — will continue to reshape the expectations of our clients and, ultimately, our industry,” Jarrard told *O’Dwyer’s*.

Healthcare agency Lazar Partners was #15 this year, boasting nearly \$5.4 million in healthcare-related net fees.

Founder and CEO Fern Lazar said the agency experienced growth from all healthcare segments last year, and the New York-based shop’s expertise in medical technology, scientific communications and patient-to-patient communications were what especially drove the bulk of its revenue in 2017.



Fern Lazar

Financial roundup

— Continued from page 28

about heavily regulated industries, such as agriculture and food, clean energy and financial services, corporate clients also rely on us to advise their strategic investment units.

“These investment arms of global companies are uncovering some of the most exciting growth opportunities, many in emerging business areas that seek to solve the world’s toughest challenges, such as food security and climate change.

“Our guidance and programs support these portfolio companies as they achieve scale, seek new routes to market, or encounter pressure from competitors, regulators, legislators or suppliers,” said Lambert.

G&S, which had \$1.2 million in financial income, counsels corporate issuers on how to provide a more complete picture of their material value to shareholders. “Our sustainability experts and analysts work closely with CFOs and CCOs to develop integrated financial reports that disclose risk and returns in terms of environmental, social and governance factors,” said Lambert. “Lack of transparency will be no longer tolerated as major investment companies and fund managers call for spe-



Martin Mosbacher

Lazar said the healthcare industry can expect to see dramatic changes in the coming years as scientific breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence, machine learning and diagnostic innovation transform data into knowledge, allowing clinicians to deliver personalized, precision care to patients in a bid to improve outcomes.

“Such transformation underscores the need for communications practitioners to deliver original, informative content that catalyzes action from healthcare stakeholders,” Lazar said. “We must also recognize the advantages of an integrated approach to our marketing as new channels that reach doctors, patients and caregivers emerge.”

New York-based shop Bliss Integrated Communication skyrocketed in *O’Dwyer’s* healthcare rankings this year, moving from #39 in 2017 with \$866,000 in healthcare-related net fees to take the #29 position this year with \$1,848,000 in healthcare-related earnings, representing a gain of 113 percent.

Bliss’ healthcare group, which was formed only five years ago, brought in some impressive healthcare account wins in 2017, including Aetna, adding to an already impres-

sive roster of clients that includes Gore Medical, TransCelerate, Procure and the American Geriatric Society.

Strengthening social capabilities

Martin Mosbacher, CEO of Intermarket, said his firm used 2017 to evolve from its focus on the intersection of finance and technology.

“After a few sluggish years, Intermarket, rebounded last year with the addition of Overstock.com’s tZero unit, blockchain/crypto-currency, BioCatch (cybersecurity) and Aperion Investment Partners (London-based venture capital group).

On the more traditional front, Intermarket, which generated 2017 financial fees of \$4 million, began work with AST (shareholder ownership services provider) and New Frontier Advisors (institutional research and investment advisory firm).

Intermarket renewed ties with NASDAQ, expanded business with RBC Wealth Management and formalized a longstanding relationship with the University of Chicago Booth School of Business as the school’s PR agency.

In addition to client work, Intermarket placed a new emphasis on expanding its content development and social media teams,” said Mosbacher. “Utilizing the PESO model we are able to provide our clients with 360 degree communications advice, strategy development and service.”

He said the firm is “developing new modes of content development and placement and expecting to make some significant addi-

tions to our client roster and capacity in 2018.”

Intermarket chalked up \$4.1 million in financial income.

Countering fake news

Peppercomm worked with the Institute for Public Relations in 2017 to study the challenges faced by CCOs and CMOs in the business work, said Jacqueline Kolek, Managing Director of the firm with \$7.1 million in financial income.

The first study found respondents were concerned about the uncertainty of the Trump Administration’s communications policies and were increasing efforts to be better prepared to respond (or not respond) if the Administration does something that affects their organization.

Kolek said the second study dealt with how communicators were reacting to the rapid evolution of digital and data and found that while most agreed that implementing digital and data is critical to their success, they are struggling with how to describe and deploy these technologies.

She said Peppercomm’s 2018 priorities include helping clients prepare for and navigate potential issues and crisis situations in today’s highly-politicized, fake news environment and to communicate their corporate purpose to align themselves with organizations that share their values. ●



Michael Roth



Jacqueline Kolek



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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN HEALTHCARE

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Firm	2017 Net Fees
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$157,315,000	35. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	\$1,164,089
2. W2O Group , San Francisco, CA	124,263,000	36. CooperKatz & Co. , New York, NY	1,135,475
3. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	27,523,600	37. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	1,104,841
4. Health Unlimited , New York, NY	25,890,471	38. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	1,004,850
5. Spectrum , Washington, DC	24,000,000	39. Landis Communications , San Francisco, CA	865,000
6. Finn Partners , New York, NY	17,251,000	40. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	828,150
7. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	13,987,802	41. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	800,000
8. Tonic Life Communications , Philadelphia, PA	12,000,000	42. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	711,639
9. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock , Brentwood, TN	9,866,079	43. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	675,000
10. KYNE , New York, NY	9,696,497	44. Bellmont Partners , Minneapolis, MN	656,392
11. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	9,300,000	45. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	612,500
12. JPA Health Communications , Washington, DC	9,182,471	46. Rosica Communications , Paramus, NJ	601,604
13. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	6,425,767	47. Singer Associates, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	582,971
14. IMRE, LLC , Baltimore, MD	5,950,000	48. North 6th Agency, Inc. , New York, NY	481,431
15. Lazar Partners , New York, NY	5,393,183	49. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	479,100
16. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	4,400,000	50. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	432,033
17. MCS Healthcare PR , Bedminster, NJ	3,823,501	51. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	401,839
18. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	3,395,186	52. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	387,500
19. Matter Communications , Newburyport, MA	2,887,874	53. WordWrite Communications LLC , Pittsburgh, PA	335,422
20. Hunter PR , New York, NY	2,750,000	54. Maccabee , Minneapolis, MN	297,376
21. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	2,661,255	55. Verasolve , Potomac, MD	217,000
22. Lovell Communications , Nashville, TN	2,573,953	56. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	182,647
23. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	2,476,977	57. Perry Communications Group , Sacramento, CA	168,822
24. Greenough , Boston, MA	2,348,055	58. BoardroomPR , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	150,000
25. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	2,196,332	59. The Power Group , Dallas, TX	129,713
26. LaVoie Health Science , Boston, MA	2,117,940	60. LANE , Portland, OR	117,668
27. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	2,085,947	61. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	99,558
28. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	2,033,710	62. Schneider Associates , Boston, MA	97,328
29. Bliss Integrated Communication , New York, NY	1,848,000	63. Weiss PR, Inc. , Baltimore, MD	85,967
30. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	1,480,794	64. Fish Consulting , Hollywood, FL	80,000
31. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	1,399,483	65. The Buzz Agency , Delray Beach, FL	68,300
32. Merryman Comms., Inc. , Redondo Beach, CA	1,229,868	66. BLAZE , Santa Monica, CA	57,781
33. McNeely Pigott & Fox PR , Nashville, TN	1,213,137	67. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	41,000
34. Lambert, Edwards & Assoc. , Grand Rapids, MI	1,188,000	68. Hollywood Agency , Hingham, MA	4,200

Why subscription-based news is the future

A growing distrust in clickbait headlines and the corrosive atmosphere of fake news is sending the public fleeing digital news sources and returning to subscription-based media properties that offer quality reporting and great storytelling.

By Todd Barrish

Despite what you may have heard about the “failing *New York Times*,” the newspaper had a bang-up year in 2017. Digital-only subscriptions to the *Times* jumped 46 percent in 2017 and overall subscription revenue eclipsed \$1 billion for the year. In fiscal 2017, meanwhile, the *Wall Street Journal* added 300,000 digital subscriptions.

On the other hand, we’ve seen the public perception of some newer media properties slide. A University of Missouri survey of consumers last year found that Occupy Democrats, BuzzFeed and Breitbart were the least-trusted news sources. Atop the list of the most-trusted was *The Economist*, whose subscriptions rose 30.8 percent in 2015. *The Economist* is on a mission to double its circulation profits by 2020.

What we’re seeing is a flight to quality. Facebook’s latest “friends and family” algorithm tweak has watered down the effect of clickbait headlines. Though there’s still a market for such fare on Google News, Google itself has recently announced a \$300 million commitment to support quality news outlets. That initiative includes Subscribe With Google, a feature that will let readers subscribe to news sources via their Google accounts. Welcome back to the age of subscription-based news.

Back to the future

The earliest American newspapers were subscription based because they were outgrowths of political parties. But mass print-

ing technology after the Civil War prompted the rise of cheap newspapers distributed in the cash-and-carry method by paper boys.

In this environment, the most sensationalistic headlines sold the most papers. Truth was irrelevant, because the idea was to win the day’s sales. Such yellow journalism led to the Spanish American War. In the 1890s, the Adolph Ochs-led *New York Times* countered the spread of yellow journalism by promoting his paper as the opposite: a sober publication that emphasized truth over sensationalism.



Sound familiar? The digital equivalent of shouting newsboys is the flurry of clickbait headlines on Facebook and Google. But now Facebook has choked off the supply and Google is at least taking steps to weed out fake news and promote the idea of subscriptions rather than impression-based news sources.

Great story, but is it true?

Once again, our news sources appear to be party-run, if not in name then in spirit. Democrats don’t trust Fox News and Republicans don’t trust MSNBC. In truth, most of us understand that both outfits tend to present a biased interpretation of events rather than objectivity.

One offshoot of the fake news crisis is that there’s more skepticism for unknown news brands. While the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* make mistakes, people tend to realize that stories from both are much more likely to be true. But people are now less willing to give the benefit of the doubt to stories from news organizations they don’t recognize. In 2015, you might have seen a headline in your news feed from an obscure source and thought “great story.” In 2018, the default is “Great story. But is it true?”

We’re wiser than we were a few years ago. Most of us no longer take any web-based news at face value unless it’s attached to a brand we trust. This, of course, tilts the advantage to incumbents, but newcomers can make their mark with accurate reporting and great storytelling that’s uninfluenced by click-through and share rates. The good news is that we’re working towards a baseline of truth that will curtail the corrosive atmosphere of fake news. The bad news is, if you want that truth, you’re going to have to pay for it.

Todd Barrish is Founder and President of Indicate Media in New York. ○



Todd Barrish

Tech roundup

— Continued from page 37

and its story,” he said. “If you know which humans matter for a brand, you can figure out the rest.”

And, as is the case with all human interaction, the level of trust is of ever-growing importance in developing relations between companies and clients. “It is imperative that the agency wins the confidence of the tech client by always bringing new ideas, having a back-up plan to the back-up plan and delivering results,” Highwire’s Carrubba said.

With the bad rap that digital communications are getting in the wake of the controversies surrounding Facebook, Google and Cambridge Analytica, ensuring the security of information, as well as trust, is a must for

firms looking to work with clients in the tech sector.

But Pearson believes that the current controversies may also point the way to positive new strategies. “We believe the recent Facebook questions relate to a larger trend,” he said. “Data is on a path to freedom. As we become stewards of our own ‘me-nome,’ we will be able to aggregate the variety of data streams that we all create during an average day from our bodies, cars, phones, devices and more. It is time for personal clouds to have their place in society.”

Park sees the importance of trust as just one of the forces shaping the future of the tech space and the role PR can play in that space. “Looking ahead,” she said, “there are a few trends that will be interesting to watch — such as digital advertising’s quest for ac-

countability and the impact that process will have on the space. Additionally, tech companies’ approaches to raising capital appear to be evolving.”

What will almost certainly remain the same, however, is the need for firms to conceive of communications that anticipate the desires of audiences, as well as the crises that can affect any company, regardless of its relationship to technology.

Carrubba said that “in an era of record funding for tech startups and digital transformation mandates from enterprises; where blockchain, AI and autonomous mobility suddenly seem to be everywhere and where new leaders emerge in years not decades, smart communications programs can help to establish leadership and progress an agenda.” ○

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **AGRICULTURE**

1. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	\$17,459,225
2. Edelman, New York, NY	14,101,000
3. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	2,457,000
4. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	2,369,970
5. Peppercomm, New York, NY	2,335,099
6. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	721,923
7. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	652,693
8. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	278,332
9. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	209,946
10. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	120,358
11. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	50,393
12. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	25,000
13. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	6,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **BEAUTY & FASHION**

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$32,523,000
2. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	4,864,007
3. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	4,600,000
4. Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	3,305,781
5. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,600,000
6. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	1,470,000
7. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	674,105
8. Peppercomm, New York, NY	516,800
9. Hunter PR, New York, NY	500,000
10. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	499,966
11. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	489,500
12. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	466,355
13. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	448,000
14. 360PR+, Boston, MA	417,184
15. Quinn, New York, NY	245,853
16. Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	236,500
17. J Public Relations, New York, NY	202,480
18. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	142,489
19. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	122,000
20. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	120,358
21. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	97,988
22. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	64,500
23. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	50,000
24. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	46,064
25. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	28,625
26. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	28,500
27. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	6,000
28. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	4,382

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **ENTERTAINMENT**

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$27,028,000
2. Finn Partners, New York, NY	8,475,000
3. Taylor, New York, NY	5,023,000
4. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,122,003
5. Peppercomm, New York, NY	1,759,304
6. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	944,577

Entertainment cont.

7. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	\$684,648
8. Greenough, Boston, MA	539,500
9. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	475,000
10. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	426,000
11. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	389,093
12. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	325,874
13. The Hodges Partnership, Richmond, VA	270,000
14. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	256,760
15. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	238,073
16. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	233,000
17. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	201,637
18. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	120,358
19. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	100,000
20. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	93,671
21. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	87,750
22. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	79,307
23. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	71,309
24. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	46,231
25. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	36,000
26. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	34,650
27. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	25,340
28. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	23,512
29. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	23,000
30. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	22,625
31. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	15,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **HOME FURNISHINGS**

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$58,948,000
2. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	4,137,467
3. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	3,500,000
4. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	3,400,000
5. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	3,124,344
6. Hunter PR, New York, NY	2,500,000
7. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	1,291,283
8. 360PR+, Boston, MA	1,251,553
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	1,100,000
10. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	1,004,597
11. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	541,000
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	356,128
13. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	324,442
14. Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	233,850
15. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	220,698
16. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	218,407
17. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	150,000
18. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	141,784
19. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	132,000
20. Peppercomm, New York, NY	128,000
21. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	97,328
22. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	78,605
23. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	49,683
24. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	39,600
25. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	29,075
26. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	20,500
27. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	4,500

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **SPORTS & LEISURE**

1. Taylor, New York, NY	\$9,630,000
2. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	5,708,953
3. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,800,000
4. Edelman, New York, NY	1,692,000
5. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	1,116,600
6. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,070,787
7. Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	878,829
8. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	518,000
9. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	417,000
10. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	355,826
11. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	327,000
12. The Hodges Partnership, Richmond, VA	174,000
13. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	173,700
14. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	161,573
15. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	150,000
16. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	142,411
17. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	96,301
18. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	79,099
19. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	66,269
20. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	61,300
21. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	60,179
22. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
23. Greenough, Boston, MA	12,500
24. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	11,050

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
TRAVEL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$44,966,000
2. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	11,700,000
3. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	10,260,700
4. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI), New York, NY	9,953,941
5. NJF, an MMGY Global company, New York, NY	9,279,419
6. J Public Relations, New York, NY	8,493,561
7. Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	7,963,228
8. Lou Hammond Group, New York, NY	7,499,273
9. Finn Partners, New York, NY	6,875,000
10. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations, New York, NY	5,007,837
11. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	5,006,414
12. Quinn, New York, NY	4,388,357
13. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	3,768,638
14. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	3,033,573
15. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,700,000
16. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	2,500,000
17. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,448,299
18. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	1,332,934
19. 360PR+, Boston, MA	1,251,553
20. LANE, Portland, OR	1,060,309
21. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	918,720
22. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	694,745
23. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	481,431
24. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	413,437
25. Hunter PR, New York, NY	400,000
26. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	220,000
27. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	212,000

Travel & Economic Development cont.

28. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	\$211,745
29. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	181,776
30. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	165,493
31. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	151,857
32. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	151,000
33. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	136,230
34. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	100,000
35. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	98,000
36. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	72,000
37. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	38,520
38. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	37,485
39. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	33,726
40. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	21,550
41. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	19,782
42. Peppercomm, New York, NY	15,000
43. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	6,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$37,035,800
2. Edelman, New York, NY	17,013,000
3. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	10,489,774
4. Finn Partners, New York, NY	6,229,000
5. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	3,890,818
6. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	3,816,290
7. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	3,262,022
8. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,701,402
9. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	1,263,240
10. Lambert, Edwards & Associates, Grand Rapids, MI	1,050,000
11. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	870,651
12. RF Binder Partners, New York, NY	800,000
13. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	676,211
14. Peppercomm, New York, NY	668,275
15. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TN	525,496
16. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	500,000
17. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	413,481
18. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	403,087
19. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	391,266
20. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	334,276
21. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	307,800
22. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	283,303
23. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	227,098
24. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	210,643
25. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	170,042
26. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	169,325
27. Greenough, Boston, MA	166,802
28. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	151,505
29. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	118,704
30. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	60,000
31. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	28,655
32. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	25,000
33. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	14,168
34. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	12,000
35. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	5,250

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Firm	2017 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$88,639,000	28. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	\$893,000
2. Finn Partners, New York, NY	8,765,000	29. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	862,700
3. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	8,122,081	30. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	605,000
4. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	6,886,281	31. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	597,484
5. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	6,069,866	32. Greenough, Boston, MA	490,000
6. Infinite Global, New York, NY	4,616,068	33. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	393,050
7. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	4,251,203	34. LANE, Portland, OR	329,806
8. Bliss Integrated Communication, New York, NY	4,077,000	35. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	303,000
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	3,800,000	36. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	301,930
10. Quinn, New York, NY	3,315,803	37. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	287,305
11. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	3,314,539	38. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	283,143
12. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	3,252,101	39. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	236,000
13. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	2,889,312	40. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	222,907
14. ICR, New York, NY	2,863,422	41. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	211,432
15. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	2,822,507	42. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	208,337
16. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	2,559,937	43. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	200,589
17. Peppercomm, New York, NY	1,990,997	44. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	196,962
18. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	1,923,570	45. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	168,484
19. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,800,000	46. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	140,015
20. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	1,771,559	47. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	136,800
21. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	1,689,944	48. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	121,580
22. RF Binder Partners, New York, NY	1,400,000	49. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	100,000
23. North 6th Agency, Inc., New York, NY	1,323,935	50. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	67,925
24. Matter Communications, Newburyport, MA	1,212,680	51. Akrete, Evanston, IL	55,102
25. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	1,117,820	52. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	40,000
26. Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	1,023,087	53. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	37,013
27. McNeely Pigott & Fox PR, Nashville, TN	946,400	54. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	7,500

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **FOOD & BEVERAGE**

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

Integrated strategies boost PR's profile, bottom line

A 24/7 content cycle and an increasingly digital, increasingly segmented media landscape has led to a rapid integration of marketing and PR efforts across a convergence of paid, earned and owned channels that will continue to bring new opportunities for the communications industry. Gone are the days of the traditional PR firm; PR pros have realized they're storytellers first and foremost, armed with a suite of multi-channel services and strategies to engage audiences and mobilize them to act.

By Jon Gingerich

The PR industry has entered a new era. Case in point: The top independent PR firms ranked by *O'Dwyer's* this year accounted for a combined total of more than \$3.14 billion in net fees, more than double the \$1.4 billion recorded by this magazine a year ago. Number-one PR giant **Edelman**, with its 2017 earnings of nearly \$894 million, is on track to break the billion-dollar mark within the next few years.



Richard Edelman

CEO Richard Edelman said business at his firm was slow during the first half of 2017, but picked up as the year progressed. He noted that Edelman had outperformed the big agency networks, but refused to accept single-digit growth as the "new normal," saying the independent shop must battle ad agencies and digital outfits for market share.

Top 10 top expectations

Every one of the top-ten firms in *O'Dwyer's* rankings this year saw gains, compared to eight in our rankings last year. Twenty-one of the top 25 firms were up in billings in 2017, with 11 revealing double-digit growth. Of the 124 PR agencies participating in the *O'Dwyer's* rankings in 2018, 92 of them — or 74 percent — posted year-over-year gains.

Tech-focused independent network **W2O Group** took *O'Dwyer's* #2 slot, accounting for \$144 million in net fees in 2017, up 17.6 percent from 2016's \$123 million, adding another banner year on top of the San Francisco-based marketing and communications network's 33 percent climb in 2017.



Bob Pearson

W2O Vice Chair and Chief Innovation Officer Bob Pearson cited the agency's ability to scale offerings, team talent and innovation concurrently as one cause for the firm's success.

"We expect a client leader to understand all forms of media and deliver what is required, not what is available. This approach is resulting in more opportunities, bigger and bolder ideas and attracting clients who want to make a major difference for their customers. The revenue numbers are simply the result," Pearson told *O'Dwyer's*.

Advances in technology and data science will influence the evolution of virtually every model of communications and marketing in the not-too-distant future, Pearson said. And he predicted that we'll see an emergence of search media relations and media plans that encompass earned, shared, owned and paid channels, usually in that order. Pearson specifically cited two key drivers that he sees as responsible for moving the industry forward in 2018 and beyond: technology and common sense.

"From a technology standpoint, machine learning is arguably the most important advance in how we measure, learn and build mechanisms to create campaigns that matter and then retain that knowledge for the next campaign," Pearson said. "Common sense occurs when great client service leaders realize that a strong earned and shared strategy can impact the paid media plan or a media relations professional knows who the top influencers are for each square inch of the 1,990 model. New media models are enabling us to focus on what is relevant, create a wider offering of what is possible and remain agile enough to change based on the needs of our customers. That is pretty cool."



O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms, p. 50

Washington D.C.-based PR and public affairs giant **APCO Worldwide** was #3 this year, topping \$128 million in net fees, accounting for gains of 6.3 percent from 2016's \$120.6 million.



Evan Kraus

"2017 was a year of tremendous growth and progress for APCO," said APCO Global President Evan Kraus. "Our growth was fueled by a recommitment to our own independence that has given us an ability to reinvest in our people like never before. We've started and expanded exciting work helping C-Suite leaders deal with disruption and world leaders make their global mark. We entered 2018 more excited than ever about the future, and look forward to continuing this progress in the years ahead."

Finn Partners is up six percent, from \$76.7 million in 2016 to just under \$81.3 last year, taking the fourth position in *O'Dwyer's* 2017 rankings.

