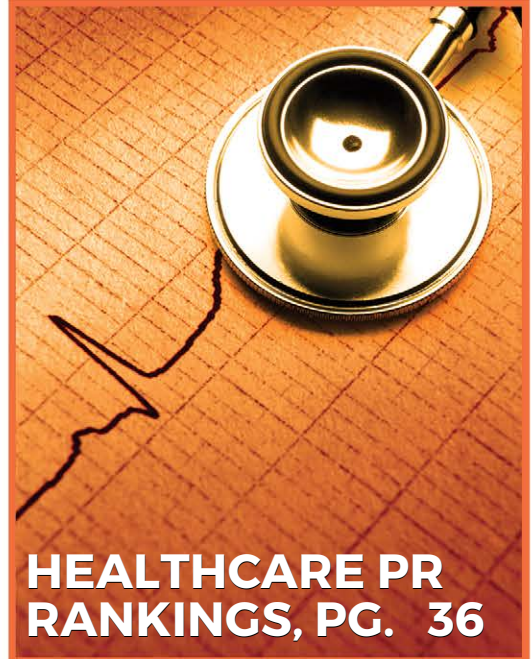


2021 RANKINGS ISSUE

**PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS RANKED BY
NET FEES, SPECIALTY, REGION & GROWTH**

**MORE THAN 130 FIRMS RANKED ACROSS
19 INDUSTRY SPECIALTIES**



**HEALTHCARE PR
RANKINGS, PG. 36**



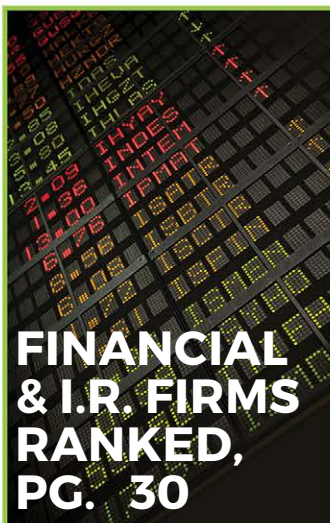
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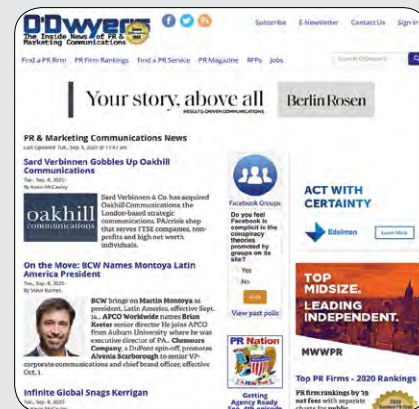
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Problems for the performatively woke brand

Now that being woke has gone mainstream, corporate America has predictably seized the moment and is weighing in on all matters political. Brands are increasingly deploying belief-driven messaging as a means of engaging with audiences, reminding us of their sophistication and good character by inserting themselves into weighty social issues and gaining a ton of free earned media in the process.

The problem is, the strategy suffers from overuse, and I suspect a lot of people are beginning to see some of these campaigns for what they are: tone-deaf pandering, opportunism couched in advocacy. Cheap shots from the cheap seats.

Remember Starbucks' cringeworthy 2015 gaffe, where hapless baristas were forced to engage in face-to-face conversations with customers about racial matters? We're at the point where this kind of quasi-parodic lip-service is becoming the norm. When Oreo in February tweeted that "trans people exist," it largely fell on deaf ears—and I'm guessing a few rolled eyes—presumably because many of us caught the chloroform whiff of corporatism behind the sentiment. The conscripted nature of these protestations often feels forced, facile, canned. Brands making big statements without committing to actually doing anything. Companies that get to cast the illusion that they've moved society in a positive direction, when in reality, all they did was post a tweet.

Brands, of course, have the right to say whatever they want. And I'm not claiming brands should necessarily curb their political ambitions, or refrain from making moral pronouncements. I'm simply suggesting that we're increasingly beginning to look at these messages with a jaundiced eye, in part because we're beginning to recognize the hands of marketing working behind them. And when that spell fails, we begin to see the messengers as bad actors, which is exactly *not* the kind of message any brand wants to send.

Conventional wisdom—for the past several years, anyway—has been that brands should publicly align themselves with today's pressing political and social causes. They should do so because, news flash, study after study shows consumers are more attuned than ever to how their purchasing behaviors impact the world, and as a result, want to support companies that share their values.