Founding Managing Partner Peter Finn said that healthcare and tech were two practice areas where the global independent agency saw particularly strong gains. The agency also benefitted from a combination of recent acquisitions as well as organic growth from new accounts and expanding existing client relationships, trends that have continued into 2018.

"This year has started off fantastically well for us. It's the best first quarter we've ever had, with lots of big wins with new clients as well as with existing clients," Finn said.

Finn also said the agency has several pending acquisitions in the pipeline that it plans to announce later in the year.

Finn cited a fundamental cultural divide between independent PR firms and the shops owned by multinational conglomer-



Peter Finn

ates as one reason why independents have been outperforming the holding companies in recent years.

"Independents are founder-led and driven by common culture and a core set of values, and I think that culture and that shared sense of core values is what's really helped drive our agency forward," Finn said. "The public holding companies generally don't have that. They're not founder-led and they've evolved a great deal over time and they're not driven by a sense of shared values, and these are differentiating factors that I believe have affected our success."

On the other hand, Finn said the trend toward integrated services puts a large independent like Finn Partners in a good position, because many of the smaller agencies often don't have the ability to bring in the resources or talent needed to grow in these innovative spaces.

"Clients are looking for solutions to their problems, and those aren't just PR problems," Finn said. "As a result, our agency is absolutely becoming more integrated every day, and we now have people working here who aren't traditional PR pros but are experts in many aspects of the digital and creative world, be it analytics or creating websites or email marketing or any number of other digital services we now provide. Many of the smaller independent agencies can't necessarily afford to move into these spaces. But the holding companies, on the other hand, have all the resources to invest in those services, but they're too siloed to offer truly integrated solutions. So, we're in a great spot."

Financial communications and investor relations mainstay **ICR** was #5 this year, gaining an impressive 13.9 percent from 2016's \$55.6 million to \$63.4 million.

CEO Thomas Ryan told *O'Dwyer's* the firm won more than 100 new retainer clients and performed communications work for 27 IPOs last year, compared to nine in 2016. The firm's digital/social media group also outperformed nicely, as did its special situations comms. team. Finally, **ICR** ended 2017 with 176 team members, a seven percent increase from 2016. Client revenues were also up 30 percent.

Ryan told *O'Dwyer's* that the agency expects to see more of the same in 2018, and particularly anticipates growth in the agency's technology, retail, real estate and healthy living industry groups.

"The role of PR continues to rise in im-

portance and increasingly, the mishandling of stakeholder communications results in reputational and valuation damage," Ryan said. "As far as by product, we expect to make strides in digital media, crisis communications, general business and financial media advice and strategic investor relations."

Financial firm **Prosek Partners** moved from #7 to the #6 slot this year, charting growth of 33.2 percent to nearly \$41 million, the largest gaining firm in *O'Dwyer's* top 10.

Managing Partner Jen Prosek cited sea changes in the U.S. financial sector, as well as growth in the agency's special situations, crisis and transactions business, as factors contributing to the agency's impressive double-digit growth.

"The financial sector is an emerging market for marketing. There are firms we represent who have just recently decided — for the first time — to allocate serious marketing dollars to communications and brand," Prosek said. "Additionally, there is more demand for holistic marketing solutions — paid, earned and owned — among our target client base, in which Prosek can offer both marketing and communications solutions."

Prosek predicted that the industry will see AI and analytics make communications more powerful, targeted and measurable. She also believes that Generation Z and Millennials will continue to have a huge impact on the expectations of how senior management communicates internally and externally on social issues, a movement that she believes will peak this year. Finally, she noted that a continued erosion of trust and a media environment rife with fake news would result in an increased reliance on communications firms as trusted advisors.

Padilla ended 2017 only slightly — 1.5 percent — above 2016, the result of the turnover of a major client as well as slow starts to much of the new business the agency acquired last year, according to Chair and CEO Lynn Casey.

The Minneapolis-headquartered agency, which also owns food and nutrition consulting division FoodMinds, was #7 this year, at \$40 mil-

lion. Casey said all of that new business is now in full-swing, and the agency has already more than made up for its 2017 lull during the year's first quarter.

Casey said she expects the industry to lean into earned influence even more than ever, as well as taking advantage of the disintegrating boundaries between paid, earned, shared and owned disciplines.

"There is some business optimism emerging despite the geo-political uncertainty of the past 18 months. Digital engagement heavy with visual content is exploding for those firms equipped to do great work in this arena for clients. We are learning better how to compete with ad agencies, digital agencies and others for this work, and are driving more integrated programs versus tucking our 'traditional' competencies into a program that others have created," Casey said. "It's an exciting time to be in this business!"

Tech PR specialist **Hotwire** continues to rise up in *O'Dwyer's* annual rankings, gaining 4.9 percent in 2017 to take the #8 position this year with \$33.2 million in net fees.

Hotwire North America President Heather Kernahan told *O'Dwyer's* that the agency, a subsidiary of Australia-based marketing network Enero Group Limited, has innovated within the last year by evolving its business model, expanding into new geographies with pop-up offices in Minneapolis and Mexico and rebranding to better serve clients and showcase its qualities as a challenger brand.

"As an agency, if you stand still you fall behind. We grow by innovating and by working with innovation companies. We've seen more non-tech companies realizing the value of being innovation brands and turning to Hotwire to help them tell the story of their business. This innovation positioning helps them hire, increase their valuation and to continue being relevant in their competitive industries."

Parsippany, NJ-based **Coyne Public Relations** rounded out 2017 with a 2.6 percent gain to \$28 million, taking the #9 spot in *O'Dwyer's*



Jen Prosek



Heather Kernahan



Thomas Ryan

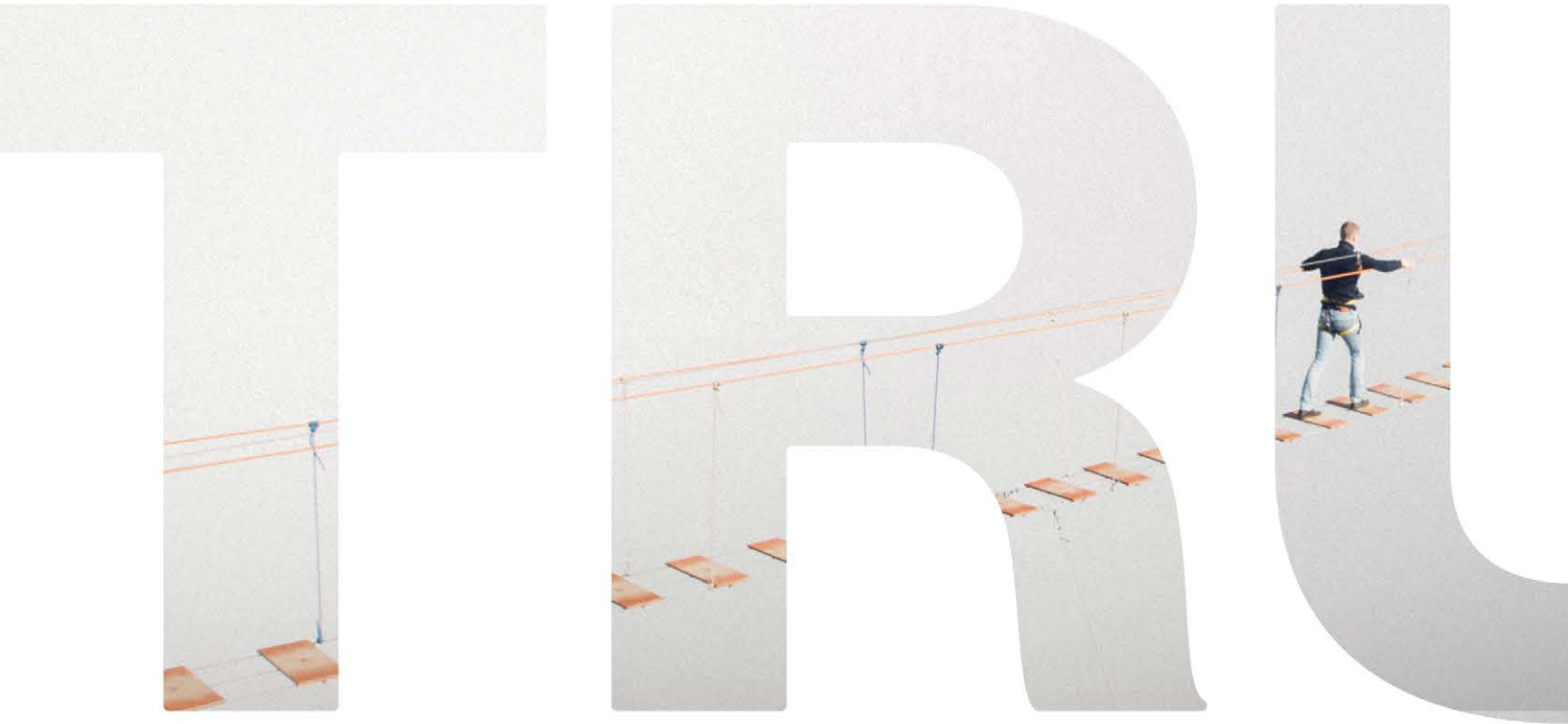


Lynn Casey



Thomas Coyne

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It's crucial when credibility
is questioned.

It's the best insurance against
competitive disruption and
consumer indifference.

It's what our 6000 experts
help companies and brands
earn every day.

O'Dwyer's rankings

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ranking this year.

CEO Thomas Coyne attributed the agency's growth to the hard work and attitude of the Coyne team. He predicts the industry will witness expanded business opportunities across industry sectors this year with a noted emphasis on media and influencers playing a critical role in delivering information. Other trends driving the industry include privacy and disclosure, an expansion of the marketing of American-made products and CSR efforts surrounding the fair and equal treatment of all citizens.

"The industry has had some very exciting growth in recent years due to the expansion into paid and owned opportunities," Coyne said. "In the next year, I see the 'other services' normalizing following some of the fast expansion into digital marketing as it evolves from a specialty to a service. PR's role will continue to expand into social media and traditional media as clients look for guidance about how to best tell brand enhancing stories and cultivate an appropriate connection to the 'right' influencers."

New York's **5WPR** broke into O'Dwyer's top 10 for the first time this year, gaining 13.3 percent in 2017 to \$27.5 million from 2016's \$24.3 million.

5W President and CEO Ronn Torossian said integration is key to PR's future success, citing the industry's ability to further implement creative strategies and storytelling through earned, owned and paid channels, crafting "a cohesive narrative that connects with the consumer and evokes emotion."

"5W is continually growing and innovating as the media landscape changes every day. We've significantly expanded our digital team which includes seasoned experts from big-name companies across the media industry," Torossian said. "In addition to our ability to adapt to the needs of our clients, we offer full-service PR and marketing capabilities across consumer, corporate and technology divisions. This is a key strength of 5W's, and a big reason why brands come to us for their PR efforts."

PR specialties see leaps and bounds

O'Dwyer's ranks firms by 12 PR specialties. Technology and healthcare PR remained the most popular specialties this year, ranking 69 and 68 firms, respectively. Edelman topped both of these lists with

\$157.3 million in healthcare PR fees and \$259.8 million in technology. W2O Group was #2 in healthcare at \$124.2 million, followed by APCO Worldwide at \$27.5 million. Hotwire (\$33.2 million) and Finn Partners (\$26.4 million) rounded out the top three technology PR firms.

Edelman dominated the rest of the specialty charts, including beauty and fashion (28 firms), entertainment (30 firms), financial (45 firms), food and beverage (47 firms), home furnishings (27 firms), professional services (53 firms) and travel & economic development (43 firms).

Edging out Edelman for agriculture PR is New York's G&S Business Communications with \$17.4 million in net fees to Edelman's \$14.1 million.

APCO Worldwide took the top spot for environmental PR & PA with \$37 million in net fees to Edelman's \$17 million. Davies came in at a close third with \$10.4 million.

Taylor is #1 for sports PR with \$9.6 million in net fees, followed by French | West | Vaughan at \$5.7 million, Coyne at \$2.8 million and Edelman at \$1.6 million.

Underscoring the strength of specialties this year was the performance of **Fahlgren Mortine**, which ranked #12, up 10.4 percent in 2017 to nearly \$27 million compared to 2016's \$24.4 million.

The Columbus, OH-based agency, which owns New York-based travel subsidiary Turner, also increased profit by 35 percent, added 50 new clients to its roster and grew its B2B business 10 percent in 2017. In total, those new business efforts yielded a 200 percent year-over-year increase in new revenue, not counting organic client growth in spending.

President Neil Mortine said deep category experience and expertise was a factor behind much of this growth, as well as integrated viewpoints on the marketing and communications challenges presented to the agency and a dynamic staff that competes fiercely on behalf of its clients.



O'Dwyer's rankings by PR specialty, pg. 38

Mortine cited a series of digital challenges facing the industry in the coming year, including how to effectively use PR as a vehicle for SEO (particularly with mobile), how to use hyper-targeting and micro influencers in an increasingly segmented media landscape, how to metricize PR/earned media that informs bottom-line business insight, and how to produce engaging content at a higher volume at a fraction of the cost.

"In the modern age of marketing, the role of PR is evolving, and understanding of its value is being elevated. Our challenge is to embrace and foster PR's role in an increasingly digital world," Mortine said.

Healthcare and life sciences shop **Spectrum** had another great year in 2017, surging 20 percent to the #16 spot with \$24 million in net fees. The gains follow a similarly spectacular 2016, when the Washington, D.C.-based agency projected 34.8 percent growth with \$20 million in net fees. It's the agency's third consecutive year of double-digit revenue growth, with a significant portion of those gains attributed to organic activity.

Spectrum President and CEO Jonathan Wilson said this transformative growth is part of a larger trend over the past four years to create a forward-looking agency structured to meet clients' future needs, now organized into practice areas, fully-integrated teams and a dedicated focus on building an extraordinary agency culture.

"With clients starting to ask for real-time, comprehensive strategies, we're seeing being ahead of the curve in our model start to pay off," Wilson said.

Wilson also cited a "responsive, insights-first strategy" as a requirement for successful communications programs of the future.

"What we're seeing in market today is based on the landscape of that moment, but most are not designed to be nimble or responsive as conversations evolve. In order to engage and drive value, clients and agencies alike are realizing that programs must adapt in real-time to reflect what's happening," Wilson said. "We use our marketing intelligence platform, Galileo6, to focus on media relevance. This provides the unique



Neil Mortine



Ronn Torossian



Jonathan Wilson



Philip Nardone, Jr.

opportunity to take an active role in shaping campaigns and trends as they develop.”

Healthcare and B2B tech agency **PAN Communications** was the #23 firm this year, up 13.7 percent to \$17.7 million in net fees after 2016’s similarly impressive gains of 18.6 percent.

President and CEO Philip Nardone, Jr. attributed two key factors to the agency’s performance this year. The first was the agency’s ability to provide truly integrated services and combine them with a sophisticated measurement platform. The second was having a well-organized HR team dedicated to attracting top talent. PAN hired 65 new staffers in 2017 across its four offices, a 45 percent year-over-year increase, which Nardone said allowed the agency to meet customers’ integrated marketing demands and produced results that contributed to its overall growth.

“The industry’s continued digital transformation means PR is no longer a stand-alone field,” Nardone said. “The remainder of 2018 will focus on the further integration of marketing and PR efforts, honing in on influencer marketing and voice of the customer as drivers of brand awareness and building customer connections. Brands will learn to lean on agencies to implement influencer marketing programs and showcase how these relationships will position them as industry leaders. Agencies will respond by tuning in to customer feedback and preferences by establishing voice of the customer programs to enhance their relationships. This is where we’ll see growth in the use of data and analytics to prove ROI of these trends, which will quickly become a commonplace for PR and marketing professionals.”

B2B technology PR specialist **InkHouse** grew by 13 percent in 2017 to \$16.2 million, ranking #27 this year.

CEO Beth Monaghan highlighted several contributing factors to the Waltham, MA-based agency’s success, namely, a focus on growing responsibly as opposed to growing fast. This entails working with admired companies and attracting talent with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. Sometimes it might also mean turn-



Beth Monaghan

ing down prospective business.

“Growth is one of those good challenges, and it’s all about developing an openness and comfort with constant change,” said Monaghan. “In the last year, it meant that we got to a size where I had to rewrite our company values and think about ways to infuse our values into our culture better. Tomorrow, it might be a better way to track our time.”

“We are in a time of tumult when trust is at stake for every organization in America. We have fake news to go with our alternative facts and the pressure for clear communications from trusted spokespeople is intense,” Monaghan continued. “A byproduct of this environment is the re-insertion of businesses into the discourse on political, environmental and social good. We call this evolution of CSR ‘purpose-driven PR’ because times have changed, and communications strategies must too.”

Annapolis, MD-based **Crosby**, which specializes in marketing programs for healthcare, government and nonprofits, grew an impressive 23.8 percent in the last year to \$15.1 million, following the 21 percent growth the agency experienced in 2016.



Raymond Crosby

Crosby President and CEO Raymond Crosby listed several factors that contributed to the agency’s multi-year, double-digit growth wave, including a selective client retention history and a strong focus on serving healthcare and nonprofit clients, as well as engaging the military and veteran community. Crosby also cited digital transformation and social media as being big drivers of growth, as well as a concerted effort to continue building out the agency’s in-house video and multimedia facilities



O’Dwyer’s rankings of top gainers, pg. 53

and further accelerate its content creation and distribution capabilities.

Crosby also identified three factors that will particularly matter as the industry turns to the future: creativity, integration and integrity.

“Creativity because it’s easy to get lost in the march toward algorithms, analytics and artificial intelligence,” Crosby said. “Ideas and experiences are still at the heart of making human connections and moving people to action. Integration because you have to be able to deal with the never-ending complexity of audiences, media channels, content and digital transformation. It’s all so interconnected that siloed approaches come up short. Earned media, while still incredibly valuable, will get harder and harder to come by. Reliance on shared, paid and owned channels will only increase. Integrity because everyone in the ecosystem (clients, agencies, media partners) needs to be held to a higher standard in an era of withering corporate ethics, fake news, and paid influencers. The communications industry can be a leader instead of a pawn in this game.”

“Integration, integration, integration”

San Jose-based tech shop **The Hoffman Agency** was #32 this year, up 12.2 percent to \$12.7 million.

CEO Lou Hoffman listed investments the agency made into being good shepherds of its brand as well as the ability to win and service multi-country clients across multiple markets as factors that drove the agency’s growth.

Hoffman also said the agency’s proprietary methodology for storytelling was an effort that delivered positive results. Every agency under the sun touts storytelling these days, but Hoffman said the inconvenient reality is that storytelling, by the conventional definition, often can’t be applied in business communications.

“Can you imagine a company executive responding to each question from a journalist with a story that has a start, an end and something going astray in between? Our approach around storytelling techniques solves this issue, particularly for B2B clients which is our sweet spot. Many agencies talk about being a digital-first agency. I think of us as a narrative-first agency. Content is at the core of what we do.”

Like everyone else, Hoffman sees an in-



Lou Hoffman

Continued on page 48

O'Dwyer's rankings

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creasing amount of PR work migrating toward digital and integrated campaigns that bring together earned, paid and owned media. Hoffman said he's also beginning to see communication agencies increasingly implementing more B2B campaigns with a direct tie to sales lead generation. Communicators of all stripes are beginning to realize that content is at the foundation of marketing efforts, not just PR.

Miami-based marketing PR firm **rbb Communications** shot up 23.5 percent in 2017 to \$11.4 million, taking the #37 slot in O'Dwyer's rankings, compared to #42 last year.

President and Partner Lisa Ross said rbb's healthcare, professional services and travel practices saw year-over-year growth and added several new global brands. The agency also experienced high demand for integrated programs, with more than 40 percent of its clients adding digital or creative projects.

When asked where she sees the industry headed in the next year, Ross' answer was clear: "Integration, integration, integration."

"Integration has reached new levels of importance with an increasing number of clients looking for discipline-agnostic strategies that play across all communication sectors from advertising to marketing and digital to public relations. rbb approaches all client programs from an integrated perspective and seeks to develop campaigns that are multi-platform to engage audiences on their preferred channel of communication."

Ross said clients are searching for products and custom solutions to support brand growth and sales goals. To meet this demand, her agency has created digital storefronts for multi-location clients to review, access and purchase a range of marketing services. Data is now a critical component of marketing for most companies, she said, making insight into real-time client data that allows the agency to make better decisions paramount. Finally, the agency is advising clients to review reputation protection strategies in advance of crisis situations.

Nashville-based healthcare specialist **Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock** ticked up three spots in the O'Dwyer's ranking this year to #41, gaining 18.8 percent to nearly

\$10 million in net fees.

CEO David Jarrard cited two important trends — a transformation of the healthcare industry as well as a growing appreciation from industry leaders for taking a strategic, holistic approach to communications — as factors that accounted for the firm's double-digit growth last year.

"It's hard to overstate the disruption underway in healthcare, especially among hospitals and other providers of patient care. Our boutique firm was built from the ground to help these organizations. It's all we do," Jarrard said.

Jarrard predicts that the industry will see a continued consolidation of traditional agencies this year, with management consulting firms further competing for strategic communications business and for "smart, data-driven analytics to make us sharper in our work, even as it threatens traditional practices and budgets," Jarrard said.

Travel, hospitality and luxury lifestyle agency **J Public Relations** gained 16.6 percent in 2017 to account for \$9 million, moving up two positions in the O'Dwyer's rankings to #47.

J PR Partner Jamie Sigler said the agency has remained focused on the customer experience, growing relationships with existing clients by cultivating their brands through social content and paid digital campaigns.

Sigler also cited the role internal innovation has played in the agency's success. Agencies get weighed down with busy work, she said, losing site of major results and often leaving teams little breathing room to connect with clients on a meaningful level. And ensuring that those meaningful connections remain sometimes results in turning down work.

"Being tuned into our strengths has helped define our success, and today we're selective about clients who are in sync with our specificities," said J PR Partner Sarah Evans. "We say 'no' when it's not the right fit and go all-in when it is."

While there are more modes of communication today than ever — and unlimited streams of content — Evans believes relationships and face-to-face communication remain paramount. Evans said it's the job of communicators to understand clients' business and what's driving ROI, and to specifically target the people and outlets that make the most impact. "It's no longer about being everywhere," Evans said.



Jamie Sigler and Sarah Evans

"Because of the onslaught of content, I believe that we are going to see more niche firms thrive and become better versed in a singular industry rather than across the board," Evans said. "We always say at JPR that you can't be an expert in everything."

Sigler also noted that experiences remain in demand over material possessions when it comes to messaging in travel PR.

"There's a desire to be part of a larger community and technology fuels travelers to seize the moment like never before," Sigler said.

New York's **North 6th Agency, Inc.** was #59 in 2018, surging in the O'Dwyer's rankings from the #71 spot last year with an impressive 38.1 percent gain to \$6 million in net fees.

CEO Matt Rizzetta said N6A has invested heavily in its company culture and infrastructure, hiring dedicated department heads for various functions and breaking ground on a new office in SoHo, which has helped the agency with recruiting. Last year also marked N6A's first acquisition, purchasing Atlas Communications, a top social media shop in Toronto, which enables the agency to expand into the Toronto market and improve its social media service capabilities.

"All of these investments have supported our strategic growth objectives and positioned us advantageously as we scale to the next level in the coming years," Rizzetta said.

Rizzetta said that in the next year, he expects to see more agencies of similar size steering away from traditional billable hourly models in favor of models which place premiums on speed, efficiency and measurement. N6A has already invested heavily in building in-house software and proprietary data systems to get ahead of this future trend. Rizzetta also said he'd witnessed no-



Matt Rizzetta



David Jarrard



Lisa Ross

— Continued on page 52



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O'DWYER'S RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS WITH MAJOR U.S. OPERATIONS

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2016
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$893,591,000	5,940	+2.1
2. W2O Group , San Francisco, CA	144,300,000	651	+17.6
3. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	128,236,300	682	+6.3
4. Finn Partners , New York, NY	81,290,000	533	+6
5. ICR , New York, NY	63,427,224	177	+13.9
6. Prosek Partners , New York, NY	40,818,192	137	+33.2
7. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	40,078,469	206	+1.5
8. Hotwire , New York, NY	33,249,507	222	+4.9
9. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	28,000,000	139	+2.6
10. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	27,538,768	148	+13.3
11. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	27,275,329	146	+12.6
12. Fahlgren Mortine , Columbus, OH	26,975,583	160	+10.4
13. Health Unlimited , New York, NY	25,890,471	122	-5.3
14. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	25,241,802	103	+8
15. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	25,105,128	148	-9.4
16. Spectrum , Washington, DC	24,000,000	94	+20
17. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	23,434,937	150	+11.6
18. Hunter PR , New York, NY	22,500,000	116	-3.5
19. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	22,313,223	67	+12.3
20. Taylor , New York, NY	22,200,000	105	-3.1
21. Peppercomm , New York, NY	19,322,830	80	+5.3
22. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	19,001,464	116	+9.2
23. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	17,741,700	124	+13.7
24. Matter Communications , Newburyport, MA	17,157,774	123	+3.1
25. Highwire PR , San Francisco, CA	17,019,030	81	+21.3
26. IMRE, LLC , Baltimore, MD	16,340,000	93	+8.3
27. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	16,225,618	94	+13
28. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	15,160,935	81	+23.8
29. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	15,100,000	52	+4.1
30. Bravo Group, Inc. , Harrisburg, PA	14,353,811	77	+25
31. Spark , San Francisco, CA	13,000,000	50	-7.3
32. The Hoffman Agency , San Jose, CA	12,719,000	32	+12.2
33. Bateman Group , San Francisco, CA	12,447,340	59	+18.7
34. RF Binder Partners , New York, NY	12,100,000	55	-2.4
35. Tonic Life Communications , Philadelphia, PA	12,000,000	40	+2
36. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	11,919,100	54	+1
37. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	11,409,196	60	+23.5
38. Davies , Santa Barbara, CA	10,489,774	34	+3
39. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	10,476,319	34	-5.1
40. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI) , New York, NY	9,953,941	60	even
41. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock , Brentwood, TN	9,866,079	34	+18.8
42. KYNE , New York, NY	9,696,497	37	+64.3
43. Bliss Integrated Communication , New York, NY	9,607,000	49	+3.5
44. NJE, an MMGY Global company , New York, NY	9,279,419	51	+9.3
45. JPA Health Communications , Washington, DC	9,182,471	31	+19.2
46. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	9,080,000	70	+10.7
47. J Public Relations , New York, NY	9,075,241	57	+16.6
48. Quinn , New York, NY	8,763,938	63	+3.6
49. Walker Sands Communications , Chicago, IL	8,678,584	79	+7.8
50. JeffreyGroup , Miami Beach, FL	8,426,524	120	+13.7
51. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	8,343,690	40	+4
52. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	8,134,581	37	+9.2
53. McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations , Nashville, TN	8,123,629	65	+3.5
54. Lambert, Edwards & Associates , Grand Rapids, MI	7,610,000	47	+8.6
55. Lou Hammond Group , New York, NY	7,499,273	40	+4
56. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	7,319,325	38	+14.6
57. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	6,697,313	35	+10.7
58. Vested , New York, NY	6,171,277	22	+73.4
59. North 6th Agency, Inc. , New York, NY	6,017,886	46	38.1
60. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	5,742,000	29	even
61. CooperKatz & Co. , New York, NY	5,564,550	29	+17
62. Konnect Agency , Los Angeles, CA	5,412,953	38	+7

O'DWYER'S RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS WITH MAJOR U.S. OPERATIONS

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2016
63. Lazar Partners, New York, NY	\$5,393,183	24	+6.4
64. Dukas Linden Public Relations, New York, NY	5,288,592	22	+2.7
65. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	5,267,141	41	-15.9
66. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	5,201,357	19	-3
67. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations, New York, NY	5,007,837	33	+9.7
68. Infinite Global, New York, NY	4,616,068	21	+16.9
69. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,593,980	23	+2
70. Greenough, Boston, MA	4,471,289	23	even
71. March Communications, Boston, MA	4,077,235	25	+9.8
72. Intermarket Communications, New York, NY	4,050,000	18	+5.9
73. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	3,890,818	18	-36.2
74. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, NJ	3,823,501	19	+10.4
75. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,548,334	18	-0.9
76. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	3,538,762	14	+16.6
77. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	3,420,000	21	-6.9
78. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	3,244,261	17	+20.2
79. Fish Consulting, Hollywood, FL	3,233,507	20	+3.3
80. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,205,075	35	+34.6
81. LANE, Portland, OR	3,057,564	18	-13.1
82. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	2,987,321	19	+19.5
83. Cashman + Katz Company, Glastonbury, CT	2,985,000	29	+10.8
84. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	2,882,562	18	+65.7
85. BackBay Communications, Boston, MA	2,798,142	17	-1
86. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2,750,000	17	+10
87. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	2,695,000	14	+2.2
88. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	2,686,572	13	even
89. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	2,641,000	16	+18.8
90. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	2,573,953	17	+5.2
91. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	2,331,882	14	+12.8
92. Gatesman, Pittsburgh, PA	2,283,500	11	-16.4
93. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,191,872	13	-11.4
94. Stanton Communications, Washington, DC	2,182,000	15	-3
95. The Hodges Partnership, Richmond, VA	2,120,088	14	+2.2
96. LaVoie Health Science, Boston, MA	2,117,940	11	-3
97. Hollywood Agency, Hingham, MA	2,041,574	12	even
98. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	1,926,017	10	+8
99. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,888,774	8	-10.2
100. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,723,378	9	-11
101. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	1,576,984	11	+17.7
102. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,573,710	15	+41
103. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	1,543,278	14	+3
104. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	1,463,382	8	+27
105. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,400,882	15	+13
106. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,323,992	4	+16.5
107. Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	1,301,041	8	-9.8
108. The Hoyt Organization Inc., Torrance, CA	1,250,000	9	+4.2
109. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	1,239,433	9	+46
110. Merryman Communications, Inc., Redondo Beach, CA	1,229,868	9	+16.5
111. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	1,190,814	8	-16
112. ScoutComms, Inc., Fredericksburg, VA	1,189,339	13	+9.8
113. RMD Advertising, Columbus, OH	1,165,179	8	+2.9
114. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	955,179	4	+3.6
115. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	947,459	7	-4.3
116. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	878,150	5	+9.5
117. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	863,270	7	-6.7
118. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	846,757	4	-12.3
119. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	669,509	7	+4.7
120. TransMedia Group, Boca Raton, FL	642,122	6	-8.3
121. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	573,111	3	-6.4
122. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	499,966	5	+6.8
123. Dale Curtis Communications LLC, Washington, DC	481,363	4	+25.8
124. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	477,230	3	-30.2

O'Dwyer's rankings

— Continued from page 48

ticeable growth in various emerging market sectors such as cybersecurity and identity, cannabis, data and analytics, travel and hospitality, recruiting and employment, financial services and cryptocurrencies.

"We believe we are as well-positioned in these areas as any agency of our size, and these will be critical assets for us as we execute on our strategic growth plans in the future," Rizzetta said.

Beehive Strategic Communication, which specializes in consumer, healthcare, education and professional and financial services, gained 16.6 percent in O'Dwyer's rankings this year to \$3.5 million, taking the #76 slot compared to #79 last year.

Beehive CEO Lisa Hannum said to watch for a surge in purpose-driven strategies from traditional businesses in the coming year, a shift that will likely influence agencies and brands alike. Hannum also



Lisa Hannum

believes the growth of in-house agencies will continue. Agencies will increasingly be tapped for high-level thinking that offers brands fresh insights and innovative, creative ideas designed to differentiate, both inside and outside. As a result, agencies need to be prepared to hand off activation and cheer

from the sidelines.

"Beehive understands business first, and we move fast, which makes us a valuable partner. The pace of change is accelerating in every industry. Our clients rely on us to navigate change with clarity and then drive action for business growth. Fast," Hannum said. "Expectations are rising. Employees, partners, customers and communities want to work for and buy from brands that authentically share their beliefs."

Boston's **Schneider Associates** was #78 this year, up 20.2 percent to \$3.2 million and gaining four positions in O'Dwyer's rankings after a bumpy 2016 saw the firm dip 6.3 percent to \$2.69 million.

CEO and Founder Joan Schneider told O'Dwyer's the agency has implemented an aggressive transformational strategy to integrate the full spectrum of marketing and communications services into its client offerings. By investing in strategic senior executive hires, staff training and through networking across industry sectors, the agency has been able to expand its offerings to include digital advertising, paid social, lead generation and nurturing, CRM inte-

gration and marketing automation, as well as investing heavily in its digital design and analytics capabilities.

"We are no longer a traditional PR firm, but instead provide a suite of integrated digital marketing and communications services that directly and quantifiably, drive client success," Schneider said.

In Schneider's opinion, forward-thinking PR firms are moving rapidly into the integrated marketing world. Separation between earned and paid media no longer exists.

"Consumers are smart. Agencies must be smarter. We're constantly optimizing to move the conversation towards action and/or purchase decisions," Schneider said. "We are always testing, and perfecting our campaigns based on what the data tells us. And data analysis is now a big part of what we do. The key driver behind this tidal wave of digital marketing is accessibly to content, speed to market and the consumer's desire for creative content that is to the point. While traditional PR is part of the equation, now there's so many more strategies and channels to add to the marketing mix."

Los Angeles-based **Marketing Maven Public Relations** gained 12.8 percent in 2017 to \$2.3 million, taking the #91 spot in O'Dwyer's rankings.

CEO and President Lindsey Carnett told O'Dwyer's that in addition to attracting more international companies in the private sector, the agency has also expanded its work in the government arena while increasing the number of influencer marketing campaigns and comprehensive marketing integration strategies it does.

Carnett sees the industry becoming even more fragmented over the next year. Early adoption of new technology will be key in providing measurable results to clients and

supporting media attribution.

Carnett also sees natural foods, consumer technology and healthcare as some of the PR sectors gaining rapid popularity, and cited education around new markets, such as blockchain and cannabis, and services such as influencer marketing, integration of chatbots and reputation management for products relying on ecommerce sales, as some of the trends we can expect to see gaining traction in the coming year.

14 firms join rankings, regions expand

More than a dozen new agencies joined O'Dwyer's rankings this year. New to the charts this year are: **Matter Communications** (#24, \$17.1 million, up 3.1 percent), **Tonic Life Communications** (#35, \$12 million, up two percent), **Tunheim** (#60, \$5.7 million, even), **Lazar Partners** (#63, \$5.3 million, up 6.4 percent), **Infinite Global** (#68, \$4.6 million, up 16.9 percent), **March Communications** (#71, \$4 million, up 9.8 percent), **Brownstein Group** (#88, \$2.6 million, even), **Stanton Communications** (#94, \$2.1 million, down 3 percent), **Hollywood Agency** (#97, \$2 million, even), **Bellmont Partners** (#103, \$1.5 million, up 3 percent), **Merryman Communications** (#110, \$1.2 million, up 16.5 percent), **RMD Advertising** (#113, \$1.1 million, up 2.9 percent), **Butler Associates** (#116, \$878,000, up 9.5 percent) and **Weiss PR** (#121, \$573,000, down 6.4 percent).

O'Dwyer's also ranks firms in 13 key cities/region. The New York area dominated again, with 39 firms either calling New York City home or having a presence there. Top firms are Edelman, Prosek Partners and Hotwire.

The Boston area revealed 13 firms. PAN Communications edged out newly-ranked Matter Communications for the top spot. Racepoint Global is third.

Twenty-five firms covered the Southeast. French | West | Vaughan continued to lead in this region, followed by Jackson Spalding and Edelman in Atlanta.

Twenty-four firms hail from the Midwest, with 14 in Chicago, including chart-topper Edelman. Columbus-based Fahlgren Mortine and Minneapolis-based Padilla round ed out the top three Midwest firms.

Firms tracked by the rankings with locations in cities throughout California and Oregon totaled 37 this year, with 21 revealing offices in the San Francisco area and 14 revealing offices in the Los Angeles area. W2O topped the San Francisco chart and Edelman was #1 in L.A. ○



Lindsey Carnett



Joan Schneider



O'Dwyer's rankings of firms by region, pg. 54

LEADING GAINERS AMONG PR FIRMS

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Employees	% Change from 2016
Firms in the top 25			
1. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	\$40,818,192	137	+33.2
2. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	17,019,030	81	+21.3
3. Spectrum, Washington, DC	24,000,000	94	+20.0
4. W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	144,300,000	651	+17.6
5. ICR, New York, NY	63,427,224	177	+13.9
6. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	17,741,700	124	+13.7
7. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	27,538,768	148	+13.3
8. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	27,275,329	146	+12.6
9. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	22,313,223	67	+12.3
10. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	23,434,937	150	+11.6
Firms ranked 26 through 50			
1. KYNE, New York, NY	\$9,696,497	37	+64.3
2. Bravo Group, Harrisburg, PA	14,353,811	77	+25.0
3. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	15,160,935	81	+23.8
4. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	11,409,196	60	+23.5
5. JPA Health Communications, Washington, DC	9,182,471	31	+19.2
6. Jarrard Philips Cate & Hancock, Brentwood, TN	9,866,079	34	+18.8
7. Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	12,447,340	59	+18.7
8. J Public Relations, New York, NY	9,075,241	57	+16.6
9. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	16,225,618	94	+13.0
10. Hoffman Agency, San Jose, CA	12,719,000	32	+12.2
Firms ranked 51 through 100			
1. Vested, New York, NY	\$6,171,277	22	+73.4
2. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	2,882,562	18	+65.7
3. North 6th Agency (N6A), New York, NY	6,017,886	46	+38.1
4. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,205,075	35	+34.6
5. Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	3,244,261	17	+20.2
6. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	2,987,321	19	+19.5
7. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	2,641,000	16	+18.8
8. CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	5,564,550	29	+17.0
9. Infinite Global, New York, NY	4,616,068	21	+16.9
10. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	3,538,762	14	+16.6
Firms ranked 101 through 121			
1. WordWrite Communications, LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	\$1,239,433	9	+46.0
2. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,573,710	15	+41.0
3. The Power Group, Dallas, TX	1,463,382	8	+27.0
4. Dale Curtis Communications LLC, Washington, DC	481,363	4	+25.8
5. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	1,576,984	11	+17.7
6. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,323,992	4	+16.5
7. Merryman Communications, Inc., Redondo Beach, CA	1,229,868	9	+16.5
8. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,400,882	15	+13.0
9. ScoutComms, Inc., Fredericksburg, VA	1,189,339	13	+9.8
10. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	878,150	5	+9.5

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Empl.	Firm	2017 Net Fees	Empl.
CONNECTICUT			NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY		
1. ICR, Norwalk	\$28,053,204	59	1. Edelman	\$200,405,000	935
2. Cashman + Katz Company, Glastonbury	2,985,000	29	2. Prosek Partners	40,818,192	137
CHICAGO			3. Hotwire	33,249,507	222
1. Edelman (includes Detroit)	\$108,191,000	584	4. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	28,000,000	139
2. Walker Sands Communications	8,678,584	79	5. Finn Partners	27,855,000	186
3. Greentarget Global LLC	8,134,581	37	6. 5W Public Relations	27,538,768	148
4. Finn Partners (includes Detroit)	7,962,000	48	7. Health Unlimited	25,890,471	122
5. Padilla	6,017,189	21	8. Hunter PR	22,500,000	116
6. Kivvit	5,431,932	19	9. ICR	21,895,895	72
7. G&S Business Communications	5,423,250	34	10. APCO Worldwide	16,990,100	62
8. Public Communications Inc.	5,267,141	41	11. Peppercomm	16,895,750	77
9. L.C. Williams & Associates	4,593,980	23	12. Taylor	12,800,000	60
10. APCO Worldwide	3,717,000	16	13. RF Binder Partners	12,100,000	55
11. O'Malley Hansen Communications	2,641,000	16	14. Kivvit	11,510,162	31
12. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,323,992	4	15. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI)	9,953,941	60
13. Taylor	905,000	5	16. KYNE	9,696,497	37
14. Infinite Global	219,813	1	17. Bliss Integrated Communication	9,607,000	49
FLORIDA			18. NJE, an MMGY Global company	9,279,419	51
1. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee	\$15,100,000	52	19. J Public Relations	9,075,241	57
2. rbb Communications, Miami	11,409,196	60	20. Lou Hammond Group	7,499,273	40
3. JeffreyGroup, Miami Beach	8,426,524	120	21. Padilla	6,929,514	24
4. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee	7,319,325	38	22. Vested	6,171,277	22
5. Fish Consulting, Hollywood	3,233,507	20	23. Quinn	6,132,894	46
6. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale	2,750,000	17	24. North 6th Agency, Inc.	6,017,886	46
7. Quinn, Miami	2,170,244	15	25. CooperKatz & Co.	5,564,550	29
8. Edelman, Orlando	1,956,000	8	26. Lazar Partners	5,393,183	24
9. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale	1,573,710	15	27. Dukas Linden Public Relations	5,288,592	22
10. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach	863,270	7	28. G&S Business Communications	5,264,719	35
11. Kivvit, Miami	705,350	4	29. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations	5,007,837	33
12. TransMedia Group, Boca Raton	642,122	6	30. Intermarket Communications	4,050,000	18
13. Finn Partners, Ft. Lauderdale	380,000	3	31. MCS Healthcare PR, Bedminster NJ	3,823,501	19
BOSTON			32. Infinite Global	1,978,315	9
1. PAN Communications	\$17,741,700	124	33. Rosica Communications, Paramus NJ	1,301,041	8
2. Matter Communications	17,157,774	123	34. Butler Associates, LLC	878,150	5
3. Racepoint Global	16,473,090	77	35. Feintuch Communications	846,757	4
4. Inkhouse	16,225,618	94	36. AMP3 Public Relations	499,966	5
5. 360PR+	8,343,690	40	37. Stuntman PR	477,230	3
6. Rasky Partners, Inc.	6,069,191	27	38. Inkhouse	382,449	7
7. ICR	4,556,853	6	PENNSYLVANIA		
8. Greenough	4,471,289	23	1. Bravo Group, Inc., Harrisburg	\$14,353,811	77
9. March Communications	4,077,235	25	2. Tonic Life Communications, Philadelphia	12,000,000	40
10. Schneider Associates	3,244,261	17	3. Gregory FCA, Ardmore	9,080,000	70
11. BackBay Communications	2,798,142	17	4. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia	2,686,572	13
12. LaVoie Health Science	2,117,940	11	5. Gatesman, Pittsburgh	2,283,500	11
13. Hollywood Agency	2,041,574	12	6. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh	1,239,433	9
WASHINGTON, D.C.			7. Infinite Global, Philadelphia	219,813	1
1. Edelman	\$71,898,000	275	MIDWEST CITIES		
2. APCO Worldwide	40,570,000	153	1. Edelman (includes Detroit), Chicago, IL	\$108,191,000	584
3. Spectrum	24,000,000	94	2. Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH	26,975,583	160
4. IMRE, Baltimore, MD	16,340,000	81	3. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	14,699,079	84
5. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	15,160,935	81	4. Walker Sands Communications, Chicago, IL	8,678,584	79
6. Finn Partners	13,148,000	54	5. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	8,134,581	37
7. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	11,919,100	54	6. Finn Partners (includes Detroit), Chicago, IL	7,962,000	48
8. JPA Health Communications	9,182,471	31	7. Lambert, Edwards & Assoc., Grand Rapids, MI	7,610,000	47
9. Kivvit	4,684,231	13	8. Padilla, Chicago, IL	6,017,189	21
10. Rasky Partners, Inc.	4,407,128	7	9. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	5,742,000	29
12. Verasolve, Potomac, MD	2,987,321	19	10. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	5,431,932	19
12. Stanton Communications	2,182,000	15	11. G&S Business Communications, Chicago, IL	5,423,250	34
13. Racepoint Global	1,395,307	6	12. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	5,267,141	41
14. ScoutComms, Inc., Fredericksburg, VA	1,189,339	13	13. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,593,980	23
15. Padilla	1,177,209	12	14. APCO Worldwide, Chicago, IL	3,717,000	16
16. Weiss PR, Inc., Baltimore, MD	573,111	3	15. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,548,334	18
17. Dale Curtis Communications LLC	481,363	4	16. Beehive Strategic Comm, St. Paul, MN	3,538,762	14
			17. O'Malley Hansen Comms, Chicago, IL	2,641,000	16
			18. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	1,543,278	14