Enter the age of the performatively woke brand. Politics has become a kind of fashion accessory for corporate America these days, a way to profit from protest. Big business' newfound altruism-as-a-marketing-strategy got a shot in the arm during the Trump era, when many Americans turned to the private sector for succor because they realized a do-nothing government wasn't going to move the needle on important environmental, civil and societal issues. This set off a dramatic rift between conservative state and Federal leaders and our newly-enlightened corporate world that continues today. Dick's Sporting Goods in 2018 stopped selling assault weapons after lawmakers cowed to the NRA in the wake of the Parkland, FL shooting. The NBA drew the ire of the Chinese government after Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey spoke out in support of pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong. And this year, Major League Baseball, Delta Airlines and Coca-Cola have all publicly condemned Georgia's controversial voting restriction laws.

Many progressive Americans have embraced this development in our culture wars. The problem is, in calling upon the private sector to rescue democracy, we're essentially making the corporate world stewards of it. This isn't going to end well. At the risk of stating the obvious, corporations don't run on benevolence; they say what consumers want to hear because it's in their best financial interests to do so, regardless of what corner of the political spectrum the loudest conversations happen to be coming from. And I don't think the world we're currently working to create—where corporations set the yardstick for what's morally acceptable behavior—is the world most of us want. Suffice to say, a company that fires an employee for a homophobic tweet she/he wrote as a teenager for easy PR points isn't something to applaud.

Admittedly, the private sector's forays into "woke washing" aren't without benefit: The silver lining here is that our politically-aware climate has lent a conscience to corporations that, for decades, were notoriously silent on social issues. Even if we recognize that brands are simply working the levers of public opinion to increase awareness and boost market share, it deserves to be said that people are convincing the private sector to say and do things it wouldn't have done 10 years ago. That's a big deal.

The critical distinction is that there remains a gaping divide between good words—even good words fronting good intentions—and actual advocacy. Maybe that's why it's hard for some to take Amazon's placement of a Black Lives Matter banner on its website seriously, considering its history of anti-union tactics. Or the fact that Oreo parent Mondelez International apparently wasn't woke enough to avoid being named in a class action lawsuit this year filed by former child slaves who alleged the company engaged in forced labor practices on Ivory Coast cocoa plantations. Actions, as it turns out, always go a lot farther than words. ○

— Jon Gingerich

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PR salaries flat, hourly billing rates up

Salaries at PR agencies nationwide were essentially flat in 2020, even as hourly billing rates increased at an average rate of nearly five percent, according to an annual Spring Associates report.

By Jon Gingerich

Salaries for PR pros nationwide were flat last year in light of the economic damage wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the latest edition of an annual compensation report by PR executive search firm Spring Associates.

The report, which analyzed salaries, bonuses and other compensation-related criteria among corporate communications executives and PR agency professionals, found that PR pros—across a range of agency titles from account executive through executive vice president—earned an overall average of \$111,600 last year compared to \$111,400 the year prior, representing an almost-nonexistent gain of 0.0018 percent.

Corporate marketing communications professionals, on the other hand, registered annual average earnings of \$142,600 compared to 2019's \$141,300, revealing an increase of 0.0092 percent.

When broken down by region, the report discovered that PR agency executive salaries were up more across the eight metro

areas that comprise the country's largest concentration of communications professionals (New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Houston, Washington D.C. and San Francisco)—at \$116,200 compared to \$115,900.

Corporate communications executives in those eight key metro areas, meanwhile, posted an overall average salary of \$148,100 compared to 2019's average of \$147,400, representing a .008 percent increase.

While salaries were essentially flat for PR professionals last year, the report discovered that hourly billing rates at those PR firms went up at the same time, increasing,

on average, by 4.8 percent.

Spring Associates President Dennis Spring told *O'Dwyer's* that the uptick in hourly rates was “probably due to pandemic-caused losses.”

The report also found that while consultant and freelancer hourly rates were virtually flat in New York (0.6 percent), Atlanta (1.6 percent), Houston (0.6 percent) and Boston (0.8 percent), they were up significantly more in Chicago (seven percent), Los Angeles (five percent), San Francisco (4.3 percent) and Washington, D.C. (2.3 percent).

When it comes to annual bonuses, the report found that nationally, bonuses represented an average 9.1 percent of base salaries for PR agency staff while for corporate communications pros they were much higher, representing an average 19.9 percent of base salaries. ○

Influencers don't influence social media users

By Jon Gingerich

Despite their popularity and overwhelming prevalence in today's marketing world, few social media users buy products promoted online by influencers, and most seem to actively avoid

sponsored posts that appear uninformative or don't speak to their specific interests, according to recent findings released by portfolio website Visual Object.

The Visual Object survey discovered that a majority (58 percent) of social media users have not and never intend to purchase influencer-promoted products.