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY

Firm	2017 Net Fees	Empl.	Firm	2017 Net Fees	Empl.
19. Akrete, Evanston, IL	\$1,323,992	4	8. ICR	\$8,921,271	9
20. Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	1,190,814	8	9. Edelman (Silicon Valley), San Mateo	6,574,000	34
21. RMD Advertising, Columbus, OH	1,165,179	8	10. Finn Partners	5,684,000	20
22. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	955,179	4	11. Inkhouse	5,551,003	30
23. Taylor, Chicago, IL	905,000	5	12. Singer Associates, Inc.	5,201,357	19
24. Infinite Global, Chicago, IL	219,813	1	13. Peppercomm	2,427,080	7
TEXAS			14. Racepoint Global	2,163,282	15
1. Edelman (includes Dallas & Houston), Austin	\$22,294,000	102	15. Infinite Global	1,978,315	9
2. Pierpont Communications, Houston	6,697,313	35	16. Padilla	1,891,366	7
3. Idea Grove, Dallas	3,205,075	35	17. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento	1,888,774	8
4. Champion Management Group, Dallas	2,882,562	18	18. Landis Communications	1,723,378	9
5. SPM Communications, Dallas	2,191,872	13	19. Karbo Communications	1,400,882	15
6. The Power Group, Dallas	1,463,382	8	WESTERN CITIES		
7. BizCom Associates, Plano	669,509	7	1. W2O Group, San Francisco, CA	\$144,300,000	651
SOUTHEAST			2. Edelman, San Francisco, CA	40,116,000	191
1. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	\$25,241,802	103	3. Edelman, Seattle, WA	35,939,000	182
2. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	23,434,937	150	4. Edelman (includes Beverly Hills), Los Angeles, CA	27,997,000	145
3. Edelman, Atlanta, GA	21,292,000	110	5. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	19,001,464	116
4. G&S Business Communications, Raleigh, NC	16,587,355	77	6. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	17,019,030	81
5. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	15,100,000	52	7. Spark, San Francisco, CA	13,000,000	50
6. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	11,409,196	60	8. The Hoffman Agency, San Jose, CA	12,719,000	32
7. Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Brentwood, TN	9,866,079	34	9. Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	12,447,340	59
8. Finn Partners, Nashville, TN	9,782,000	65	10. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	10,489,774	34
9. JeffreyGroup, Miami Beach, FL	8,426,524	120	11. ICR, San Francisco, CA	8,921,271	9
10. Padilla, Richmond, VA	8,360,366	43	12. Edelman, Portland, OR	8,667,000	49
11. McNeely Pigott & Fox PR, Nashville, TN	8,123,629	65	13. Edelman (Silicon Valley), San Mateo, CA	6,574,000	34
12. Taylor, Charlotte, NC	7,500,000	35	14. Finn Partners, San Francisco, CA	5,684,000	20
13. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	7,319,325	38	15. Inkhouse, San Francisco, CA	5,551,003	30
14. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	3,420,000	21	16. Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	5,412,953	38
15. APCO Worldwide, Raleigh, NC	3,060,100	13	17. Singer Associates, Inc., San Francisco, CA	5,201,357	19
16. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	2,750,000	17	18. Finn Partners, Los Angeles, CA	4,577,000	33
17. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	2,573,953	17	19. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	3,890,818	18
18. Quinn, Miami, FL	2,170,244	15	20. Edelman, Sacramento, CA	3,727,000	18
19. The Hodges Partnership, Richmond, VA	2,120,088	14	21. LANE, Portland, OR	3,057,564	18
20. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	1,576,984	11	22. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	2,695,000	14
21. Hemsworth Comms, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,573,710	15	23. Finn Partners, Portland, OR	2,446,000	13
22. The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	863,270	7	24. Peppercomm, San Francisco, CA	2,427,080	7
23. Kivvit, Miami, FL	705,350	4	25. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	2,331,882	14
24. TransMedia Group, Boca Raton, FL	642,122	6	26. Racepoint Global, San Francisco, CA	2,163,282	15
25. Finn Partners, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	380,000	3	27. Infinite Global, San Francisco, CA	1,978,315	9
26. Infinite Global, Raleigh, NC	219,813	1	28. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	1,926,017	10
LOS ANGELES			29. Padilla, San Francisco, CA	1,891,366	7
1. Edelman (includes Beverly Hills)	\$27,997,000	145	30. Perry Communications Group, Sacramento, CA	1,888,774	8
2. Davies, Santa Barbara	10,489,774	34	31. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,723,378	9
3. Konnect Agency	5,412,953	38	32. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,400,882	15
4. Finn Partners	4,577,000	33	33. The Hoyt Organization Inc., Torrance, CA	1,250,000	9
5. Cerrell Associates	3,890,818	18	34. Taylor, Los Angeles, CA	1,010,000	5
6. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood	2,695,000	14	35. Padilla, Los Angeles, CA	1,003,744	4
7. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo	2,331,882	14	36. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	947,459	7
8. BLAZE, Santa Monica	1,926,017	10	37. Quinn, Los Angeles, CA	460,800	2
9. The Hoyt Organization Inc., Torrance	1,250,000	9	<p>The firms ranked in the O'Dwyer Co. rankings of PR firms have satisfied O'Dwyer's ranking rules, supporting fee and employee totals with income tax and W-3 forms and providing a current account list. The O'Dwyer rankings should be regarded as an expression of our judgment of a firm's standing within the industry, and are not warranted to comply with any specific objective standards.</p> <p>Firms are added to O'Dwyer's rankings throughout the year. Go to odwyerpr.com for an up-to-date version of the rankings.</p>		
10. Merryman Communications, Inc., Redondo Beach	1,229,868	9			
11. Taylor	1,010,000	5			
12. Padilla	1,003,744	4			
13. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach	947,459	7			
14. Quinn	460,800	2	SAN FRANCISCO & NORTH CALIFORNIA		
1. W2O Group	\$144,300,000	651	1. W2O Group	\$144,300,000	651
2. Edelman	40,116,000	191	2. Edelman	40,116,000	191
3. LaunchSquad	19,001,464	116	3. LaunchSquad	19,001,464	116
4. Highwire PR	17,019,030	81	4. Highwire PR	17,019,030	81
5. Spark	13,000,000	50	5. Spark	13,000,000	50
6. The Hoffman Agency, San Jose	12,719,000	32	6. The Hoffman Agency, San Jose	12,719,000	32
7. Bateman Group	12,447,340	59	7. Bateman Group	12,447,340	59

Louisiana PR legend Weill dies

Gus Weill, Louisiana PR man, political strategist and writer, died April 13 at a hospice in Baton Rouge. He was 85.

Son of a Lafayette mule salesman, Weill opened an advertising agency in Baton Rouge after a three-year stint in the Army.

He worked for Gov. Jimmie Davis and on the Pelican State presidential campaign for John F. Kennedy.

Weill though made his mark while managing the gubernatorial campaign of long-shot candidate John McKeithen, whom he would then serve as Executive Secretary.

He went on to manage gubernatorial races for Edwin Edwards and Dave Treen and mentored the likes of James Carville.

Weill hosted the "Louisiana Legends" public broadcasting series for more than two decades. He wrote plays that ran off and on Broadway and eight novels through "The Cajuns," which was reviewed as a powerful look at 1950s bayou country.

Weill experienced the loss of son, Gus, Jr., who worked at Edelman and took his own life in 2004. He was 42. Weill is survived by his grandson, Gus Solomon Weill. ○



Gus Weill

Sorrell quits WPP

Martin Sorrell, architect & CEO of WPP, resigned April 14 following the probe launched earlier last month into allegations of his "personal misconduct" and misuse of corporate assets.

Roberto Quarta, Chairman of WPP, moves into the executive chairman slot until a replacement for Sorrell is announced.

Sorrell's departure wraps up the investigation, "which did not involve amounts that are material," said a statement from WPP.

Quarta called Sorrell "the driving force behind the expansion of WPP to create the global leader in marketing services."

Sorrell, via a statement from his crisis PR rep Project Associates, said he's sad to leave WPP. "It has been a passion, focus and



Martin Sorrell

source of energy for so long. However, I believe it is in the best interests of the business if I step down now. I leave the company in very good hands, as the Board knows."

Andrew Scott, WPP's Corporate Development Director and Europe COO, and Mark Read, Wunderman CEO, will share the COO role at WPP. ○

Gillespie moves into WCG president post

Angela Gillespie, who returned to W2O two years ago as Healthcare Practice Leader and Chief Strategy Officer, has been named President of its W2O WCG unit. She reports to Jennifer Gottlieb, W2O President.

Gillespie has more than 20 years of healthcare marketing experience, supporting the initiatives of pharmaceutical, consumer health, device/diagnostic and payer/provider networks.

She exited WCG in 2010 for a series of key posts at Boston Scientific (Clinical Strategist/Educator), Covidien (Venous Vascular Therapies unit Market Development Leader) and NeuWave Medical (VP-Marketing).

Gillespie owns Gillespie Family Wines in Argentina. ○



Angela Gillespie

Edelman Health Founder Turett Joins APCO

Nancy Turett, who founded and led Edelman Global Health and its Health Barometer, has joined APCO in New York as Executive Director.

After a 24-year run, Turett left Edelman in 2012 to serve as Principal of WholeView, advising corporate and NGO officials on personal and public health issues.

It has partnered with the World Health Organization, United Nations, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Harvard University, Columbia University and Merck.



Nancy Turett

Turett also was Media Relations and PA Director at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. ○

Barker to be talent scout for Edelman

Marie-Claire Barker will become Global Chief Talent Officer at Edelman on July 23 and report to COO Matt Harrington.

She will join from WPP's Wavemaker, media, content and technology operation where she was talent lead for the 8,500-person firm. Earlier, Barker was Global Talent Officer at Ogilvy & Mather in charge of recruiting, learnings, development and succession planning.

Harrington views Barker's experience as an "incredible resource" as the PR firm evolves into an integrated marketing organization with expertise in data analytics, paid media, C-suite advisory and digital transformation. ○



Marie-Claire Barker

Slavich takes WB publicity post

Michelle Slavich has been named Executive VP, Global Publicity and Strategy, at Warner Bros. Pictures.

Slavich comes to Warner Bros. Pictures from Google, where she most recently served as Head of Entertainment Communications for YouTube.

In the last two years, her team launched over 50 publicity campaigns for YouTube Original series and movies.

Before Google, Slavich was VP, Publicity at Universal Studios Home Entertainment. She began her career

at the Shoah Foundation, Steven Spielberg's nonprofit organization dedicated to the recording of Holocaust survivor testimonies for educational use.

At Warner Bros. Pictures, Slavich will oversee publicity and work proactively with her teams to develop global publicity strategies on all releases from Warner Bros. Pictures and New Line Cinema. ○



Michelle Slavich

Humor brings B2B firms business opportunities

Some of the most highly regulated and closely scrutinized industries produce the most humorous marketing campaigns, without forfeiting their overall message.

By Tom Faust

Does humor belong in business communications?

If you ask B2B marketers, the answer more often than not will be “no way,” or it’s “too risky.”

Quel dommage.

Using comedy for branding may alienate some customers, partners and/or vendors and spark more trouble than it’s worth, so B2B companies can be forgiven for keeping humor at bay when it comes to marketing messages or managing crises.

But, at the same time, a mythology has been constructed that B2B brands should avoid humor in their marketing efforts.

The reality suggests otherwise.

Some of the most highly regulated and closely scrutinized industries also produce some of the most humorous marketing campaigns, without forfeiting their overall message.

Exhibit A: the insurance industry.

Progressive Corp., which offers business insurance policies, has relied on Flo, a fictional character, to get the word out about the company for a decade. Progressive’s ads are light hearted—silly even—but reinforce the discounted rates that distinguish the insurer from its competitors.

B-to-B giant Cisco Systems also embraces humor to get its message out.

Take Cisco’s marketing campaign designed to promote one of its computer servers. Using all the tropes of coupledness, Cisco developed the campaign to coincide with Valentine’s Day.

The ad features still shots of young couples, as a voiceover intones: “How many ways can a man tell his sweetheart, ‘I love you.’ Until now, the answer was three: He could buy her expensive diamonds; he could take her on a tropical vacation or he could carve his initials into a tree, then carve a heart, then carve her initials.

“But now, he can give her the ultimate expression of his everlasting affection — the Cisco ASR 9000. Because nothing says ‘Forever’ like up to 6.4 terabytes per second, nothing says ‘Commitment’ like up to 400 GPS per slot and nothing says, ‘I love you,’ like six times the Mobile Mac Haul capacity ...”

The Cisco ad is illustrative for B-to-B companies and their PR/marketing agencies. The ad touts the major benefits of the product, uses keywords, and never loses sight of brand value or customers’ needs.

By using humor to drive the message, Cisco not only does an effective job of separating itself from the pack, but also makes its message more compelling.

Think about it: B-to-B buyers are constantly inundated by ads and messages with a somber if not funereal tone. Depending on the brand, B-to-B messaging may even try and shame people into purchasing their product to ensure their business’s future.

There’s only so much serious information people can take before their eyes start to glaze over.

As traditional methods of communicating with business customers are upended, perhaps b-to-b marketers should think about how they can appeal to the funny bone instead.

All the product-driven messaging in the world is no match for delivering a message that makes B-to-B buyers laugh and bringing some levity to their hectic schedules. They’ll remember a funny message the next time their purchasing cycle begins anew.

However, before taking this step, Job One is to make sure the brand of humor syncs up with brand attributes. It’s also important that employees are on board with the effort, because they’re the ones who will be asked about it, and may have to defend it.

Run a beta campaign by some media savvy employees and see if it resonates with them or falls flat. Go backward and determine where the campaign might backfire with the market.

When ready to allocate budget for a humorous campaign, brand managers should also keep these three tips in mind.

Make sure the audience shares in the humor. There’s nothing like an attempt at humor turning into the communications

equivalent of crickets chirping. When talking a humorous approach to marketing, brainstorm carefully. Bring in top sales reps to get a sharper sense of what makes customers tick. Don’t get too far afield from your audience. Make sure the humor deployed doesn’t turn into a head-scratcher for customers. The audience needs to be in on the joke.

Don’t get too

edgy. In order to work

effectively, the humor deployed in communications must harmonize with the audience and connect with the company’s overall values. It’s a fine line between humor and inane.

Be (slightly) self-deprecating. People are drawn to companies that can laugh at themselves and still send a strong message. B-to-B brands are no exception. The message needs to convey the benefits of the products and services being sold, of course. But by taking a humorous approach, companies demonstrate to consumers that they are good people to work with and are not all about the sale. That makes people feel good when they think about your company, which is the coin of the realm.

By taking humor more seriously, B-to-B marketers have a better shot at cutting through the proverbial and growing clutter online, and to connect more closely with customers and prospects who are less and less beholden to individual companies. Don’t laugh. It works.

Tom Faust is Managing Director of Stanton. ○



Tom Faust

Most online forms go uncompleted

A survey by The Manifest revealed that 81 percent of respondents admitted to clicking away from an online form recently and never returning to complete it.

The main reasons for doing so: form length and concerns surrounding online security. The survey found that more than a quarter of respondents — 27 percent — said they ditched an online form because it was too long, and slightly more — 29 percent — cited security worries. 11 percent said advertisements or upselling compelled them

to leave, and 10 percent said they’d been provoked to abandon the process because of unnecessary questions.

The survey also suggested that once someone leaves a form, they’re not likely to return to it. 67 percent said they abandon the process entirely after quitting the form, compared to only 20 percent who admitted following up with the company later.

A majority of those polled — 67 percent — said they’d filled out at least one online form within the past week. ○

O'Dwyer's guide to RANKED PR FIRMS

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

Our 150 tenacious and creative communications practitioners develop and execute creative campaigns that connect our clients with their target audiences in memorable ways. Every aspect of our programs is designed to impact our clients' bottom line, bringing leading businesses a resourceful, bold and results-driven approach to communication.

5WPR's diverse roster of clients includes Sparkling ICE, All-Clad, It's a 10 Haircare, jane iredale, JetSmarter, The Trade Desk, Wendy Williams and Zeta Global. Our innovative programs have received recognition and we have won many awards including PR Agency of the Year, Product Launch of the Year and Business to Business Program of the Year.

Clients: Aerosoles, All-Clad Metalcrafters, Ashley Stewart, BornFree, Bowlmor AMF, Camp Bow Wow, CheapOAir.com, Crepe Erase, Decléor, Diono, Duane Reade, Ethique, Empire Government Strategies, FULLBEAUTY Brands, Gray Line New York, GoHealth, Hess Toy Trucks, IMUSA USA, Indie Beauty Expo, It's a 10 Haircare, jane iredale, JetSmarter,

JustWorks, KRUPS, Lenda, Life-styles Condoms, Loews Hotels, McDonald's, Medifast, Millennium Hotels, Patina Restaurant Group, Payoneer, Publisher's Clearing House, Purity Vodka, Rowenta, RxAdvance, SAP NS2, Servcorp, SMEG, Sparkling ICE by Talking Rain, Spring Owl Asset Management Storyblocks, Sure Fit, T-Fal, The Jackie Robinson Foundation, The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, The Peebles Corp., The Trade Desk, Voices Against Brain Cancer, Wendy Williams, Inc., Zeta Global and ZICO Coconut Water.

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Jenni Brennan, **Melinda Bonner**,
Ali Kavulich, **Sean McNair**, VPs
Melissa Perroni, Employee
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Born in the digital age, 360PR+ is perfectly built for today's rapidly evolving consumer and communications worlds. As a consumer specialist agency, we're constantly thinking about how to build, engage and mobilize consumer audiences and do precisely that for category-leading and challenger brands. We are media-agnostic, holistic marketers, offering clients the industry's very best talent in the areas of earned media, influencer programming, social media strategy, digital activations and experiential events. Our highly creative and collaborative team members, including a hands-on senior team, are *all in* with our clients every day, producing business-driving results.

360PR+ has been recognized as an Agency of the Year and Best Place to Work, and is a member of PROI Worldwide, the largest global partnership of independent PR firms.

Clients: Avis, Cars.com, Conti-

mental Mills, Drizly, Eagle Foods, Gerber Childrenswear, Giant Food, Harpoon, Harvest Hill Beverage Company, Hasbro, HomeAway, Honeywell Home Environment, illy, Jelly Belly, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Lightlife Foods, Meredith Publishing, Nasoya, National Geographic, National Institution of Yerba Mate, Nintendo, Peapod, Pete and Gerry's Organic Eggs, Safety 1st, Sagamore Spirits, Stonyfield Organic, Tommee Tippee, Travelpro, Vida Shoes International, Virgin Atlantic Airways, Walkers Shortbread, WellPet and Wolverine Worldwide.

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A boutique national content marketing and public relations firm, we articulate and promote business growth stories. We specialize in business launches and major expansions, financial services and commercial real estate. We write to inspire individual people to action: clients, prospects, media and influencers alike. We speak the language of business — and can translate to B2H (Business to Human) in ways that connect investors, clients and companies in growth mode.

No subject matter is too complex, no growth vision too expansive for #TeamAkrete's 20+ person team of senior storytellers. Our services range from thought leadership to digital consulting, media and public relations to CEO counsel and social media strategy. Our vibrant, strategy-shaped marketing, ghostwriting and public relations campaigns are delivered with high-touch service, and attention to timelines that accelerate business. Accept no substitute for strong content; our team can make your ideas come alive and help you achieve meaningful media coverage.

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APCO Worldwide is a global communications consultancy based in Washington, D.C. and operating in more than 80 markets. APCO brings a campaign mindset and the latest in digital tools to help corporations, nations and organizations enact change and make an impact for themselves and the world around them. For more than 30 years, APCO's work has improved reputations and bottom lines; created and protected jobs; shaped issues important to society; improved workplaces and communities; gained visibility for and gave voice to those who may not typically be heard; and much more. Simply put, our work has impact, is meaningful, solves problems and creates opportunities. APCO is a proud majority-employee and women owned business.

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Additional locations: New Orleans, San Francisco

Anna Ruth Williams, CEO
Blair Broussard, SVP
Renee Spurlin, VP of Analytics
and Digital Marketing
Evan Goldberg, VP of Client Service

Founded in 2012 and built from the ground floor up, ARPR has always been a different agency — one fueled by a culture and an approach that works for both clients and employees. Today, ARPR is one of the fastest growing tech PR and integrated communications agencies in the U.S. — growing by double digits year over year and earning a reputation for creatively telling high-impact stories that intersect technology, innovation and business.

In 2016, ARPR earned recognition as one of *PR News*' Top Places to Work, and was named *Bulldog Reporter's* Technology Agency of the Year. The agency followed up by generating quality results to be named a Top Tech Agency by *O'Dwyer's* PR in 2017 as well. With over 35 awards on its shelf, ARPR's dynamic approach to client service tightly integrates media relations, social media, content marketing and lead generation and pushes the limits of what a PR firm can truly achieve. Just like its tech clients, ARPR is always focused on PROpelling what's possible.

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Bill Haynes, President & CEO

BackBay Communications is an integrated public relations and content marketing firm focused on the financial services sector, with special expertise in the private equity, asset management and fintech industries. With fifteen employees, and offices in Boston and London, BackBay is a specialty agency serving companies across the United States, Europe, and elsewhere, leveraging global partners.

BackBay takes a brand-centric, content-driven approach to developing and executing market positioning and integrated communications programs for financial



The ARPR team's culture is rooted in a simple motto: Believe the best IN each other. Want the best FOR each other. Expect the best FROM each other.

services firms including marketing strategy, content development, media relations, brand research and message development, creative design and multi-channel distribution of company news and perspectives to build brand awareness, credibility and drive new business for our clients.

Solely focused on financial services since its founding in 2005, BackBay has unparalleled industry expertise and strong relationships with the major business and financial trade media. A boutique agency, every client account is staffed with senior team members dedicated to providing clients a high-touch, results-oriented experience.

BackBay was recently ranked #1 in Boston for financial services PR by *O'Dwyers* for the second

year in a row and was recognized in late 2017 as Communications Firm of the Year by M&A Advisor. BackBay also consistently ranks as a top ten global PR Agency in The Deal's private equity league tables.

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Elinor Mills, Sr. VP of Content

Rachael Cassidy, **Ben Friedland**, **Kerry Tescher**, VPs
Jennifer Steinle, VP of Operations
James Niccolai, **Marc Samson**, Dirs. of Content
Victoria Butler, **Mina Manchester**, **Jen Woods**, Acct. Dirs.
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Hanna Johnson, **Jordyn Lee**, **Puneet Sandhu**, Acct. Mgrs.

Bateman Group is a content-led PR agency focused on helping technology companies at every stage make a positive impact on the way we live and work. We believe crafting these stories requires a different way of thinking about PR and an exceptional team capable of delivering on its powerful possibilities. We're distinguished by our people-first culture and progressive workplace policies, allowing us to maintain one of the highest employee retention averages in the industry — 90 percent on average since inception.

Bateman Group has a very well-defined, distinctive company culture. The agency's motto is "Invest in Team First" — in other words, to deliver exceptional client service and award-winning work,

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BackBay Communications: Financial Services PR and Integrated Marketing Specialists



Bateman Group's Bill Bourdon, Partner and President; Fred Bateman, CEO and Founder; and Tyler Perry, Partner and GM of New York City.

BATEMAN GROUP

— Continued from page 59

the agency first must invest in its people. While fast growth often comes at the cost of employee turnover, Bateman Group has grown an average of 33 percent for the last three years with an average employee retention rate of 90 percent — among the highest in the industry.

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Lisa Hannum, President & CEO
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Nicki Gibbs, Senior Vice President
Ayme Zemke, Senior Vice President
Rebecca Martin, Vice President

Beehive Strategic Communication uses the power of communication to build better businesses for a better world. Our energized culture fuels fresh insights, creative strategies and meaningful connections that create enduring value for our clients.

Beehive's team of senior strategists and savvy specialists bring curiosity and optimism to everything we do. We have partnered with businesses locally, globally and in virtually every industry. That shortens our learning curve. And we have especially deep experience in the education, financial services, healthcare, and retail and consumer industries.

Our expertise includes research, communication strategy, brand positioning, employee engagement and internal communication, public relations, social and digital marketing, and crisis communication.

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Matt Kovacs, President

BLAZE is the go-to PR agency for lifestyle brands hungry for a real piece of the marketshare. Fresh and seasoned, our boutique agency is comprised of veteran practitioners who stay one step



As one of the leading independent PR firms in the country, Bravo Group can help you win tough fights anywhere.

ahead of trends and will not rest on the laurels of past successes. Our media strategies are meaty, creative and on-point because they are backed by a thoughtful process that considers the particular world of each brand.

Recent Awards: *PR Week*, Best Places to Work; *LA Business Journal*, Best Places to Work; One Planet Awards, Gold — PR Campaign of the Year; One Planet Awards, Bronze — Product Launch of the Year

Clients include: AmaWaterways, Chronic Tacos, ESPN, Fragrant Jewels, Heat Holders, Marriott Hotels, Melora Manuka, Naked Nutrition, NutraWise, Omax Health, Pathobiome, Performance Bike, Santa Barbara Airport, Simon Malls, Spectrum Sports, Weihe-Stephan and Woodside Homes.

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Reed Handley, Sally Slater, Liz

Deforest, VPs

Bliss Integrated Communication is a 42-year old integrated marketing communication agency that partners with top-tier healthcare, financial and professional services companies — and those who live “in between” — to build reputation and sales through strategic PR, thought leadership, targeted digital media and analytics. Bliss focuses on finding the whitespace that makes each business unique, driving toward business goals and securing real results. Clients include some of the most respected names in the industries served; average tenure among large clients is eight-plus years. What sets Bliss apart is its dedicated and experienced executives, an understanding of how to forge deep, long-lasting client partnerships and an unwavering commitment to success.

Want to learn more? Contact us at elizabeth@blissintegrated.com.

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Jennifer Clarin, Michelle Griffith, VPs

Boardroom Communications is a full-service public relations and integrated marketing agency delivering results for many of Florida's most successful professionals, corporations, entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations. Now in our 29th year, we leverage the skills and connections of our staff, which includes former journalists, seasoned PR and marketing professionals — to secure earned media. Clients turn to us when they want creative solutions to increase visibility, establish credibility and ultimately make their phones ring.

Boardroom Communications helps bridge traditional and new media to generate newspaper, magazine, trade journal, radio, television and online coverage. Our digital expertise includes website development, blog and social media management and email campaigns. Perhaps most important in today's Internet-driven economy, our online campaigns incorporate online research, search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) and online reputation management (ORM). We offer full-service branding capabilities consisting of logo, ad and collateral materials design, copywriting and video production. With offices in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Orlando and Tampa, we are positioned to serve clients across Florida and beyond.

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Additional Offices: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.

Chris Bravacos, President & CEO
Dennis Walsh, President, Government Relations
Topper Ray, President, Communications
Megan Madsen, VP, Communications

When you're doing everything right but you're still not winning, you turn here.

We work on behalf of companies and causes where government and public opinion affect business and

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SLOANE & COMPANY

Strategic Communications at the Intersection of Valuation and Reputation

Integrated Corporate Communications and Positioning



Crisis Communications and Issue Management



Investor Relations



Transaction Support



Public Affairs



Social Media and Digital Communications



Shareholder Activism and Proxy Contests



Strategic Insights

BRAVO GROUP, INC.

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organization objectives. We focus on winning to help clients recognize the fight they are in. Whether it be a short-term challenge or long-term problem, we bring together dynamic skills and do everything possible to help our clients win.

Our people come from marketing, public relations, political campaigns, digital analytics, research, digital and broadcast journalism, and government. We win because we deliver a superior, choreographed approach using advanced strategies and tools to overcome even the most difficult public challenges.

Partial Client Roster: Aqua, American Cancer Society, Christiana Care, Comcast Cable, Delaware Healthcare Assn., Genentech, Hospital & Healthsystem Assn. of Pennsylvania (HAP), Mercy Ships, New Jersey Resources, Pennsylvania Dept. of the Treasury, Pennsylvania Turnpike, PhRMA, PPL, Transource, The Food Trust, UPMC and Williams.

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Julie Mullen, Co-Founder & Partner

Elizabeth Kelley Grace, Co-Founder & Partner

The Buzz Agency is an energetic, forward-thinking, women-owned communications firm with offices in Delray Beach and Palm Beach, Florida. Founded in 2009 by South Florida-based industry leaders Julie Mullen and Elizabeth Kelley Grace, The Buzz Agency employs a team of dynamic professionals with collective know-how to manage PR, social media and community engagement for a variety of clients, regionally and nationally. The Buzz team has generated impressive, award-winning results for clients in industries such as commercial and residential development, travel/hospitality, restaurant/retail, corporate/general business and not-for-profits.

Clients include Aviation Week Events, Hair Club, Discover The Palm Beaches, Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, Morikami Museum & Japanese Gardens, Galley at



Crosby President & CEO Raymond Crosby with members of the firm's leadership.

Hilton West Palm Beach, Delray Open (ATP Tennis), Chris Evert Charities Celebrity Tournament, Boca Raton Championship (PGA Champions Tour), Boca West Country Club, Big Time Restaurant Group, among others.

COOPERKATZ &
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CooperKatz & Company is an award-winning public relations agency headquartered in New York City, proudly serving a national client base across diverse industry sectors.

We combine the muscle of a global agency with the care of a smaller firm. Our six integrated service areas are public relations, strategy and consulting, social media and influencer relations, content marketing, events and a full Creative Services studio. We have deep expertise in such specialized areas as crisis communications, media and presentation skills training, video production and more.

Clients include such top brands as Coldwell Banker Real Estate, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Fiserv. Numerous awards include "Agency of the Year" in our size category from *The Holmes Report* and "Best Places to Work in New York City" from *Crain's New York Business*.

CooperKatz is a member of the PR Council and the Public Rela-

tions Global Network, a consortium of 50 independent agencies from markets around the world.

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As one of the Top 10 Independent PR Firms in the U.S., Coyne PR delivers programs built on a foundation of stand-out creative, integrated thinking and activation capabilities to effectively convey messages across paid, earned, shared and owned channels for its clients. These programs have been recognized with more than 900 industry awards since the agency's inception in 1991 and led to the agency being named the 2016 Best Agency to Work For Globally by *The Holmes Report*.

Spanning 20 industry verticals, Coyne's client roster includes many of the most respected companies in the world and those who want to be, including The Walt Disney Company, Hard Rock International, Shell Oil, Chrysler, Timberland, Pfizer, VTech, Allergan and the United States Golf Association, among

others. In addition to its offices in New York and New Jersey, the agency's footprint spans across 115 cities, in 49 countries on six continents through its partnership in The Worldcom Public Relations Group®.

CROSBY

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Suresh John, Director of Digital
Strategy & Analytics
Lindsey Goebel, Director of
Content Marketing

The Crosby team is passionate about helping clients Inspire Actions That Matter™ — actions that positively impact people's lives and contribute to the greater good.

Crosby helps clients make powerful connections with their customers, constituents and communities to shape attitudes, inspire behavior change, and motivate action. The firm's award-winning campaigns, which integrate paid, earned, shared and owned media, have touched the lives of virtually every American.

The firm has specialized practices in Healthcare, Government, and Nonprofits & Causes. Clients include the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ),

American Kidney Fund, DAV (Disabled American Veterans), EPA ENERGY STAR program, Kaiser Permanente, Military OneSource, Pacific Western Bank, Qlarant, Social Security Administration, USDA, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, and The Wallace Foundation.

Crosby is #28 on *O'Dwyer's* national ranking of PR firms, #7 for healthcare PR, and is a member of the PR Council and American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As). The firm has offices in Maryland's state capital of Annapolis and in Washington, D.C. To see case studies and capabilities, visit www.crosbymarketing.com.

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Dale Curtis, Founder & CEO
Marsha Smith, Director of Operations

Founded in 2009, Dale Curtis Communications helps companies and causes advance their public affairs agendas through strategic, integrated communications in Washington, DC and beyond.

DCC provides public-affairs-oriented PR and content services to a variety of clients in sectors including technology, telecommunications, public safety, DC affairs, and nonprofit issues. Each client benefits from a customized, integrated strategy and action plan.

Our team offers decades of experience in senior positions in Congress, the White House, Executive Branch, local government, business, nonprofits, and the media.

In-house specialties include strategic counsel and planning, messaging and content, news media relations, digital media, graphic design, video, and events. We also maintain a network of adjunct professionals in a variety of disciplines who can be activated as needed.

Clients have included IPC-The Electronics Association; BSA-The Software Alliance; the High-Tech Digital TV Coalition; InterDigital; LyondellBasell; NASSCOM; NE-NA-The 9-1-1 Association; SAP

America; SAP National Security Services; and the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA).

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John Davies, CEO
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Creating wins for clients facing public opposition and major crises for 35 years.

Davies is a full-service strategic and crisis communications agency that employs insightful public opinion research to craft thought-provoking materials that share client stories. We uncover and motivate vocal public support, soothe the crisis and thwart opposition through hands-on community activation and thoughtful strategy.

Davies delivers the power of public support for clients engaged in local, state, and federal environmental regulatory permitting battles and land use entitlement challenges.

When trouble strikes, Davies manages crisis response with focused management, message driven communications and strategic planning that calms the media and public storm.

DEVELOPMENT COUNSELLORS INTERNATIONAL (DCI)

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Karyl Leigh Barnes, President, Tourism Practice
Julie Curtin, President, Economic Development Practice
Andrew Levine, Chairman
Carrie Nepo, Chief Financial Officer

One Agency. Two Specialized Practice Areas. Established in 1960, Development Counsellors International (DCI) focuses exclusively on economic development and tourism marketing. During the last half century, we have worked with more than 500 cities, regions, states, provinces and countries to help them attract business investment, visitors and talent. Experts in economic development marketing and lead generation, DCI knows how to elevate your community's image, increase project inquiries and help you create new investment opportunities and good jobs for your citizens. Our tourism marketing team partners with destinations to increase leisure, corporate and association visitor arrivals and spending. How? By winning the support of key influencers — media, digital influencers, meeting

planners and the travel trade. Our goal always? Combine smart strategy with the right tactics to deliver powerful results.

DCI is globally connected through TAAN Worldwide, a network of 46 agencies in 29 countries.

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Richard Dukas, Chmn. & CEO
Seth Linden, Pres.
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Dukas Linden Public Relations (DLPR) is a communications partner for leaders in finance, asset management, professional services, fintech and B2B technology. We create compelling narratives that expand our clients' share of voice, enhance their brand value and — most important — engage key audiences in a global marketplace.

We're driven by a passion to deliver targeted strategies and creative solutions that provide measurable benefits to clients — and help their businesses grow and succeed. Our full suite of integrated communications services includes: comprehensive messaging and media relations across multiple platforms, content development, crisis and special situations communica-

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The Dale Curtis Team. (L to R) Breyana Franklin, Ram Uppuluri, Dale Curtis, Marsha Smith.

DUKAS LINDEN PR

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tions, online reputation management and internal communications.

We serve clients globally through a strategic partnership with one of the U.K.'s ten largest PR firms.

DLPR's clients include both well-known and emerging companies in key areas of finance, including: mutual funds, ETFs, wealth management, hedge funds and private equity, institutional investing, and investment banking. DLPR's has proven professional services experience within accounting, business consulting, compliance, cybersecurity, economics, risk management, management consulting and law. DLPR also has strong experience in fintech and B2B technology.

EDELMAN

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Edelman is a leading global communications marketing firm that partners with many of the world's largest and emerging businesses and organizations, helping them evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Edelman owns specialty firms Edelman Intelligence (research) and United Entertainment Group (entertainment, sports, experiential), a joint venture with United Talent Agency.

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Fahlgren Mortine is an integrated marketing and communications company headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, with locations in Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio; Charleston, W. Va.; Boise, Idaho; Denver, Colo.; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Miami; Chicago and New York City. The



Feintuch senior team members (L-R) Doug Wright, Henry Feintuch, Rich Roher and Rick Anderson

agency is a member of the global IPREX network.

Key industries include B2B, CPG, economic development, healthcare, higher education, manufacturing, logistics, retail, technology, and travel and tourism.

Our integrated model differentiates the Fahlgren Mortine experience by allowing us to pursue the best solution to our clients' challenges regardless of the medium. We consistently achieve a Net Promoter Score placing us in what the metric creator deems the "world-class" range, and it means clients enthusiastically recommend us to their peers.

The agency consistently earns Best Place to Work and Agency of the Year honors from various trade organizations.

TURNER, a travel, tourism and active lifestyle public relations agency, is a Fahlgren Mortine company.

FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS

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Henry Feintuch, President
Richard Roher, Managing Partner
Rick Anderson, Senior Managing Director
Doug Wright, Senior Account Director

Feintuch Communications is an award-winning boutique strategic relations firm offering senior coun-

sel, experience and tactical support to a broad range of organizations — from the *Fortune* 500 to emerging companies, non-profits and associations.

We focus on delivering business results — helping our clients build distribution, sell more products or services, improve their corporate or brand image and achieve other business outcomes. And every client engagement is managed — hands-on — by a senior practitioner who is responsible for results. We provide clients with an integrated blend of public relations, social media, advertising/marketing, investor relations, web/digital marketing and other services. Strategic practice areas include technology; financial services, fintech; AV; energy and clean tech; media and marketing; and professional services.

In our delivery of sophisticated public relations services, we focus on specific needs — such as media relations, new product launches, corporate identity and branding — as well as broader-based initiatives including industry analyst campaigns, trade and consumer outreach, social media programs, awards and honors programs, speaking platforms and association marketing.

We serve on the board and are a partner in PR World Alliance (www.PRWorldAlliance.com), a global partnership of premier independent communications consultancies.

Our goal is to provide the expert service, experienced counsel and hands-on support that our clients need to meet their business objectives. Our commitment is to be a

superior business partner in each and every client engagement.

Clients include: BorderX Lab, BasisCode, HDMI Licensing Administrator, Healbe, Klarna, Leclanché, Legrand, LifeThreads, MPOWER Financing and ZeeVee.

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Rick French, Chairman & CEO
David Gwyn, President / Principal
Natalie Best, Executive Vice President / Director of Client Services / Principal

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the leading integrated marketing firm in the Southeast and one of the nation's 15 largest independent public relations, advertising and digital media agencies. FWV is the only N.C.-headquartered public relations firm to earn Agency of the Year honors, with 19 nominations and 12 wins, including seven in the past 18 months. The firm is the winner of the *Bulldog Reporter* 2017 Stars of PR Awards, including the Grand Prize for Best PR Agency of 2017. FWV earned top honors for Midsize and Consumer PR Agency of the Year, and was also named the country's Most Innovative Agency. In addition, the firm is the *Holmes Report* 2016 Consumer Agency of the Year winner and is a 2018 Mid-size Agency of the Year finalist.

Founded in April 1997 by Chairman & CEO Rick French, FWV

employs more than 100 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C. headquarters and New York City, Los Angeles and Tampa offices.

In addition to ranking FWV #14 nationally, *O'Dwyer's* placed FWV #1 in the Southeast, a position it has occupied for more than 15 years. Among the top agencies, FWV ranks second in both Beauty/Fashion and Sports Marketing, fourth in Entertainment Marketing and eighth in Agricultural Marketing. The agency's work in Food & Beverage, Home Furnishings, Professional Services, Travel/Tourism and Economic Development, and Environmental/Public Affairs also earned category rankings in the top 20.

Over two decades, FWV has represented iconic brands like Wrangler, Coca-Cola, Jack Daniels, Slim Jim, Justin Boots, Pendleton Whisky, Volvo Trucks and many others, as well as the Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau, Bassett Furniture, Saft, ABB and Teen Cancer America.

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Luke Lambert, Pres. & CEO
Mary Buhay, Sr. VP, Marketing

G&S is an independent business communications firm with headquarters in New York, offices in Chicago, Raleigh, N.C., and Basel, Switzerland and PROI Worldwide affiliates in 50 countries. To tackle our clients' complex businesses and value chains, G&S communicators collaborate as divergent thinkers who unlock diverse ideas and refine them to inspire action that drives results.

G&S focuses on key markets where we have deep experience and offer valuable insight: Advanced Manufacturing, Agribusiness and Food, Clean Technology and Energy, Emerging Technology Ventures, Financial and Business Services, and Home and Building Solutions.

We combine our strengths in business strategy and tactical skills with communications and marketing tools to offer these areas of expertise: B2B Intelligence, Branding Strategy, Content Strategy, Creative, Digital & Social, Employee Engagement, Insights & Analytics, Media Relations and Sustainability & CSR.

Partial Client Roster: Actagro, AeroVironment, AgTech Accelerator, Cascades, Dow Chemical, Flexible Packaging Association,

GWG, HEAD, Knowles, Littelfuse, Lord Corporation, Mannington Mills, Martin Marietta, Medical Mutual, Miele USA, Million Dollar Round Table, Mitsubishi Electric Automation, MonoSol, Motorola Solutions, National Elevator Industry, Inc., Neolith, Neovia Logistics, Panasonic, Ply Gem, Radian Group, Schindler Elevator, Standard Textile, Syngenta, The Nature Conservancy and Trex.

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Susan English, SVP, PR & Social Media

John Gatesman, CEO
Shannon Baker, Partner, President

We are writers, researchers and news hounds.

Gatesman PR tackles your toughest business and communications challenges — whether it's to stand out in a competitive environment, change perception, protect your reputation or navigate the rapidly evolving digital world.

Our strategic consumer-centric model puts your target audiences at the forefront to motivate action and influence behavior that

increases sales, market share and brand affinity.

We combine critical and creative thinking to produce ideas and content that stem from research and insights to disrupt, educate and engage consumers, media and the industry. We believe in research, so much so that we invest more than \$200,000 annually in tools and resources to benefit your business.

Founded in 2006, Gatesman is a privately held corporation owned by partners John Gatesman and Shannon Baker. Gatesman is an award-winning, full-service public relations practice that ranks nationally within the top 100 independent PR firms, and is a partner in IPREX, a global communication network.

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Phil Greenough, Founder and CEO

Scott Bauman, EVP and General Manager

At Greenough Brand Storytellers, client satisfaction is our top priority. Great storytelling starts with a boundaryless connection between brand and agency team, and this is measurable. In 2017, we once again scored a near perfect 10 for being "extensions" of clients' teams. 100 percent of those same clients surveyed said they'd recommend us to others.

Great storytelling is also evident in outcomes. Our client successes begin with "Brand Journalism," our approach to sourcing, developing and distributing authentic stories. We're a client's in-house investigative reporting team, presenting industry trends and issues through stories that engage instead of sell — and we earn results for clients through consistent media coverage. We also tap owned and paid channels with integrated marketing programs that turn great stories into opportunities to engage, build audience affinity and generate leads. Our campaigns more effectively engage viewers, readers and listeners, and this makes them think, share and take meaningful action.



At Greenough Brand Storytellers in Watertown, Mass., client satisfaction is a top priority. The team believes great storytelling starts with a boundaryless connection between brand and agency team.



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

GREENTARGET GLOBAL LLC

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Greentarget is a strategic public relations firm focused exclusively on business-to-business organizations.

Founded in Chicago by John Corey and Aaron Schoenherr, Greentarget has become a destination for talent. Our world-class team is infused by the same entrepreneurial spirit that led to the firm's creation in 2004.

Our culture reflects the firm's core values: hard work, risk-taking, authenticity, individual and team growth, and creative thinking.

Our proven client-engagement process empowers Greentarget clients to direct smarter conversations that influence their audiences, drive business objectives and create value. Drawing on our deep expertise and extensive experience in crafting multi-layered communications programs, we deliver high-impact results to clients in professional services and others industries.

Everything we do is informed and driven by our belief that business leaders who aspire to thought leadership have an obligation to elevate the conversations they're participating in. That means empathizing with their audiences and delivering valuable insights in accessible, compelling form through both earned and owned channels.

Greentarget's staff of 50 works across our Chicago headquarters and offices in New York, London, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

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Karen O'Malley, Global Practice Chair, Public Health and Policy
Julia Jackson, Practice Leader, US Public Relations and Marketing Communications
Susan Duffy, Chief Strategy Officer, US

Health Unlimited is a global health consultancy and communications agency built by specialists with unmatched experience, perspective and expertise. For more than 25 years we have been driving results for companies solving the world's most complex and chal-

lenging health issues. We have a legacy of advancing landmark developments in global health and challenging, hard to treat health conditions such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, rare diseases, infectious diseases and vaccine preventable diseases.

We drive results for a diverse group of companies and organizations invested in solving the world's most complex and challenging health issues in these areas. Clients include medical device, pharmaceuticals, government agencies, medical societies, advocacy organizations and consumer health.

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Samantha Jacobs, Founder & President

Michael Jacobs, COO

Kate Wark, Managing Partner

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

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

Ranked one of the country's fastest-growing agencies each year since its 2014 debut, Hemsworth has received numerous accolades including HSMIA Adrian Awards, American Business Awards, Magellan Awards and more. Founder Samantha Jacobs was named to *PR News*' Top Women in PR list for 2017.

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

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Emily Borders, **Kathleen Gratehouse** and **Carol Carrubba**, Principals



Highwire PR's March 2018 Company Kickoff.



Senior leaders from Asia and Europe join the Hoffman U.S. team for a "portrait."

Highwire is built on the promise of delivering creative, results-oriented PR programs for innovative companies. Our team is 100+ strong and is comprised of veteran communicators and former journalists with technology industry knowledge from consumer to enterprise across our offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York and Boston.

A full-service communications agency, Highwire has been recognized by numerous industry leading publications for award winning work and as a top technology agency. We've achieved this success with a simple formula: we believe in supporting our clients with strategic communications programs built to achieve and exceed on business goals.