According to the survey, most social media users are drawn toward influencers with specific subject matter expertise who provide informative, insightful content focusing on a shared interest. The survey found that the most popular influencers are subject matter experts (34 percent), business leaders (29 percent) and wellness experts (28 percent), suggesting that influencers with specialized, niche followings are the most likely to engage followers and cultivate communities.

The study also discovered that most respondents who follow influencers (55 percent) said they typically follow brand advocates with fewer than 50,000 followers, further supporting the idea that most social media users tend to engage more with influencers that specialize in niche subjects and interests. Micro-influencers, or brand advocates with fewer than 10,000 followers, are often seen by brands as a budget-friendly alternative to partnering with influencers that command larger followings.

Finally, the Visual Objects survey found that most social media users are relatively selective about who they follow online, with a majority (57 percent) claiming they follow only five influencers or fewer. ○



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Negative sentiment hurting marketing campaigns

The prevalence of negative language in online marketing campaigns, while certainly a reflection of the times, has had the harmful effect of reducing conversions among site visitors, according to a study.

By Jon Gingerich

The overwhelmingly negative tone that has pervaded news coverage since the early months of 2020 is, arguably, at least partially responsible for driving the historic surge of clicks and online content consumption that has occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. But those sentiments have had the opposite effect on marketing campaigns, according to a new marketing study by conversion intelligence software company Unbounce.

Unbounce's study analyzed millions of visits to thousands of websites across 16 different industry categories and studied how certain types of sentiment and emotional language might influence a site's ability to convert traffic into potential customers. It found that the frequent occurrence of negative emotional language appeared to coincide with lower conversions across multiple industries, particularly businesses specializing in ecommerce, fitness and nutrition and home improvement.

In the ecommerce category, for exam-

ple, the study found that conversions went down as emotional language with a negative connotation—such as sadness or fear, for example—went up, suggesting that while negative sentiment isn't always necessarily a bad thing, it probably doesn't pair well with ecommerce copy, where feelings of joy and anticipation are more likely to correlate with an increase in landing page performance.

Unbounce's study found that online sellers in this category increased their use of emotional language in the last year, particularly negative language that evokes anger (up 8.9 percent), fear (up 6 percent) and sadness (up 8.1 percent).

Traffic to sites specializing in fitness and nutrition increased almost 125 percent in the last year, but also saw emotional language with significantly higher levels of negative sentiment, including words with an angry tone (up 13.4 percent) as well as disgust (up 9 percent) and fear (up 15.9 percent).

Unbounce's data revealed that fitness and nutrition sites with positive and encouraging language—like words evoking joy, for example—correlated with much higher conversions, suggesting drill-instructor-style language could be hurting these business' page performance.

On the other hand, the Unbounce study also discovered that, occasionally, positivity appears to result in a decrease in conversions. When it comes to education-based sites, for example, the study found that positive language—words related to joy and anticipation, for example—actually seemed to have a neutral or negative influence on whether visitors convert, suggesting an exception to the rule that being positive or upbeat is always a must for marketing campaigns.

Unbounce's "Conversion Benchmark Report" used artificial intelligence to analyze the outcomes of 264 million visits to 44,000 landing pages between November 2019 and November 2020. ○



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From insights to actions: a PR pro's guide to analytics

Some of the ways in which analytics and artificial intelligence are transforming today's communications landscape.

By Kayla Rodriguez and Sally Slater

PR and marketing professionals notoriously don't like numbers. We're creatives, storytellers and above all else, words people. Calculus, we hardly knew ye.

But with the advent of analytics and artificial intelligence, numbers are about to become your new best friends. The days of decision by gut instinct are behind us. Data reigns supreme, replete with quantifiable evidence that can prove or disprove our theories, measure program impact, gauge audience interests and behaviors and uncover opportunities to optimize performance. The communications strategies of the future will increasingly be one part art, one part data science.

Where analytics has gained the most traction in the industry to date is measurement and reporting. Demonstrating the ROI of PR and marketing has long been an uphill battle, and as reporting requests grow more frequent and more elaborate, collecting and collating the data can eat up a sizable chunk of retainer hours. Analytics can streamline reporting efforts and provide better metrics that resonate with business leaders outside the marketing function. Relational databases allow us to build dashboards with KPIs tailored to different stakeholders, and data visualizations help us relay the numbers in the most compelling way. And instead of using ad value equivalency, we can use attribution analytics to tie earned media directly to the sales funnel.