We work with the world's innovative technology companies

to shape and tell the stories of the most transformative era in history. Highwire's client experience includes some of the most well known brands in technology including Akamai, GE Power, IBM, Trulia, Qualys, Sunrun and Twilio.

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Lydia Lau, VP of Global

Operations

Defining communications broadly to include digital, content marketing, thought leadership as well as traditional PR, The Hoffman Agency knows how to differentiate brands and deliver air cover for sales. With heritage in the technology sector, the firm's work today cuts across a range of industries.

While campaigns vary by client and industry, all share one theme: the creation of content that reflects the tenets of storytelling. This means developing narratives that prompt journalists to write and target audiences to read — a far cry from the "corporate speak" that satisfies internal stakeholders. Toward this end, the firm conducts storytelling workshops for internal communicators, executives and employees.

For clients with global needs, the

company operates in Asia Pacific, Europe and the United States. Unlike traditional agencies handicapped by their silo structure, The Hoffman Agency applies a collaborative approach to implementing multi-country campaigns. This leverage of content and thinking across geographies ultimately generates better results.

Sample Clients: Adobe, AppAnnie, Axis Communications, Chicago Booth, City of Fremont, Corning, LifeSize, Linde, Mojo Networks, Monaco, Nautilus, NextFlex, Nokia, Nutanix, Revation, SpinTransfer, SuperMicro, Thin Film Electronics and Zscaler

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Darlene Hollywood, principal
Courtney Curzi, SVP
Jeff Dillow, SVP

At Hollywood Agency, we make brands famous. Creativity, culture and content drive us to ignite products, services and ideas that are changing the game. Believing that strategy and creativity should work harmoniously, Hollywood's integrated services include social media, media and influencer relations, content creation, events, creative/digital services, and reputation management.

Ours is a serious business we conduct with earnest fun, because campaigns are rooted in imagination ... and nothing stifles imagination like severity in approach or sterility of mindset. An independent boutique in practice and principle, being on our own has never stopped us from having a big impact.

We don't get excited about monotony. That's why we maintain an eclectic mix of clients. We've immersed ourselves in the nuances of food, fragrances, education, consumer technology, financial services, and a broad spectrum of B2B endeavors. We're proud to call the following brands clients: Samsonite, Fine Cooking, TOMY International, HBX, The Edge Fitness Clubs, Secure Circle, and Fusion Worldwide.



Hollywood Agency's senior team speak(s) easy of the firm's commitment to creativity."

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Hotwire is a global communications agency that helps CMOs better connect and engage with their customers. From Sydney to San Francisco, we operate with a borderless mind-set across 22 locations including the UK, US, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Australia, together with co-branded partners in the Netherlands, Belgium, the Middle East and Brazil. Together we are #HWlimitless.

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Leeza Hoyt, President
Kent Barrett, VP

THO is a bit twisted and we love it. As one of the continuously top-ranked *Los Angeles Business Journal's* Independent PR Firms, The Hoyt Organization, Inc., builds success by developing strong strategies using the proper tactical tools, setting the stage for dynamic PR programs.

As a full-service integrated public relations agency serving real estate, financial services, educational institutions, healthcare foundations and technology-based firms, we twist, blend and meld various communications strategies to make sure your program produces the best results possible. Nothing more. Nothing less. Founded over 25 years ago by Leeza Hoyt, APR, THO establishes our clients as national industry thought leaders who drive their markets. We



The Hotwire team in Barcelona at their annual bootcamp.

deliver your goals, giving you the best ROI available. Lastly, proud to serve as the LA partner of the Public Relations Global Network (PRGN), THO has 45 international partners in major submarkets around the globe, serving our clients globally as needed.

HUNTER PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Hunter Public Relations is an award-winning consumer products and services public relations firm with offices in New York and London and a strategic footprint in markets across North America. Beginning with research-driven insights, Hunter executes strategic public relations programs that build equity, increase engagement and drive measurable business results for branded consumer products and services. A powerful blend of media relations, social and digital media, influencer engagement, and events and experiences engages the hearts, minds and spirits of target consumers.

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

With more than 120 full-time staff professionals, Hunter remains committed to delivering exceptional boutique-style marketing communications services to our clients and providing a rewarding career experience for our employees. We accomplish this by focusing on three areas: earning consumer attention, earning client relationships and earning staff dedication. Our creative approach and client service-orientation has led to some



The THO Staff viewing the great eclipse.

of the most enduring client relationships in the business including Tabasco Pepper Sauce (29 years), 3M (22 years), Church & Dwight (12 years), DIAGEO (11 years) and Johnson & Johnson (10 years).

ICR

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Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to optimize transactions and execute strategic communications programs that achieve business goals, build credibility and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm's highly differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 500 clients in approximately 20 industries. Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and advisory firms in North America maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco and Beijing. Learn more at www.icrinc.com. Follow us on Twitter at @ICRPR.

Clients include: Boot Barn, Cardlytics, Inc., CareDx, Inc., Car-



With more than 120 Hunter staffers and a geographic footprint that includes offices in New York and London with team members based in Miami, Orlando, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Toronto, Hunter PR still comes together once a year for three days of an intensive off-site creativity training and "mandatory fun."

Gurus, Chunghwa Telecom Co. Ltd., Cobalt Int'l Energy, Darden Restaurants, Dole Food Co., FleetCor Technologies, Inc., Fossil, Inc., Freshpet, Genuine Parts Co., Harman, Herbalife Ltd., HubSpot, IAC, Intel-Mobileye, Jamieson Laboratories Ltd., Jarden Corp., La Quinta Holdings, Inc., Legg Mason & Co., LLC, lululemon athletica, Michael Kors, MongoDB, Inc., New Relic, Ocwen Financial Corp., Paramount Group, Inc., Planet Fitness, Inc., Red Hat, Inc., Shake Shack, Starwood Property Trust, Tyme Technologies, Inc., VF Corp., Williams-Sonoma, Inc., Wingstop, Wintergreen Advisors and Workiva

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Beth Monaghan, Co-Founder & CEO

InkHouse is breaking the agency mold. We're making traditional media relationships relevant again. And we're breaking down creative silos with integrated PR, content, social media, design, filmmaking and paid editorial all in one place. We value progress over process, but we also believe in the power of measurement. We're bi-coastal, 10 years old, 100 people, and one of the fastest growing agencies in the country.

Founded in 2007 by communications veterans Beth Monaghan and Meg O'Leary, InkHouse's steady growth can be attributed to the company's longstanding reputation for solid PR and content campaigns, and deep bench of experienced communications professionals, former journalists, and creative thinkers on staff. With offices in Boston, Providence, San Francisco, and now New York, InkHouse is well-positioned to serve both national and international clients looking for dynamic, thoughtful integrated communications campaigns across the U.S. market.

Clients: Acacia Communications, Bentley University, Carbon Black, Consigli, Crucial, Eaze, Ecova, ERA Coalition, Ergotron,

Finagle A Bagel, Freight Farms, General Catalyst, Gradifi, Harvard, Hired, John Hancock Digital, Liberty Mutual, Mass Art, Neuro-metrix, OSR, Perkins + Will, Raytheon, Rockland Trust, Salesforce, Sisense, Toyota and Zimperium.

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

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



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

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J PUBLIC RELATIONS

Continued from page 69

Grace Hotels and many individual Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts.

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

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

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Atwell, Kim Fox, partners**

Jarrard Phillips Cate & Hancock, Inc. is a top-10 strategic communications consulting firm devoted to helping the nation's health systems and health services companies navigate confidently through change, challenge and opportunity. With offices in Nashville and Chicago, Jarrard Inc. has guided leaders at more than 400 healthcare organizations across the country through



The TDK and Karbo Com team at January 2017 CES.

high-stakes moments, including leading communications and political strategy for more than \$45 billion in announced M&A. Our team of former journalists, political operatives and healthcare executives works alongside every client to build a custom strategy that delivers measurable results in the areas of M&A, issues and crisis management, strategic positioning opportunities and systemic change management. For more information, visit jarrardinc.com.

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Kara Taylor, JPA Labs Senior
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At JPA Health Communications, we share our clients' commitment to making people healthier. Some might say we are obsessed with improving and protecting lives.

This ideology inspires our work. It pushes us to combine data and heart to go deeper and see beyond the obvious. It drives sophistication and creativity to solve complex problems.

JPA's exclusive focus on health means that our biotech/pharma, device and diagnostics, provider and nonprofit clients can count on a team with experience and perspective to deliver results. We generate positive media coverage through carefully cultivated relationships. Our influencer relations model uses a proprietary, targeted

approach to reach the stakeholders who drive change and engage others within their reach.

JPA is an independent, full-service communications agency. We are proud of the award-winning work we get to do every day. We invite you to learn more by contacting one of our offices: Washington, DC, Boston, and London.

KARBO COMMUNICATIONS

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Julie Karbo, Founder & CEO

Karbo Communications is a respected and innovative PR and digital marketing agency that delivers on clients' business objectives. The firm's track record of helping companies boost sales and out-perform formidable competitors draws promising and prestigious clients from around the world. Karbo Com's services combine perennially successful and inventive PR programs with the newest growth hacking solutions. A varied and multi-talented team synthesizes the worlds of PR, journalism and digital marketing — with a Silicon Valley ethos. The resulting services reflect Karbo Com's ever evolving view of what agencies can do to help their clients. Unlike most agencies, Karbo Com ensures client teams are always led by senior team members on a day-to-day basis. With Karbo Com, you don't get bench players. You get the industry's top marketing and PR teams working with you every day, whether it's developing positioning, placing your company in top media, growing an active so-

cial media base, securing thought leadership, executing ebasts and SEM campaigns or writing content that contributes to your bottom line. Karbo Com has ushered in technologies such as the cloud, SaaS, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, big data, mobile, advertising tech, security, networking, augmented reality and wearable technology. When it's make or break, you want the best. You want a team that's seen it all, yet knows the latest and greatest trends, technologies and tools. At Karbo Com, we have a track record of delivering revenues, industry leading stature, partners and funding.

The Karbo Com team has worked extensively with both B2B and consumer tech companies ranging from small startups to global, billion dollar brands including Apple, eBay Advertising, the IoT World Conference, Equinix, Cisco, Defense.Net, NerdWallet, GoDaddy, *National Geographic*, Oracle and Intel.

Clients include: 8th Wall, Fog World Congress, Logitech, nCAP, OnScale, Penguin Computing, RTI (Real-Time Innovations), Senzing, SpaceAI and TDK

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With unmatched business acumen, Konnect Agency provides public relations, social media, marketing and content creation services for food & beverage, franchise, lifestyle and family brands. Konnect develops strategic campaigns that keep brands relevant. We know what makes a brand attractive to its target audience and how to maximize marketing tactics to fast track growth and success. More than that, we are proactive collaborators who hustle to deliver exceptional results for lifestyle brands. Konnect is headquartered in Los Angeles with offices in NYC and Austin. Clients include: Lyft, KRAVE, Sky Zone, Nautica, The Goddard School, Kite Hill, Tea Collection, The Flame Broiler, Dave & Buster's, and Nuna, to name a few.



The KYNE team, February 2018.

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Julie O'Donnell, Global Head of Digital

KYNE is an award-winning specialty health communications agency dedicated to helping improve and save lives. We were founded on the belief that communication is a powerful health intervention. We have deep experience working with foundations, non-profits, government organizations and biopharmaceutical companies around the world to address the most pressing health issues. Our team is passionate and committed, with deep experience working across sectors to make real differences in health. But our greatest strength

The June issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile Travel PR firms, as well as Multicultural PR firms.

If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2089 or steve@odwyerpr.com

isn't just our ability to connect the dots. It's in creating programs that achieve real change, leveraging our skills, expertise and passion to break down barriers. We develop and deliver tailored programs to meet each clients' goals and objectives. We love what we do, we live what we do, and we truly believe in what we do.

Key Clients: AstraZeneca, The Carter Center, World Federation of Hemophilia

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Named America's #1 PR Agency (Small Firm) (Ragan's) and #1 Healthcare PR Agency in America (Ragan's) and called "the Bay Area's consumer/B2B PR and marketing communications experts," San Francisco-based Landis Communications Inc. (LCI) is celebrating more than 25 years in business. LCI also is a Bulldog Award winner for social media and media relations and has been named the #1 Social Media Agency in the U.S. by TopPRAgencies.com.

LCI is a full-service public relations, digital/social media and

marketing communications agency that specializes in consumer, consumer technology, B2B, corporate and institutional public relations campaigns that help support each business' identified goals. Through its Promised Results® return-on-investment program, LCI provides tangible metrics for your PR dollars. Clients include: Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, UCSF, Global Alzheimer's Platform, Walmart, Match.com, California Bank & Trust, Brain Health Registry, Carrington College, Save the Redwoods League, Peninsula Open Space Trust, MetLife, Whole Foods Market and more. LCI is a proud member of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, is an official Corporate Diversity Supplier and certified as a Small Business Enterprise by the City of San Francisco. LCI is the San Francisco member agency of the Public Relations Global Network, with 50 affiliate agencies worldwide. Call us at: 415/561-0888 or visit LCI online at: www.landispr.com.

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LaVoieHealthScience is a health science focused, award winning integrated communications agency providing IR and PR to build recognition, sales, and value for health science innovations. Our specialized expertise in pharmaceuticals, biopharmaceuticals, biotechnology and medical devices uniquely positions us to help clients make their health and science innovations known, understandable, and approachable to target stakeholders through carefully executed strategies and plans.

The agency has received 29 awards over the past eight years in recognition of the work it has done for emerging and established industry leaders in life sciences, pharmaceuticals, health, and government helping our clients from development to launch to commercialization. We bring 17 years of case studies and over 300 proven local, national and global strategies to our clients offering direct connections to media, investors, advocacy groups, and KOLs. We are focused on building trust and long-term relationships based on the quality of the work that we deliver. Many of our client relationships go back over a decade.



LCI hunts for stories.



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Lou Rena Hammond, Founder
Stephen Hammond, CEO

Lou Hammond Group (LHG) is an award-winning firm specializing in the key industries of travel, economic development, destinations, food and drink, real estate, lifestyle, and technology. With offices in New York, Charleston, Miami and Los Angeles, the agency has 40 employees offering brand development, public relations, digital strategy, social media management and analysis, creative programming, and marketing strategy.

For the past three decades, LHG has been an industry leader providing superior, results-driven services to clients around the globe. Founded by industry trailblazer Lou Hammond, the agency takes pride in remaining fiercely independent and departing from business-as-usual. LHG continues to grow with an emphasis on digital, social, design, advertising and branding in an ever-evolving media landscape. With quality and trust as guiding principles, LHG has developed a proven yet agile and strategic approach earning it recognition as one of the nation's most award-winning marketing and communications firms.

issues management and crisis communications, awareness and promotional campaigns, thought leader advancement and internal communications.

In addition to our strength in working with all types of providers, we have long served as trusted and strategic counsel to health care companies that help support hospitals and health systems, particularly with their business development and thought leadership needs.

Learn more about the firm at Lovell.com or on Twitter, Facebook or the company blog.

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Jodi Petrie, EVP
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Liz S. Hosman, VP
Meredith L. Eaton, VP
Erica Frank, VP

March Communications is a PR and integrated communications agency. We partner with technology and consumer innovation brands to shape and share their stories that bring innovation to life for companies, buyers and consumers. Our insights-first approach

fuels and informs the strategies we deploy to solve the business problems and communications needs of our clients. Ours is a unique "under one-roof," model comprised of in-house researchers, content specialists, and seasoned PR pros. Our Consumer Innovation Group's shop within a shop structure enables our dedicated team of consumer brand planners, strategists and social and influencer authorities to tap into the knowledge of the specialist teams and technology brainiacs in our broader orbit.

We are a multi-award winning agency delivering smart, integrated, creative PR programs to a diverse portfolio of emerging and established technology and consumer brands from across the US and around the world. March is recognized as a top place to work and has offices in Boston and Chicago.

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With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Marketing Maven's combination of PR, social media and influencer marketing helps provide a competitive edge to their clients. Marketing Maven



March Communications' Martin Jones and Cheryl Gale.

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At Lazar Partners, we don't just deliver your message; we catalyze the connections that drive business results and enhance your reputation. Our clients count on us to deliver proactive strategic recommendations as well as flawless execution. For the last 17 years, private and public companies have benefited from our proven approaches to strengthening relationships with healthcare professionals, patients, third-party organizations, the financial community, the media and business partners. Our commitment to clients is to forge trusting connections that build brand equity, increase goodwill and grow shareholder value.

Yet even companies with great reputations sometimes find themselves facing challenging situations that can harm their brand and we stand with you to manage and overcome crisis situations.

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With a 30-year track record of delivering strategic marketing and public relations counsel and exceptional client service, Lovell Communications is an award-winning firm serving a national roster of health care clients. We specialize in protecting brand reputations and helping health care organizations navigate challenge, opportunity and change.

Our firm offers clients deep experience in every area of health care communication strategy and management including merger and acquisition communications,



Marketing Maven CEO & President Lindsey Carnett

helps businesses grow their revenues by developing campaigns that engage a target audience, generate sales then utilize advanced metrics to measure ROI.

Named to the 2017 *Inc.* 5000 List of Fastest Growing Companies in America and *Entrepreneur* magazine's 2016 Entrepreneur 360 List as one of the Most Entrepreneurial Companies in America, their services aid national marketing campaigns and product launches with reputation management, organic SEO tracking, competitive analysis reports and online product reviews to help increase revenue.

Marketing Maven is a federally recognized Native American Owned 8(a) and WOSB certified company. We are also a certified Small Business (SB) with the California Department of General Services (DGS) and a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) with the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

Specialties include: Multicultural, beauty/fashion, professional services, travel/hospitality, home furnishings, financial PR/investor relations, healthcare, food & beverage, entertainment/sports, technology, environmental/public affairs clients and social media.

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We have specialized solely in healthcare communications for more than three decades — longer than any other agency. This singular focus has earned us the trust, respect and confidence needed to handle some of the greatest achievements in medicine — from the eradication of smallpox, to the launch of the world's first cardiovascular mega-trials, to the mapping of the human genome.

We are supporting the next wave of innovations ahead. Our independence, structure and deep expertise make us uniquely positioned to succeed in the value-driven, patient-focused, digital revolution that's underway.

We take the time and care to deliver exceptional quality work to



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

clients and each other. This allows us to provide an unmatched level of service, knowledge and expertise to your business and the communications channels that reach your audiences.

Clients include: 81qd, Allard, Allergan, Atlantic Health Systems, Bracco Diagnostics, Cutanea Life Sciences, CSL Behring, Genentech, Janssen, Level4 Orthotics and Prosthetics, Merck and PhotoCure.

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Betsy Merryman, Managing Partner

Merryman Communications works closely with healthcare clients ranging from start-ups to *Fortune* 500 companies as a strategic partner in integrated marketing, communications, public relations and digital marketing. We are a full-service agency, and we offer a wide range of capabilities and special expertise to ensure we have all a client's needs covered. The Merryman Communications team has worked across virtually all healthcare industry categories and therapeutic areas, including medical devices and diagnostics, biotech and pharmaceuticals, health IT, health plans, hospitals and physician groups/IPAs and nonprofits. We're

based in Los Angeles and have team members around the country. We're all seasoned veterans of global advertising and PR agencies, so we offer "big agency" know-how but with a boutique, specialty agency touch. Our virtual model helps your budgets go further, and you can rely on us to help you flourish.

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Nancy Friedman, Partner
Julie Freeman, Mng. Dir.
Lauren Kaufman, Sr. VP

At NJF, an MMGY Global company, we inspire people to go places. As marketers specializing solely in travel and hospitality, we help put travel brands on the map and navigate their narrative through innovative thinking, creativity and storytelling. NJF offers boutique service and expertise in consumer and trade media relations, social media, corporate and brand positioning, experiential and event marketing, strategic partnerships and promotions, influencer engagement and crisis communications.

For those seeking senior level counsel, unwavering brand advocacy and unrivaled media savvy, NJF is a PR powerhouse and one-stop shop. Hundreds of hotel, destination, travel and lifestyle brands have entrusted their reputations to NJF whose "Leave No Stone Unturned" philosophy has catapulted

the firm to the top. Our integrated PR and social media team prides itself on long-standing client relationships and an innate ability to move within many spheres: tapping media and industry influencers, forging creative partnerships, uncovering strategic advantages, and providing global perspective. Our campaigns are rooted in research and insights, and we are master storytellers and content creators who know how to make news out of simple concepts or large-scale programs. We forge an emotional connection to reach our audiences where they live, work and play.

Industry innovators and thought leaders, NJF is the pioneer of Hotel Week NYC, and MMGY is the author of the widely acclaimed *Portrait of American Travelers*® annual research study. With offices in New York City, Kansas City, Los Angeles, London, Madrid, Orlando, Washington, D.C. and an international partner network, Travel Consul, we serve many of the world's premier travel and tourism brands. Other MMGY Global areas of expertise include research and insights, strategic communications planning and implementation, brand marketing, traditional and social media buying, digital/social media strategy, website development and management, e-CRM, and travel industry relations.

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

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Launched in 2010, North 6th Agency (N6A) has grown into an award-winning brand communications agency serving a client roster of emerging, mid-sized and enterprise brands from over 30 different

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NORTH 6TH AGENCY

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sectors. As the #1 Fastest-Growing Firm in its revenue category in 2016 and one of the 50 Most Powerful Agencies in the United States by the *New York Observer*, we've scaled to the next level, creating a culture of speed, service innovation and data practices for our customers, while also implementing an internal "Compete and Care" culture lauded as one of the most rewarding and unique in the agency world. Everything we do at N6A follows the six taglines that serve as our foundation: "Compete & Care," "Embrace the Pace," "I Was Wrong," "Championship Months," "Start & End Strong," and "N6A-accountability." Our dedicated employees are always working one step ahead, strategically collaborating to foster strong media relationships and deliver the best results to our clients. N6A practice areas include cybersecurity, cannabis, professional services, technology, travel, e-commerce, food and beverage, and healthcare, among many others.

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O'Malley Hansen Communications infuses the high quality of big firm work with the focused client service and cutting-edge strategy that only a nimble, independently owned strategic communications agency can offer. We create dynamic programs that drive positive conversations to ensure our clients are heard clearly and consistently. Our approach breaks through a noisy

market with an understanding that brand equity and reputation are built by endorsement from a range of influencers who receive information from a variety of sources. We focus on five core expertise areas: consumer marketing, corporate reputation management, social media, influencer communications and internal communications.

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Lynn Casey, Chair and CEO
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Padilla is a top 10 independent public relations and communication company comprised of 210 employee-owners. Padilla builds, grows and protects brands and reputations worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds and the research authorities at SMS. Clients include 3M, Barnes & Noble College, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Hass Avocado Board, Mayo Clinic, Prosciutto di Parma, Rockwell Automation, Sanofi Pasteur, U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council, the Virginia Lottery and Welch's. Padilla is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 143 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Make a connection at PadillaCo.com.

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PAN Communications is a data-driven integrated marketing & PR agency servicing B2B technology and healthcare brands. With offices in Boston, San Francisco, New York and Orlando, we move ideas by creating compelling stories, driving intent and influencing markets across all forms of media. We currently work with several leading and emerging brands nationally and globally including SAP, Radial, MediaMath, Hybris, Cogito, Sift Science, Maestro Health and Fuze, to name a few.

With a staff of 140+ professionals, PAN offers the agility and personalized service of a mid-size agency while leveraging national and international relationships to manage large scale communications programs. An award-winning firm experiencing impressive growth, we thrive to help today's modern marketers by integrating a combination of services to better engage with your audiences and move markets.

Connected Content — Creative Storytelling — Results that Matter!

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Mike Friedin, Chief Digital Officer

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

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades,

including *The Holmes Report's* North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and *Bulldog Reporter's* Mid-sized Agency of the Year. *Fortune* has included the agency on its lists for 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

Key clients include Capital Grille, Capitol One, CDK Global, Cisco, Eddy V's, EY, Genpact, Mariner Holdings, MINI USA, Oppenheimer, Raymond James, Saint-Gobain North America, Sharp, Steelcase, Sterling National Bank, Traveler's, Wilbur-Ellis and Wilmington Trust.

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Kassy Perry, Pres. & CEO
Julia Spiess, Sr. VP

Perry Communications Group is an award-winning, full service strategic communications firm. Led by Kassy Perry, PCG shapes ideas, galvanizes opinions and influences decisions ultimately leading to social change. The PCG team helps clients positively impact public policy issues not only in Sacramento, but throughout California and the U.S. PCG tackles high-profile issues such as health care, energy and environment, finance and water.

Whether the politically savvy PCG team is managing a complicated issue, running a statewide initiative campaign, leading a high-profile coalition or helping clients communicate, shape and influence with a mix of traditional and digital strategies, we achieve success by building strong relationships with policymakers, the media and corporate influencers. We excel at working with local and state governments. Since the company's founding, we have worked with *Fortune* 500 companies, major industry associations and charitable organizations.

PCG provides services for an array of clients including: Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation, California Assn. of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, California Chronic Care Coalition, Pharmaceutical Research & Manufactur-

ers of America, West Health and ZGlobal, Inc.

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Prosek Partners is among the largest independent public relations firms in the U.S., and one of the few domestic, mid-size firms that offers global capabilities through its London office and international network. We deliver an unexpected level of passion, creativity and marketing savvy to the financial and business-to-business sectors. Our "Unboxed Communications" approach brings breakthrough ideas and unmatched results to every client engagement.

We are a rare hybrid; a corporate communications firm with a fully integrated, top-ranked deal shop and a comprehensive investor relations practice inside.

Through our gateway office in London and network of partner agencies, we can deliver for clients in major business and financial centers around the world.

We are an "Army of Entrepreneurs™." Our creative, entrepreneurial culture attracts and retains the most talented professionals.

Prosek currently advises \$10 trillion in client assets.

Added offices in LA and Boston, expanded transactions communications and issues and crisis management services, as well as ramped-up strategic digital capabilities, allow us to meet clients' evolving needs.

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Big Agency Results. Small Agency Touch.

Racepoint Global combines the power of worldwide reach with personal attention. Our clients expect everything to be bigger, better and bolder. They also want access

to the brightest minds at all times. We have the necessary DNA to do both. We challenge our clients to do more to stay ahead and demand that they challenge us to be accountable. We drive communications that are strategically sound and strive to forge personal relationships, breakthrough results and lasting impact.

Racepoint is redefining what it means to be an intelligence-driven marketing agency. We deliver accountability based on our ability to better understand your customers, their psychology and how they consume information. The key is our proprietary software, FieldFacts. It's the industry's best tool for identifying influencers and targeting them where they engage verbally, visually and emotionally. Armed with this intelligence, we give our clients PR, advertising and precision-marketing campaigns that speak to the right people at the right time.

Racepoint Global services world-class brands including Huawei, Panasonic, Dassault Systèmes, AT&T, Advance Medical, Stanford Children's Hospital, Forrester Research, Harman and more.

Racepoint Global is headquartered in Boston, with offices in Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Raleigh, London, Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

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Ron Walker, Chief Operating Officer
George Cronin, Managing Director
Justine Griffin, Managing Director

Rasky Partners is a nationally recognized public and government relations firm with more than a decade of experience providing exceptional client service to organizations that operate at the intersection of business, politics and media.

With offices in Boston and Wash-

ington, D.C., Rasky Partners offers a comprehensive range of services including media strategy and public relations, government relations, reputation management, crisis communications and digital media. The firm works with a wide array of clients that includes Fortune 100 companies, trade associations, coalitions, nonprofits, think tanks and foreign governments.

As an independent firm, Rasky Partners has the flexibility and resources to address complex communications challenges with a commitment to serve our clients' interests first. We are dedicated to providing consistent, strategic hands-on engagement at all levels, as each client team — including the senior professionals — is highly engaged, from the beginning to the end of each client engagement.

RBB COMMUNICATIONS

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rbb Communications champions breakout brands with integrated marketing, digital and public relations strategies that bring clients closer to their customers, shareholders, influencers or employees. Strategic insights, innovative campaigns and a collaborative culture leads to engaged audiences and customer and staff passion that inspires action and delivers bottom line results. Recognized multiple times as "Agency of the Year" and "Best Agency to Work For," rbb's 70+ professional and creative staff excels in corporate communications, digital marketing, community relations, reputation management, influencer engagement and media relations. rbb's family of brands compliment the firm's PR expertise offering advertising, creative, digital strategy, crisis management, social media and web development teams to create 360-degree multi-platform cam-

paigns that reach diverse targeted audiences and deliver strong business outcomes. Specialty practices include consumer, travel, health, entertainment, education, professional services, real estate and technology. A few of our Break-out Brand clients include: Bank of America, Brown & Brown Insurance, Cleveland Clinic Florida, Cross Country Home Services, DHL Express, Embassy Suites by Hilton, FirstService Residential, Florida International University, Florida Power and Light Company, Hampton by Hilton, Jackson Health System, Merck Serono, Dreams and Secrets Resorts & Spas, Virgin Voyages and Winegard Electronics. With offices in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles and the New York area, we serve clients throughout North America and our international reach extends to 100 cities in 50 countries as a partner of PROI Worldwide, the largest global network of independent communications agencies.

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David Weinstock, Chief Creative Officer

RF|Binder is a full-service, independent communications consultancy headquartered in New York City, with offices in Boston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. At RF|Binder, we build transformative integrated communications programs that address business challenges. Our campaigns connect with key stakeholders, build corporate reputations, and educate on important issues, to ultimately define and distinguish industry leaders.

We pride ourselves on being an agency of entrepreneurial thinkers who always challenge convention,

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RF | BINDER

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in an effort to help our clients think, act and be different. We work with companies, brands and institutions that are building or seeking better solutions for people and businesses, to impact the issues and opportunities facing the food and beverage, health and wellness, education, and financial services industries, and impacting both corporate and consumer stakeholders. With our always-on growth mindset, we are constantly discovering new ways to achieve greater relevancy, ignite more meaningful connections, and build stronger relationships, to ultimately support and invigorate businesses' bottom line. RF|Binder initially was formed in 2001 as part of the Ruder Finn Group and has been an independent agency since 2014. For more information visit www.rfbinder.com.

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RMD Advertising is an integrated advertising, digital, brand strategy, social media and public relations agency that specializes in serving challenger food and beverage brands. It's all we do. Our brands are category champions... brands that have carved out a strong niche for themselves, and prefer to work with a food agency that's as committed to their growth as they are.

Our ideas address our clients' challenges with solutions embodying the words smart, creative, sharp, passionate, problem solving and gratitude. We're proud to serve amazing love brands, including Big-Jac Dog Food, Graeter's Ice Cream, Nest-Fresh Eggs, Southern Recipe Pork Rinds, Wholly Wholesome, Key-



As part of its work in the nonprofit sector, Rosica is agency-of-record for NJ Sharing Network. The agency builds awareness surrounding the importance of organ and tissue donation.

stone Meats, Whirly Bird Granola ... and so many more.

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Chris Rosica, President

Rosica Communications is an integrated PR and online marketing company that promotes and protects companies, brands and people. Founded in 1980, the firm serves a diverse healthcare, B2B, nonprofit, consumer products, food and beverage and corporate clientele. Our PR and communications capabilities include positioning and messaging, thought leadership, media relations, social media management, influencer marketing, crisis communications, content marketing, corporate communications, cause marketing, direct marketing, and media training. Rosica's social media services include strategy, management, branding, content development and optimization, and follower acquisition. Our online marketing team, based in New Windsor, NY, is a Google Certified Partner and specializes in SEO, online reputation, reviews management, online advertising (PPC and social ads), website development, and WordPress security.

As a "thinking partner" focused on achieving our clients' objectives, Rosica creates and executes thought leadership programs with clearly defined KPIs/metrics. We craft compelling, authentic stories and messaging then effectively disseminate our client-partners' good news while supporting their

sales and communications goals.

In 2017, Rosica formed a joint venture with New York City-based Feintuch Communications, which specializes in Tech PR, analyst relations and investor relations.

Our process includes:

- Strategically identifying our clients' business and marketing goals/objectives
- Identifying target audiences, influencers and key opinion leaders
- Honing the positioning, story and key messages, tailoring messages to each audience
- Developing measurable, integrated and creative PR, social media and internal/external communications programs
- Proactively communicating with clients
- Aggressively securing results, evaluating against pre-determined strategic objectives
- Repurposing and leveraging content and PR coverage to augment SEO, sales activities, online reputation, tradeshow marketing, analyst relations, and direct marketing.

Clients include: Alzheimer's New Jersey, BeneCard, BioReference Laboratories, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey, Bridor, Dynarex, Exergen, Jewish Vocational Service, National Vision Administrators, Newark Public Library, Celsius, NJ Sharing Network, T & M Associates, and TriStar Products

Please visit www.rosica.com for case studies and additional information.

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Phil Pennellatore, President

Creating a standout campaign in a converged media world requires a team of talented integrated marketing strategists. Enter Schneider Associates — we are passionate about conceptualizing targeted, impactful and measurable campaigns that activate paid, earned, owned and shared channels to deliver game changing outcomes. Our agency has a track record of launching, re-launching and accelerating growth for new products, services, companies, institutions, organizations and communities. We know how to craft integrated communications programs that create a ripple effect among media, influencers and customers for a wide range of education, corporate, public affairs, and consumer clients. CEO Joan Schneider has written two books on new product launch, as well as several articles for the *Harvard Business Review*, including "Why Most Product Launches Fail." Schneider Associates is a full-service integrated marketing and public relations agency specializing in Launch Public Relations®. Agency services include integrated marketing, lead generation, brand development, messaging, media relations, social media, special events, creative design, web design, digital marketing, influencer marketing and crisis communications. Learn more at www.schneiderpr.com

Clients include: Berkshire Choral International, Brighton Marine, City of Revere, Cubic International, Cushman & Wakefield, J. Calnan & Associates, In-Crowd, Landmark College, LCB

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

Photo by Chris Owen for Windstar Cruises.

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— Continued from page 76

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ScoutComms is the nation's leading agency dedicated to providing services that support veterans and military families. We work with *Fortune* 500 corporations, veteran-owned businesses, non-profits, and others to help them increase and sustain their positive impact for those who have served.

We are an award-winning Certified B Corp and a Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business and one of the first B Corps in the world focused on veteran and military family community issues. In 2016 and 2017, we were named as a "Best for the World" honoree.

We like to think of ourselves as being a mile deep and an inch wide, providing a comprehensive suite of services — spanning the fields of communications, digital and social engagement, advocacy, philanthropic strategy and market research — to empower organizations that are led by or work with the nation's service members, veterans and military families.

Clients include: The Home Depot Foundation, GORUCK, Veteran Tickets Foundation, Give an Hour, Student Veterans of America, Vets4Warriors, USAA Education Foundation, USAA Corporate Responsibility, Veterans Campaign, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

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Alan Soucy, CEO
Donna Burke, Co-Founder

From startups to *Fortune* 1,000 members, Spark specializes in helping technology-focused and innovation-minded companies transform their brands by bringing powerful narratives to life through public relations and integrated marketing programs.

The agency's full suite of services includes content and social development, programmatic distribution and other forms of paid media, and data-driven insights to inform strategic planning and measure go to market plans. Spark also provides comprehensive strategic communications & marketing services for blockchain and cryptocurrency leaders through its Sparkchain division. From guiding successful token sales to growing companies post-ICO, Spark has emerged as the preferred partner for these highly specialized services across the globe.

Spark's clients are some of the world's most innovative startups and industry leaders, including eBay, Electronic Arts, Flickr, Mozilla.org, Nokia, NVIDIA, Skype, *The Economist*, Trulia, Verizon, Visa, Walmart Labs, and Yahoo!. Many of Spark's startup clients successfully exit through acquisitions or go public through IPO.

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Jonathan Wilson, President & CEO

Spectrum is both one of the nation's leading health and science communications agencies and



Spark's headquarters in San Francisco.

proudly independent. Health and science communications is the only thing we do. We live and breathe science and storytelling and clients reap the benefits of our relentless dedication. While many agencies have a dedicated healthcare practice, Spectrum is further specialized to deliver the most relevant strategies and counsel with five unique practice areas: biotech, biopharma, consumer science, health tech and public affairs.

Our in-house teams of digital and creative experts (the LAB), Ph.D. scientists and precision communications specialists are embedded within our account teams, delivering fully integrated strategic solutions that meet clients' business goals. This breadth of experience brings a unique mix of scientific rigor and contemporary smarts to all of our work across a full suite of communications services.

Spectrum is the founder, US partner and chair of GLOBAL-HealthPR, the largest independent health and science communications agency partnership worldwide. This year, Spectrum was named "Top Millennial Company" and "50 Fastest Growing" by *The Washington Business Journal* and a "Best Agency to Work For" by *The Holmes Report*.

SPM COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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Suzanne Parsonage Miller,
Pres. & Founder

Founded in 1999, SPM is a Dallas-based PR agency with national reach, promoting and protecting lifestyle, apparel, food, restaurant,

retail and franchise brands through media relations, social media strategy, influencer campaigns, events, brand storytelling, spokesperson training and crisis management.

SPM's cross-trained team of PR pros, media relations specialists, social media strategists, corporate communications experts and former journalists approaches each client's brand holistically. Whether the client is a category-leading national powerhouse or a start-up, SPM works to build their brand through integrated, high-impact campaigns that encompass paid, earned, shared and owned media elements, with ROI measured using the most forward-thinking, ethical analysis.

Our "No Jerks" policy, which was featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, is the core of SPM's culture. It means we foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust among clients, team members and company leaders, leading to greater creativity, productivity, long-term account stability and true partnership between agency and client.

Clients include: Bruegger's Bagels, Blue Top Creamy Hot Sauce, Cicis, Cotton Patch Café, Gold's Gym, Haggard Clothing Co., Kirkland's, Lantana Foods, Lemi Shine, Main Event, Mimi's, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Smoothie King, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas and Travis Frederick's Blocking Out Hunger.

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Taylor is a brand counselor and public relations partner to a select portfolio of the world's leading consumer brands. Named "Consumer Agency of the Decade" by *The Holmes Group*, Taylor has partnered with the most influential corporate marketers, utilizing lifestyle, sports and entertainment platforms to drive consumer engagement. Founded in 1984, Taylor is headquartered in New York with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, Charlotte and Atlanta. Discover how "We're Built Differently" at taylorstrategy.com.

Clients: Activision, Allstate, Capital One, Circle K, Comcast, Diageo, DraftKings, Fox Sports, IBM, Keurig, Mercedes-Benz USA, Nestle, Panini America and P&G.

TONIC LIFE COMMUNICATIONS

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Maryellen Royle, Global CEO

Tonic Life Communications is a global public relations and stakeholder engagement agency that uses its knowledge, influencer rela-

tionships, and proven experience to connect leading industry organizations with the audiences that matter most. Now part of the Evoke Group — a collection of leading health marketing agencies bound by a common purpose of making "Health More Human™" — we offer our clients customizable services based on their specific needs. We translate the science behind health and wellness companies, products and services into meaningful stories that get heard, always striving to achieve our clients' objectives on time and within budget.

Tonic has dual headquarters in the US (Philadelphia) and UK (London). We keep good company and have long-standing partnerships with leading healthcare organizations including Allergan, Bayer, Eisai, Johnson & Johnson and Teva. Recent awards include: PharmaTimes International Communications Team of the Year; CLIO Healthcare; Sabre Award (*The Holmes Report*); and PM360 Greatest Creators.

Clients include: Adaptimmune; Allergan, Inc.; Bayer; Eisai Co., Ltd.; Ferring Pharmaceuticals; Glenmark Pharmaceuticals; Idera Pharmaceuticals; Incyte Corporation; Janssen Biotech, Inc.; Janssen Global Services; Janssen Pharmaceuticals; Janssen Research & Development; Life Sciences Pennsylvania; Olympus Pharmalex; Reckitt Benckiser; Teva Pharmaceuticals and Zynerva Pharmaceuticals.

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Outcome-Driven. Beyond services, industry practices and even results, come to us if you have a specific outcome you're trying to achieve. We'll use our reputation marketing suite of services — public relations, digital/social marketing, demand generation and creative services — to deliver. We feature four — Thought Leadership, Growth, Engagement and Valuation. And yes, there are nuances to each of these, but most of our clients land on one of those outcomes as part of their strategic objective. Have your own outcome, great. Serve it up and we'll give you our honest take on whether we can achieve it. Beyond outcomes, we connect with clients whose leadership aligns with one or more of our market focuses — Disruptive Forces, Category Pioneers, Stealth Leaders and Wonder Women. So ask yourself, do you have a story to tell along these lines. If so, then we already connected on a more meaningful level than the superficial service and experience criteria.

As far as the experience goes, we have seven practices, six ranked nationally — technology, health, financial services, food & beverage, lifestyle and environment. Franchising, the agency's seventh practice, is in an unranked category, but it has featured brands such as TCBY, Johnny Rockets, Corner Bakery Café and Moe's Southwest Grill. Based in Atlanta's urban westside, the firm operates Groovy Studios, a creative arm that offers graphic design, web services, content development and brand identity. Since its inception, Groovy Studios has received more than 45 creative awards. It owns and runs the Winepreneurs.Club, an initiative that brings together entrepreneurs and small batch winemakers to sip, taste and connect. The firm's Start-Opia platform houses its technology and entrepreneur endeavors that establish it as a first mover in the region with support for Atlanta Tech Village, Atlanta Tech Angels, Tech Alpharetta, Keiretsu Forum, Launch Pad2X and Raise Forum.

Client work features a mix of publicly traded, middle market and startup companies, including Atlanta Tech Village, Belgard, Biocept, Carvana, Ciox, Discovery Point, Factor Trust/TransUnion, Interface, Monkey Joe's, Sakrete, Sita, SOC Telemed and Stretch Zone.



Trevelino/Keller's "Team within a Team" culture has not only influenced its path to the industry's #1 retention rate [having lost one person to an agency in 15 years], but it has also nourished and conditioned its staff's ability to deliver highly measurable and business critical outcomes.

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Vested is a global and integrated digital communications firm catering to financial and fintech clients. The firm's founders created Vested in 2015 with a vision to be differ-

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VESTED

— Continued from page 79

ent — different about the work we do and how we approach it; and also different about the people we employ and how we treat them. Our unique approach merges deep financial expertise with creativity to deliver award-winning, integrated campaigns for our global clients.

Entrepreneurial to the core, Vested is a founding member of the Global Fintech PR Network and launched the industry's first agency-run investment group, Vested Ventures.

Say hello at info@fullyvested.com.

The agency supports a range of firms across the financial spectrum, from established global institutions to disruptive fintech startups, such as: Avanade, Axioma, Backstop Solutions, Bloomberg, Bloomberg Tradebook, BNY Mellon, Boston Private, Cambria, ClearStructure, Current, Diebold Nixdorf, DTCC, Elevate Credit, Finastra, Golub Capital, Mediant, Morgan Stanley, Museum of American Finance, Oakam, PeerStreet, Remesh, Quantitative Brokers, REX, Rockefeller Capital Management, SmartBiz Loans, Virtus Real Estate, Wirecard and WorldRemit.

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W2O is an independent network of complementary analytics and insights-driven, digital marketing and communications firms focused on integrated business solutions for the world's leading brands and organizations in healthcare and other industries. We unearth transformative insights your competition can't see and integrate them into all the work we do, and we know to focus on the full customer journey. Since 2001 we've grown to over 670 people in 13 offices across the U.S. and Europe. Our network includes W2O wcg, W2O twist, W2O pure, W2O sentient and W2O marke-

teching.

W2O Group was named a 2018 Midsize Agency of the Year Finalist by *The Holmes Report*, was ranked #1 in *O'Dwyer's* ranking of Texas PR Firms and was ranked #18 in *PR Week's* Global Agency Business Report in 2018. Chairman and CEO Jim Weiss was honored a "Lifetime Achievement" award by *The Holmes Report*, named on the "Health Influencer 50" list by *MM&M* in 2017, and was honored as a member of *PR Week's* Global Power book list in 2017, 2016 and 2015. President Jennifer Gottlieb was inducted into *PR Week's* "Hall of Femme" in 2018. President Bob Pearson was honored as a member of *PR Week's* Global Power Book list in 2017, 2016 and 2015. For more information, please visit www.w2ogroup.com

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By focusing in B2B tech and professional services companies, Walker Sands has helped hundreds of leading B2B brands build brand awareness, establish marketplace credibility and drive demand that converts to leads. In the 17 years since our founding, we've cultivated a culture that prioritizes collaboration and prioritizes excellence in integrating PR and digital marketing.

Client CompTIA, a non-profit IT association, used our integrated approach to develop a campaign that would close the IT gender gap. The campaign resulted in 130 media placements, including 25+ feature stories in national business and consumer news outlets. The strategy triggered nearly 10,000 unique monthly website visitors, driving more than 800 e-book downloads. Organic and paid social media promotion helped generate more than 600,000 impressions and drive nearly 3,000 new followers.