However, reporting efficiencies are just the tip of the iceberg. Here are some of the ways analytics and AI are transforming the communications landscape:

Competitor intelligence

Analytics and AI can accelerate unwieldy competitor audits by automating data collection processes to quickly generate competitive benchmarks and insights on performance. Analyzing earned share of voice with tools like Cision and Meltwater is standard fare at this point. You may be less familiar with SimilarWeb, which lets you spy on your competitors' website traffic (ethically!) or Newswhip, which not only measures social engagement on your competitors' content, but it also predicts which competitor content will perform best next.

Audience insights

The holy grail of insights, audience analytics can be used to get a 360-degree view of your customers and the influencers who shape their opinions and decision-making. There are plenty of social listening platforms

out there that will give you surface-level intelligence on broad market categories or topics of conversation. But to truly understand what your target audiences care about, who they respect, how they consume content and when, you need to go deeper. We refer to this as audience architecture, the structural elements that shape human behaviors and outcomes. With machine learning techniques, you can identify and track hyper-targeted audiences to construct a dynamic view of those structural elements and use those insights as the foundation of everything that you do.

Content and media mix optimization

By leveraging analytics to map where key audiences go online to read and share content, you can more efficiently allocate media spend to those channels and outlets. Not only can you drive more website visits, you can drive more of the right visitors to your website. This applies to search strategy and keyword spend as well. By understanding the language your audiences use when they ask peers questions online about products and services, you can tailor your SEO strategy to match their language and optimize your web content to address gaps in knowledge.

ABM and sales team enablement

Analytics can also be used for strategic buyer intelligence to support an account-based marketing strategy or empower sales teams with insights into the needs and business objectives of their sales targets. A corporate issues report, paired with an audit of a key decision-maker's public social persona, paints a broader picture of where their priorities and pain points lie. Messaging, content and sales collateral can be personalized based on analysis of specific high-value audience segments.

The good news is that with self-service analytics platforms and a team of data scientists, communicators still don't have to do the math. However, data isn't insight, and the numbers alone don't tell a story. To get the most value out of your data initiatives, consider these three best practices:

Build the right data foundation. Bad data in equals bad data out. To find meaningful insights, you need to draw from the right data sources—and those data sources need to be accurate, complete, relevant, reliable, timely—and most importantly, accessible. Figure out what first-party data sources (the data you collect directly), second-party data (first-party data from other entities)

and third-party data (open databases or aggregated from other data owners) you have available to you, and which best fit your needs. Marrying first-party with third-party data can be particularly effective.

Break down silos. The project team should be multidisciplinary, integrating technical data skills with communications expertise and industry experience. Data teams can't work in silos and need to collaborate directly with account leads and clients to thoroughly understand the applications of the research and realities of the market. Expect an iterative process and communicate frequently to avoid gaps in understanding.

Start with specific questions and hypotheses to test.

Hogwarts isn't real, and data scientists aren't wizards. You can't expect them to pull rabbits out of hats unless you give some guidance on the breed and color you're looking for. The best analytics initiatives aren't open ended; they're designed to find answers to specific questions or prove hypotheses true or false.

The challenging part is knowing what questions to ask. To formulate the right ones, we begin with these thought starters: What are your marketing or PR goals? Who are you trying to reach? What do you already know about your key audiences? What types of insights would be most helpful? What themes do you want to learn more about?

Hypotheses don't need to be PhD-level theses. The only pre-requisite is curiosity. For example, you might postulate that your audience prefers short-form to long-form content. Analytics can validate—or invalidate—your theory.

The most critical determinant of analytics value is the extent to which the insights uncovered are actionable. You might discover that 55 percent of your customer base prefers dogs to cats, but what can you actually do with that information? (Unless you're in the business of pets.) In our view, analytics is only successful when it leads to concrete changes that drive better outcomes. AI can accelerate information gathering, but it's on communicators to turn insight into action.

Kayla Rodriguez is Senior Director of Analytics and Sally Slater is Head of Innovation at The Bliss Group. ○



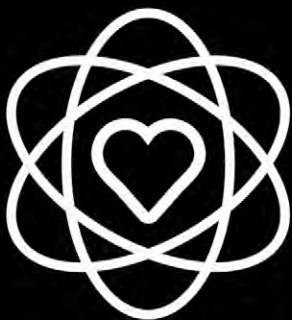
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Communication in the age of corporate activism

Companies are now expected to go beyond social responsibility and into social activism, but a challenge arises surrounding when and how to communicate an organization's values.

By Peter V. Stanton

Corporate social responsibility is a given for any business wishing to be recognized as committed to political or environmental causes. But it's no longer enough for business leaders to espouse policies with respect to sustainability, diversity and gun control. Now, corporate boards and executives are expected to adopt vocal, prominent positions on an ever-expanding array of issues recognizing that customers, employees and investors expect action—not only words.

Companies have long taken positions on issues of social importance. The difference now is both in the frequency of corporate pronouncements on events, policies and legislation, as well as the expectation that companies be directly engaged on social issues even when those issues aren't directly linked to the company's business or capacity to effect meaningful change. There's pressure to both say more and do more.

At least part of the reason for this is that corporations remain among the most trusted segments of our economy, far more so than the media or government, according to Edelman's Trust Index. Further, no single group of stakeholders want corporate leadership to engage. Almost all do, from employees to consumers to those already engaged in political discourse. Corporate leadership is compelled, to a far greater extent, to take a position and be visible in doing so.

For communicators, the challenge becomes counseling corporate leadership on when to engage, how to engage and the manner in which to communicate about that engagement. Is a statement posted to the company's website appropriate, or is a CEO's post to a LinkedIn profile the better way to express a perspective? The answer may vary by company and by each unique context.

Consumer brands generally want as many customers as possible, without regard for the political leanings of those who buy their products. Thus, taking a stridently and highly-visible liberal or conservative position may risk alienating a segment of their marketplace that can be vitally important to revenue and profitability goals. Conversely, there's a desire and obligation to speak out on issues such as racial injustice—as was especially the case in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd—that reflect a widely-shared sense of commitment to equality.

Culture and principles are key

There's a growing willingness among corporations to weigh in and express their values, similar in some ways to the actions of engaged individual citizens. While it can be necessary and important to express a position on matters of concern, the company's culture and principles provide the boundaries for when and when not to do so.

The principles a company upholds and the manner in which it conducts its business provide context and the rationale as to why a company is taking a position, why it matters to the business and what actions the company also will take to affirm its beliefs. If the company intends no action with respect to a particular issue, it's not likely to be credible espousing a perspective on that issue.

Those of us who counsel senior leadership on issue communication must frame our advice with reference to corporate culture and principles. If we can't draw a bright-line connection, we risk exhausting the credibility capital that gives the organization's statements weight and value.

Stakeholder sensitivity

CEOs speak for the corporation, but not necessarily for every investor, employee or customer. When the corporation clearly defines its culture and values, it gives stakeholders an opportunity to assess if their personal perspectives align with those of the organization. They may not in all cases, so CEOs must be sensitive to the potential for differences of opinion.

To be sure, strong unequivocal statements are needed when our shared sense of humanity is imperiled. Companies gain nothing from silence on such matters. Yet there are times when the CEO's personal views may not represent all of the company's stakeholders. At the very least, this possibility needs to be considered when statements are prepared. This sensitivity also may guide decisions about where and how to deliver statements of importance. If the views are primarily those of senior leadership, their personal LinkedIn or Facebook pages may be more appropriate than the landing page of the corporate website.

Being CEO doesn't automatically entitle one to the full followership of all constituents. This is especially the case within multi-national corporations where differences in culture, language and social mores influence how a statement is received. As communicators, we must help senior lead-

ership maintain this awareness and sensitivity so they can speak thoughtfully and deliver their message in the optimal forum.

Your own public square

When the decision is made to express a perspective on a social issue, the accompanying decision is where and how to deliver it. There's no question that the company's website is its most valuable "owned" channel. There are times when only the front page will do, such as at the time of the George Floyd murder.

An additional option for corporations to consider is a platform specifically created for the purpose of delivering messages of social importance. Think of it as your company's own public square, where perspectives and opinions can be shared, updated and easily accessed by those outside the organization. A specifically created channel also affords executives the ability to readily share links to new material, post commentary on their own platforms, and direct internal and external audiences to important information. Most important, it preserves the value and significance of the corporate landing page for matters that warrant such prominent presentation.

Openness to dialogue

Issues of social importance almost always are controversial. There's rarely a single perspective with which all can agree. When a company or CEO expresses a perspective, it will, almost certainly, precipitate a reaction.

When a statement is simply posted to the corporate web site, there may be no mechanism for differing viewpoints to be expressed. This can leave others, especially employees, feeling disenfranchised. Creating an opportunity for stakeholders to weigh in, share a perspective, offer a comment or even dissociate themselves from the corporate position, is an appropriate and meaningful demonstration of openness to dialogue.

It also can be a further affirmation of a core value or principle reflected in the company's statement of culture.

In the emerging age of corporate activism, the rules will continue to evolve. For now, we at least can accept that silence isn't golden, that expression isn't necessarily engagement, but most important, actions speak louder than words.

Peter V. Stanton is Founder and CEO of Stanton Communications, Inc. ○



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A bizarre year in financial communications

Several events that impacted the investing and finance world in 2021 underscore the importance of maintaining communications advocacy for a financial company's brand and message.