So far, our approach has paid off. We're a five-time *Inc.* 5000 honoree that's grown revenues 194 percent over the last five years. These numbers are a result of our thriving culture and consistent drive for result driven success.

This immense growth is a result of our thriving culture, which *Crain's Chicago*, *Entrepreneur*,

Inc., and *The Holmes Report* have recognized in their Top Company Cultures list. We're experts in B2B and technology and have focuses in electronics, education technology, enterprise software, fintech and marketing technology to name a few. We have partnered with and built strategy for the likes of Accenture, Worldpay, CloudCraze, Spout Social, G2 Crowd, Hyperwallet and Miller Heiman Group.

When looking for PR and digital marketing services, you need a partner who understands your industry and is setting the precedent for integrated storytelling that delivers impactful results. Walker Sands is filled with brilliant, determined marketing scientists, but our culture revolves around more than just work. We've put the tools, programs and philosophy in place to make our agency a place where employees can live up to our core values: to constantly learn, support each other, and do exceptional work. And that's Walker Sands.

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Founded in 2008, Weiss PR, Inc. helps businesses and non-profit organizations reach, engage, and influence the right audiences in order to achieve their communications and business objectives.

Staffing accounts exclusively with senior-level executives who have a minimum of 10 years of public relations experience, Weiss PR has developed a strong reputation for getting positive results for clients by using an integrated communications approach that includes media and influencer relations, social media, marketing services, and issues management — all anchored by strategic communications planning.

Weiss PR's clients are concentrated in five industry sectors: commercial real estate (including architecture, construction, development, and engineering); employee benefits and healthcare; non-profits; professional services; and technology. In addition, the firm has extensive experience in crisis communications, including strategy development and rapid response implementation for both corporations and individuals.

In spite of its rapid growth and

assignments throughout the U.S. and internationally (including clients in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and Iceland, and work throughout Europe and the Middle East), Weiss PR has stayed true to its vision to provide clients with ideas built on strategy — not egos — from a team of senior public relations professionals who are committed to providing exceptional service, great work, and measurable results.

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Paul Furiga, President and CEO
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Your story is your organization's most powerful marketing asset. It explains why you do what you do, why someone should buy from you, work for you, invest in you or partner with you. It drives your success.

WordWrite helps you share your great, untold stories with everyone who needs to see, hear and experience them. Ranging from start-ups to *Fortune* 100 and global firms, WordWrite clients share a fundamental belief in the value of two-way communications and authentic stories shared by fluent storytellers.

Our proprietary storytelling process taps the deep and elemental human love of stories to build two-way, ongoing relationships with the audiences you need to reach. We collaborate with you to answer the burning questions about your business and develop the fundamentals of your story. Then, we identify the best ways to share the story, and we share it in ways that are unique, compelling and memorable.

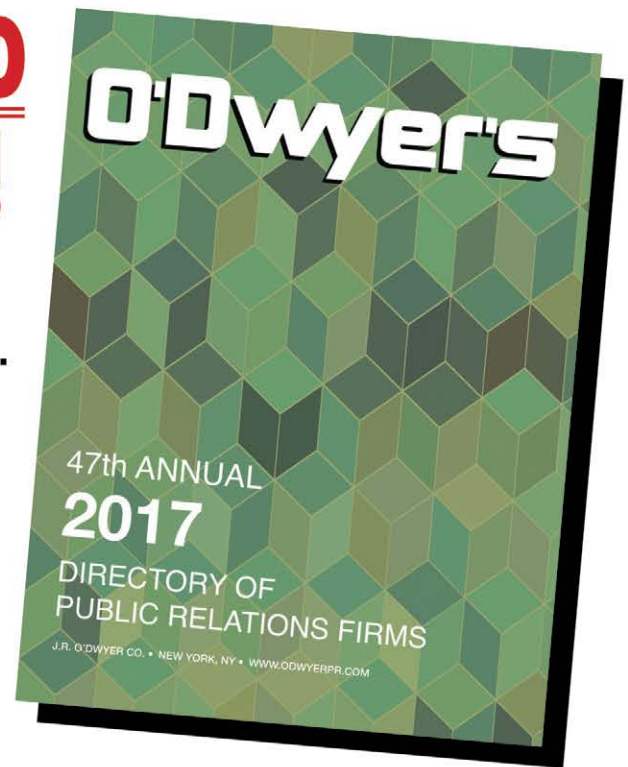
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Choosing and Working with your PR firm

Starbucks surrenders the store

By Fraser Seitel

Public relations professionals, college professors and social justice advocates of every stripe have universally commended the management of Starbucks

for its fast and decisive action after two African Americans were arrested at a store in Philadelphia.

To be sure, the situation, whose viral video quickly elevated the incident into a national crisis, demanded the kind of speedy action that Starbucks took, but I wouldn't be so fast in hoisting the celebratory Mocha Cookie Crumble Frappa-



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*.

cino.

Starbucks' spur-of-the-moment decision to acquiesce completely to mob demands may likely backfire on the company, its employees and shareholders.

First, a review of the situation. Two 23-year-old African-American men at Starbucks, waiting for another man to discuss "real estate opportunities," asked to use the restroom.

The store manager replied that restrooms were for paying customers only, and if the men bought something — perhaps a cup of coffee — they could use the facilities. The men refused and sat down at a table.

Shortly thereafter, the manager called the Philly cops, who arrived, handcuffed the men and led them out of the store.

Second, prejudice on the basis of race or sex or religion or whatever is always wrong. So, if these two were arrested because they were black, then they were clearly discriminated against and those responsible should apologize and attempt to undo the wrong that was committed.

Third, the immediate condemnation of the incident by Starbucks new CEO Kevin Johnson was the right thing to do. The arrest of the two African-American men was wrong. Handcuffing them was even worse. And they deserved, as CEO Johnson said, an apology from all concerned, because racial profiling and discrimination are always wrong.

But fourth, when Johnson and Starbucks

founder Howard Schultz rushed to blame the entire thing on the company in general and the Philadelphia store manager in particular, they set the company up for a raging, long-lasting public relations disaster.

Here's what they did wrong.

Starbucks rushed to judgment

Johnson followed up his statement of condemnation by rushing cross-country from Starbucks' Seattle headquarters to Philadelphia to apologize personally to the two men.

In so doing, he was tacitly admitting the company's — and the manager's — guilt.

But wait a minute: all the manager did was call the local police, fearing a potential disruption. It was the cops who quickly decided to snap the handcuffs on the presumed perpetrators. As one of the men put it, as soon as the police arrived, "they just said you have to leave."

In other words, it was the Philadelphia police, not Starbucks local management, that aggravated the situation. The next day, the Philadelphia police chief publicly apologized for the uncalled-for action taken by his subordinates.

But since the Starbucks CEO was so quick to assume blame, most observers followed suit and blamed the company rather than the real culprits, the Philadelphia police.

Starbucks abandoned its employees instead of facing up to its management policy failure

The only casualty in the crisis — beyond Starbucks' reputation — was the manager of the store who sought police assistance. The poor woman who made the decision, according to Starbucks, "no longer works at the company."

She was tossed overboard in an immediate gesture to calm the gathering mob of racial activists and local protestors descending on the Philadelphia store.

But what did the woman do wrong?

Starbucks' policy on loitering without buying anything is notoriously inconsistent. Some stores encourage students and others to "hang," as a safe place to relax. Other stores are more rigorous in their insistence that the precious few tables — not to mention the coveted restrooms — be occupied only by paying customers.

So, this poor manager was properly confused, because Starbucks' management has never dictated consistent policy. Rather than acknowledging its failures, management chose to behead its manager as a convenient scapegoat.

The message for a future Starbucks' man-

ager faced with a similar situation is clear: management won't have your back. That can't be good for employee relations.

Starbucks caved to the rabble rousers

As BlackLivesMatter activists and #Boycott Starbucks hashtaggers gathered momentum from the sudden crisis, Starbucks' management panicked.

To stem the onslaught, the company announced a national day of racial training for all 8,000 Starbucks stores across the U.S. On May 29, Starbucks will close all stores and deliver racial sensitivity training to all 175,000 workers.

Rarely in the annals of American corporate culture has a dumber idea been hatched; it's even dopier than Starbucks' ill-fated 2015 "Race Together" campaign to "start a dialogue about race."

While most acknowledged that one day of sensitivity training likely wouldn't do much to leave a lasting impression on anybody, the real tragedy of the one-day closing was perpetrated on Starbucks' shareholders.

The cost of the transparent Hail Mary publicity attempt in lost Starbucks' revenues: \$12 million.

The message to investors contemplating an investment in such a weak-backed company: beware.

Starbucks invited schemers

While CEO Johnson's well-meaning but costly attempts to smooth the situation were costly enough, it was left to the company's perpetually do-gooding founder Howard Schultz, creator of the "Race Together" fiasco, to deliver the final counterproductive coup de grace.

These two men, Schultz told CBS, deserved to be listened to. And he vowed that Starbucks would try to work with them, perhaps on real estate opportunities or even as company franchisees.

In other words, because law enforcement screwed up after a Starbucks manager sought help in reconciling confusing management policy, Howie Schultz was opening the company's coffers to anybody who might air a similar grievance.

One could only imagine the rush to Starbucks of every gold-seeking con man eager to take advantage of the world's squishiest management.

The bet here is that once the universal admiration dies down, Starbucks' knee-jerk, public relations response to its racial crisis will be assessed for what it was: a failure for its employees, its stockholders and the company itself. ●

Investing in real estate

By Richard Goldstein

Many of my clients are investing in real estate, but most don't understand the tax rules that go along with the investment. The motivation for making this investment varies, but for the most part, it's appreciation and cash flow.



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

A real estate investment can be as simple as a vacation home or rental property. Rental property can be, for example, a multi-family dwelling or a property that's rented to the taxpayer's business (there are separate rules for this not discussed in this column).

Before going any further, there's one basic rule that must be understood. For the most part, a trade or business that the taxpayer doesn't materially participate in is considered a "passive activity." This means that the taxpayer may not deduct passive activity losses against non-passive activity income. Assume a PR professional operates a small PR agency that earns \$200,000. The same PR professional also invested in another business that he or she does not actively participate in. This business lost \$200,000. This loss of \$200,000 cannot offset the income earned by the active business. Therefore, the loss is suspended!

Unfortunately, rental real estate activities are considered passive activities, even if the property owner does materially participate in the rental activity. (There are exceptions to this rule however.) Therefore, the real estate loss cannot offset the income earned by the PR agency.

Passive activity income and losses

It matters not how real estate is owned. You can purchase property directly or make an investment in an S corporation, partnership or limited liability company. If the real estate activities generate operating income, this income is taxed as ordinary income. If the activities generate a loss, these losses must clear three hurdles before they can be deducted: tax basis, at-risk and passive loss limits.

Without getting into too much detail, the tax basis hurdle is simple: it limits the loss deduction to your tax basis in the property. Therefore, if you purchase real estate for

\$2.0 million free and clear your tax basis is \$2.0 million.

If, on the other hand, you purchase the same property for \$2.0 million and secure a \$1.5 million mortgage, you need to clear the at-risk rule. Your tax basis is still \$2.0 million assuming you're at-risk for the mortgage. Therefore, if the property generates a \$100,000 loss, you have the potential to deduct the \$100,000 loss. If, on the other hand, the loan to purchase the property is non-recourse, you have no economic risk other than for the \$500,000 down payment. Once you get by these two hurdles, the passive activity loss rules must be satisfied as discussed above. Remembering that real estate activities are considered "passive" not active activities, a taxpayer must pass one of a series of tests to be considered materially participating in the activity. If you make a direct investment in real estate the material participation requirement is simple to pass. If you are one of 50 other investors in a real estate partnership, the likelihood is you will not pass the material participation requirement.

Accordingly, if your share of the real estate activity loss is \$50,000, you will not be able to deduct this loss unless you have other passive activities that generate passive income. There's an exception to this rule in the year you sell or otherwise dispose of the property and that's not discussed in this column.

Rental real estate exception

Small landlords with modified adjusted gross income under \$150,000 (\$75,000 if married filing separately) will be able to deduct the loss against non-passive sources of income. Under this exception, you can deduct up to \$25,000 of rental losses from your non-passive income, such as wages, dividends and interest. If your Modified Adjusted Gross Income exceeds \$100,000 (\$50,000 for married filing separately) the \$25,000 deduction (\$12,500 for married filing separately) is reduced by 50 percent of each dollar over \$100,000. (\$50,000 for married filing separately). Once your MAGI reaches \$150,000, the \$25,000 deduction is eliminated.

Real estate professionals

Let's say you are year employed or own a PR agency. Let's further assume your average work year is 2,000 hours, and you also work 752 hours managing your properties. Over the years, you've purchased real estate and now you own and manage six properties. You're familiar with the tax rules concerning real estate. However, a friend told you that you're a "real estate professional"

and the passive activity loss rules don't apply to you. You make an appointment with your tax advisor and ask why you were never considered a real estate professional?

The simple answer is you just do not qualify! True, income and losses arising from any rental activity are generally considered passive. One exception to this rule applies to real estate professionals. If you qualify as a real estate professional, the rental real estate activity escapes the per se rule otherwise applicable to a rental activity.

So, can a PR professional qualify as a real estate professional? It's difficult and, yes, maybe even impossible!

To be a real estate professional, a PR pro must provide more than one-half of his or her total professional services in real property trades or business in which he or she materially participates and performs more than 750 hours of services during the tax year in real property trade or businesses. For purposes of determining if you're a real estate professional, your material participation is determined separately for each property unless an election is made to treat all interests as a single rental activity.

Getting to the math. Our PR pro worked 752 hours and passed the more than 750-hour test. However, 2,000 hours plus 752 hours is 2,752 hours divided by two is 1,376 hours. Our PR professional worked 752 and therefore failed the test. Play with the numbers; unless your primary business is real estate, it's extremely difficult to pass this test. **o**

PR news brief

KCSA courts cannabis crowd

KCSA Strategic Communications is expanding its presence in the growing cannabis industry with the acquisition of Salar Media Group, which specializes in the sector. SMG founder and CEO Cynthia Salarizadeh is joining KCSA as a managing partner.

The New York-based firm's move comes as the trend toward legal marijuana intensifies nationwide. In addition to Washington, D.C., Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Vermont and Washington State all have legalized the recreational use of marijuana. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 44 states have some form of legal marijuana, ranging from adult recreational use to medical use to "limited medical" use in several states allowing "cannabis extracts."

Salar Media Group has represented brands that include cannabis tracking software company BioTrack-THC, Humboldt's Finest and JuJu Royal, the cannabis brand launched by Julian Marley, son of late Reggae star Bob Marley.

KCSA's cannabis practice works for such clients as cannabis-focused agriculture company Terra Tech, cannabis oil and solution provider Golden Leaf Holdings and Viridian Capital Advisors, a strategic and financial advisory firm dedicated to the cannabis industry.

Dept. of Homeland Security to track journos

The Department of Homeland Security has plans to create a “media influencer database” that it says will track over 290,000 global news sources.

According to documents issued by DHS in April, the Department is looking for a contractor who can monitor “any or all media coverage related to the Department of Homeland Security or a particular event.” The scope of the database is to include online, print, broadcast, cable, radio, and trade and industry publications, as well as international media outlets.

In addition to tracking media content, the database would compile information on the people who produce that content. DHS says potential contractors should be able to “present contact details and any other information that could be relevant, including publications that this influencer writes for, and an overview of the previous coverage published by the media influencer.”

The proposed database, which would also gather data on social media conversations, would analyze statements in terms of “sentiment” as well as content.

While DHS says it has “a critical need to incorporate these functions into their programs in order to better reach Federal, state, local, tribal and private partners,” it has not been forthcoming about exactly what kind of uses the information gathered would be put to, or as regards what, if any, limits would be put on the gathering of that information. ○

Ex-de Blasio press secretary re-launches firm

Karen Hinton, who was press secretary for New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, has re-launched her firm to focus on issues such as environmental protection, affordable housing and employment opportunities for low-income individuals.

Most recently chief strategy officer at Fenton, Hinton handled de Blasio’s messaging, branding and oversight of a ten-person staff.

Before joining de Blasio’s team, she ran Hinton Communications and was senior advisor to former Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary and current New York Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Hinton represents Business Network for Offshore Wind, Nonhuman Rights Project, National Community Reinvestment Coalition and the Amazon Defense Coalition. ○



Karen Hinton

Dept. of Agriculture alum joins Edelman

Darci Vetter, who was Deputy Secretary at the Dept. of Agriculture, has joined Edelman in D.C. as general manager of PA.

She’ll be vice chair in its agriculture, food and trade group to support clients in the commodities, supply chain, agribusiness and global trade sectors.

Vetter also served as chief agricultural negotiator in the Office of the US Trade Representative, where she worked on the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement. ○



APCO handles Global Citizen

APCO Worldwide has signed on to represent New York-based Global Citizen, the nonprofit dedicated to eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.

The GC platform relies on social action such as events, content, partnerships and grassroots organizing to generate funds.

Its high-profile Global Citizen Festival held last September in Central Park featured performances by The Killers, Steven Wonder, The Lumineers and The Chainsmokers.

The organization claims to have received financial commitments of \$35 billion since 2012, of which \$10 billion of the amount has been disbursed for food/hunger, sanitation, health-care and educational programs.

APCO’s work involves support for maintaining spending on development aid. Jerri Ann Henry leads that effort. ○



Jerri Ann Henry

Gunshot detection group sets sights on Washington

Burson-Marsteller’s Prime Policy Group has been hired by gun technology company ShotSpotter, Inc. to advocate law enforcement funding issues on Capitol Hill.

Newark, CA-based ShotSpotter, which was founded in 1995, utilizes a technology that detects the location of gunfire activity through a series of sound sensors placed on area rooftops, then alerts area law enforcement agencies when shootings occur. The service, which law enforcement agencies pay an annual subscription to use, is intended to help officers respond to shootings more quickly and to provide them with local gunfire data, thereby reducing incidents of gun violence.

The New York Police Department began using the technology two years ago. Law enforcement agencies in more than 90 cities — including Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Boston, San Francisco and Minneapolis — have adopted the technology as well.

According to lobbying registration documents filed in April, PPG has been hired by ShotSpotter to monitor federal assistance to local U.S. law enforcement agencies.

A seven-person team at the government and public affairs firm leads the account, including PPG chairman Charles Black, who ran all of Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaigns and also served as an adviser to the election campaigns of George H.W. Bush, Senator John McCain and Governors Mitt Romney and John Kasich.

WPP is Prime Policy Group’s parent company. ○

UAE hires H+K for energy bash

The United Arab Emirates has hired Hill+Knowlton Strategies to handle strategic communications and global PR for the World Energy Council's 24th World Energy Congress slated for 2019 (Sept. 9-12) at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center.

The Congress, headlined "Energy for Prosperity," will attract heads of state, energy executives, community leaders and members of academia who will discuss the "energy trilemma" of security, equity and environment sustainability.

Abu Dhabi won the bidding to host the 2019 Congress in 2014.

H+K's offices in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and London will begin their PR work by showcasing the planning and progress made to put on the event. The WPP unit will promote a flurry of announcements leading up to the Congress and conduct outreach to leading influencers in the energy sector.

The London-based World Energy Council has more than 3,000-member organizations in 90 countries. ○

Mercury consults Kazakhstan

Mercury Public Affairs has inked a three-month, \$90,000 pact to lend consulting and management services for the Republic of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice.

The public affairs and strategy shop will provide strategic consulting and management services to the central Asian country in areas of lobbying, government relations and issues management, according to Foreign Agents Registration Act documents filed with

the Justice Department in April.

Mercury will be an independent subcontractor on behalf of U.S. law firm Latham & Watkins, with whom there is a direct contractual relationship, while the work will be funded and performed under the direction and supervision of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Justice.

The oil-rich former Soviet Union state is Central Asia's top economy, generating 60 percent of the region's GDP, primarily through its booming oil and gas industry.

The \$30,000 per-month pact terminates in June.

Omnicom is Mercury's parent company. ○

ThirdCircle pitches Morocco as film mecca

The Embassy of Morocco has hired ThirdCircle Inc. to a \$480,000 one-year pact to promote film production in the Kingdom.

The agreement calls for TC to arrange visits by American film and TV producers to Morocco and provide opportunities for Moroccan producers to meet with studio executives in the US.

TC also will pitch the northwest African nation as a golf mecca and arrange for FAM trips there by golf pros, enthusiasts and media people from outlets such as the Golf Channel.

It will craft an outreach program and "engage in meaningful dialogue with various stakeholder and ethnic/issue-oriented groups across a range of issues from culture to economics," according to its statement of work with the Embassy. ○

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.

PASS, LLC, Alexandria, VA, **registered Mar. 30, 2018 for Kurdistan Regional Government, Ministry of Interior**; Joint Crisis Centre, Agency of MOI, Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq, regarding an international donor's conference for the humanitarian crisis in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, including drafting a resolution in favor of the conference and contacting U.S. members of Congress to sponsor and support the development of such resolution.

Tusk Ventures LLC, New York, NY, **registered Apr. 24, 2018 for Republic of the Marshall Islands**, Majuro, MH, regarding consulting services to Neema, Ltd., an Israeli startup that facilitates international money transfers via an app and has used blockchain to create a digital currency called the Sovereign (SOV). The Republic of the Marshall Islands recently passed a law declaring the SOV as its official legal tender. Neema is now working together with the RMI to ensure the smooth rollout of the SOV.

Dickens & Madson Canada, Inc., Montreal, Quebec, Canada, **registered Apr. 11, 2018 for United Liberation Movement for West Papua**, Republic of Vanuatu, regarding securing support of the US for the goals of bringing independence to West Papua.

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.

GDR Strategies, Alexandria, VA, **registered Apr. 23, 2018 for Northrup Grumman Systems Corporation**, Falls Church, VA, regarding defense budget issues, authorization and appropriations.

Husch Blackwell Strategies, Washington, D.C., **registered April 23, 2018 for Coalition to Stop Internet Gambling**, Reno, NV, regarding issues related to online gaming legislation.

Thorn Run Partners, Washington, D.C., **registered April 23, 2018 for Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**, Bethesda, MD, regarding health insurance access and treatment needs of persons living with cystic fibrosis.

American Continental Group, Washington, D.C., **registered Apr. 20, 2018 for Songwriters Guild of America**, Brentwood, TN, regarding copyright and competition issues.

BGR Government Affairs, Washington, D.C., **registered Apr. 20, 2018 for 1,000 Days**, Washington, D.C., regarding strategic counsel on foreign assistance and nutrition funding for the non-profit working in the US and around the world to ensure women and children have the healthiest first 1,000 days.

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Employees: 19. Founded: 2009.

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

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