By Thomas Butler

We're in the midst of 2021's corporate proxy season, when Wall Street and the investor community is hyper-focused on the decisions, actions, governance and earnings of corporate brands we invest in and whose products we purchase.

It's also a daily reminder that the messaging that communication pros in our industry curate and convey are essential on so many levels.

One year ago, according to Visual Capitalist, the international stock markets were collectively valued at \$89.5 trillion. Additionally, investments in global debt reached \$253 trillion, along with \$280.6 trillion in real estate value. Still in their infancy, cryptocurrencies add another \$244 billion to that tally. That's only the tip of the iceberg, in terms of the financial industry landscape.

The curveballs of today's market

So far in 2021, there are a few troublesome case studies that show clearly to any CEO or board of directors that maintaining regular and quality communications advocacy is vital.

In January, popular website Reddit took the investing and finance world by storm, pumping up the valuation of certain stocks seemingly on their last legs. One of those was GameStop, the largest brick and mortar video game retailer, with a business model reminiscent of Blockbuster Video in an era of Amazon and Netflix.

GameStop's stock price had dropped to \$3 and so-called amateur investment bloggers working in unison pushed it towards \$20. Hedge funds sought to capitalize by shorting the stock. The Reddit community countered by pushing the price higher. By January 20th, it was \$40 and by the 28th it was \$483/share. A week later it deflated to \$50 and then up again to \$180.

I also recently received a lesson about the cryptocurrency Dogecoin from my 18-year-old while traveling to tour a college. His high school friends were making a killing on it. Launched by two IBM software engineers in 2013, it was initially created as a joke currency, using the Shiba Inu meme "Doge" as its logo. Its market capitalization peaked in early 2018 at \$0.017.

Over the pandemic, online campaigns sought to boost the price towards \$1. Per CoinDesk's price index, it ended 2020 at less than half a penny per coin. Then with 2021,

it leaped over 800 percent, thanks again to Reddit. Billionaire Elon Musk propelled the Doge-mania by tweeting about it, generating more hype to spike the price. As of this writing, the volatile cryptocurrency, which touched \$0.42 on April 20, was about \$0.27.

The GameStop and Dogecoin sagas are clear examples of the modern decentralization of news and informational sourcing. It shows it can be like the wild west out there if you can't maintain and manicure your client's brand and message.

For the last few years, members of our team have been kept busy chasing down sources publishing unverified stories about a specific client. While positive, they perpetuated false information that, like weeds, need to be rooted out.

A path diverted

Back in my college years, I thought a life working on Wall Street was in the cards. I spent a summer working on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange when that Exchange was considered the center of the financial universe.

Fresh-faced and with economics degree in hand, it was shortly after the hit movie "Wall Street" came out and captured so much attention. In fact, some of the very same floor brokers shown trading in scenes within the movie were familiar faces from the Stock Exchange floor. The trading posts were brimming with anxious brokers buying and selling blue chip stocks, often placing buy orders for customers based on rumors and selling based on news.

Back then, one would soak in market knowledge from tuning in to see who was appearing on "Wall Street Week" with Louis Rukeyser. We'd go to the college library to read the *Wall Street Journal*, touching ink and paper, something less frequent in 2021.

I walked away after that summer job to complete my degree, having received offers from two trading firms. Then, upon graduation, I interviewed with a large banking institution and a major bond house. Ready to accept one of the offers, my dad suggested I do one more interview. I agreed.

I traveled to New York City Hall for a job interview, just a five-minute walk from NYSE. The interview, inside a bustling press office newsroom, went better than expected. It hummed with reporters from the *New York Times*, Associated Press, NBC-News and all the major dailies, radio, TV stations,

with full-time journalists there to cover democracy in action.

When the communications director walked in, the reaction of my 21-year-old self was to say: "I know you. You had been the host of Inside Albany." It was a longtime political-junkie news show. Like Rukeyser, it was a must-watch, but about Empire State government, policy and politics.

For the next few years, I received the best education in communications and media from some of the most experienced journalists

in the nation, some of whom went on to be columnists, news anchors and bureau chiefs, including at the White House.

The corporate and financial markets

At my first PR agency, I was anxious to do more and learn, managing public affairs, economic development, commercial real estate, construction accounts and more. Then the portfolio evolved to include crisis management, litigation, publicly traded companies, entrepreneurs and CEOs.

That firm was also retained to promote some new global stock exchanges that would eventually merge, as global markets and economies advanced. It was clear, the career path intended, and the path taken, had been getting closer to their own merger.

This year, Butler Associates marks 25 years since we first opened our doors. What started out as a firm focused on servicing first responders, labor, public policy and crisis matters, law firms and litigations, has evolved to be so much more.

Decades after first setting foot inside the New York Stock Exchange to begin a career on The Street, I'm still in awe when walking past this historic landmark, but now to visit our agency clients that include prominent financial firms.

And while "Wall Street Week" might have been very cool to watch from our college dorm, thinking how smart we would be absorbing the advice of gurus, I've come to value being in the studio greenroom of the same show even more. In one instance, I believe I may have been the only non-billionaire in the room.

The experiences over three decades in our amazing business has been rich and rewarding and not something I might trade in so easily.

Thomas P. Butler is President of Butler Associates Strategic Communications. ○



Thomas Butler

A woman with dark hair is holding a clapperboard in front of her face, looking upwards and to the right. The clapperboard has a red digital display showing '12:00'. The background is dark and out of focus.

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COYNEPR

Consider these PR and IR best practices around an IPO

Key recommendations for PR professionals when representing companies that are ready to go public.

By Curtis Sparrer

On the heels of a strong 2020, which saw new all-time highs for the Dow Jones and the S&P 500, the stock market of 2021 also appears poised to set new records. Among the events driving last year's market were more than 300 IPOs on the NASDAQ, which raised more than \$80 billion in capital. What's more, the IPO market shows no signs of slowing. During the first quarter of 2021 alone, more than 100 companies went public, and a variety of technology and consumer firms are slated to enter the public markets as this year goes on.

For PR professionals working for companies that are ready to go public, the times before, during and after an IPO can mean lots of excitement and lots of work, as well as a great opportunity to collaborate with one's peers in investor relations. Having led numerous clients through IPOs, my company's team has compiled a number of best practices around communicating to target audiences—including banks/analysts, investors and the media—that can help articulate a company's unique value proposition while making the process of launching into the public markets smoother and more efficient. Following are some key recommendations that will help make the most of an IPO, ideally driving a richer company valuation.

Prior to the IPO

During the several months leading up to an IPO, PR and IR teams should begin to plan communications strategy and establish a roadmap for execution. This includes taking an assessment of staffing/personnel needs and evaluating when and where outside resources, including PR agencies and investor relations professionals, may need to be brought in to handle the additional workload. This is an important first step, because the regular flow of PR work must continue throughout the IPO process, and spreading resources too thin should be avoided.

Success metrics

Building a communications campaign around an IPO not only requires a solid understanding of the necessary resources and expertise to handle the work, it also requires an understanding of key metrics for success. Well in advance of an eventual IPO, companies should look at key awareness metrics in order to establish a baseline around company awareness and perceptions with key analysts, influencers and investors. This research can be done in the form of media analysis, review of analyst reports and original research like phone

and email surveys of relevant audiences, including potential investors.

With such data in hand, PR/IR teams can plan their pre- and post-IPO communications strategy. In this phase, aligning on what success looks like, in terms of awareness among key stakeholders, becomes central to the exercise of planning. Firms should ask themselves what specific communications deliverables will constitute a measurable track record of success to excite and entice investors and the market. This examination will help to clearly establish collective benchmarks that help position the firm going public as a "company to watch" with a strong financial future and leaders who are visionaries in their field. For example, in many cases when companies go public, new board members or executive hires will be added for their specific expertise. This presents a meaningful opportunity to highlight this additional expertise and raise awareness with key investor audiences.

Messaging

Once broad metrics are established, teams should work together to develop effective messages. These messages should drive communications throughout the IPO process, focusing on the company's track record and unique story. PR and IR should develop a clear and concise corporate narrative that states the company's positives, while also addressing company risks head-on and simultaneously remaining sensitive to any potential financial disclosures.

Collaboration

PR and IR teams should also meet regularly, taking a collaborative approach to all stakeholder communications. This includes creating alignment around all recommendations that cover media outreach, as well as documents like press releases, fact sheets and investor FAQs. It should also extend to meetings and other activities; for example, the PR team should sit in on investor calls. And, similarly, the IR team should participate in meetings with reporters at agreed-upon outlets. This helps to ensure that everyone is working with the same set of facts and is knowledgeable about interactions with investors and key media, thereby reducing chances of miscommunication.

In addition, a collaborative PR and IR team should develop a system for routing incoming investor and media inquiries and create a plan to manage both those inquiries and ongoing relationships. This includes making a determination around owners of

each contact at key financial publications, at the beginning of the engagement, in order to maximize return on outreach and to most effectively leverage media relationships. In addition, the PR and IR teams should share program calendars covering all relevant initiatives, thereby enabling them to map out opportunities for collaboration and cross-pollination.

Post-IPO

After the IPO has launched, companies should maintain this type of collaboration. Robust financial communications programs should regularly create and refine themes and messages for investors and the market, looping in IR and the office of the CFO. Cross-functional teams should manage the quarterly financial reporting process, including having a plan for post-earnings media outreach each quarter. Best practices should also include a programmatic review of forward-looking financial guidance and being aware of any material events that must be reported to the SEC, which are often announced via press release and must be timed in concert with other news.

On an ongoing basis, the PR and IR functions should coordinate select top-tier media briefings that are taking place around investor events like conferences and road shows. Keeping top-tier media informed has the effect of supplementing other tools, including press releases, bylined articles and op-eds, as well as social media updates and investor communication. All of these tools are useful in providing ongoing "air cover" for an integrated PR and IR effort and should be integrated into larger communications programs. Finally, cross-functional teams should prepare for the annual reporting cycle and combine resources to create content for the published annual report, which will usually integrate financial information and various marketing assets.

Wrapping up

Given the speed and volume of corporate IPOs, PR people should be prepared for "liquidity events" as part of their professional repertoire. Each IPO represents a significant opportunity for cross-team collaboration and serves as a venue for employment of best practices like those outlined above. Doing so will help deliver communications results that ultimately burnish a company's image while enhancing shareholder value.

Curtis Sparrer is Co-Founder and Principal at Bospar. ○



Curtis Sparrer



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How to find the right PR firm

The top 10 factors to look for in the course of determining whether a PR agency is the best fit for your organization.

By Bill Haynes

As the world begins to emerge from the disruptions caused by COVID, as economies start to heat up again and as companies become more comfortable making plans and investing for future growth, an increasing number of companies are embarking on a quest to identify a PR firm to help them achieve their business objectives.

Some of the largest companies are issuing comprehensive, multi-step RFPs to dozens of agencies, while others are identifying candidate agencies through Google and directory searches and by tapping into their network for referrals. Some searchers are PR veterans who know what questions to ask and can effectively ascertain which agencies have the right factors that are most likely to lead to a long-term, successful relationship. Others are new to working with agencies and may be new to their company.

With lessons learned from taking part in hundreds of new business searches, here's a list of 10 important themes for companies to explore to find the best agency for them:

Focus. Does the agency focus on your field? You don't want a generalist. Knowledge of PR and marketing is important, but it's only half of what your agency needs to succeed. The other half—knowledge of the industry—is equally important in order to understand as fully as possible your company and where it fits in your business ecosystem, to offer strategic advice based on that knowledge and to be able to convey your unique value proposition to your target audiences.

Relationships. Does the agency have strong relationships with your target audience? You need an agency that knows not just the names of target publications, but that also speaks regularly with reporters there and knows what interests them. The same is true with industry influencers, data providers, consultants and conference and awards organizers. Having existing relationships—not just a database or list—saves time and boosts efficacy for agency and company alike.

Size. Is the agency the right size for you? Do you need to have an agency with hundreds or even thousands of employees? At the other end of the spectrum, will a freelancer have the time and strategic perspective to help you long-term? Finding an agency where you're big enough to com-

mand the agency's best strategists—but not so big that you overwhelm the firm's capacity to deliver a sustained and effective program—is critical.

Team. What's the makeup of the team that will work on your account? Finding an agency that will field a team of professionals at different levels and responsibilities and truly work as one team is important. Make sure you have a good understanding of who will comprise that team and their backgrounds and responsibilities. It may not be the ones who are pitching you. Be certain you have access to senior-level agency executives who are involved in your account and can provide ongoing strategic advice.

Integrated services. Does the agency have an integrated approach to help you develop your brand and build your business? These days, traditional media relations, or "earned media," isn't enough. Earned media can be leveraged through multiple channels such as social media, website and newsletters (it would be a mistake to rely solely on publications' subscribers to see your news). Likewise, content development, or "owned media," is an important offering from agencies. This can include blogs, articles, white papers, studies, videos, podcasts and other means to capture the perspectives of your executives and share it with your audiences. Of course, all content developers aren't alike. Make sure the agency has former journalists in house who are involved with your account and who can conduct the research and interviews and write compelling, non-salesy articles your audience will want to read.

Strategic approach. Does the agency pride itself on developing and executing 12-month proactive plans, or are they waiting for you to call them and tell them what to do? Too often we hear from prospective clients that they have just fired their PR firm because they were waiting around for company news or direction. They were not taking the initiative to understand the client and its business objectives and offer strategic initiatives on a sustained basis to help the client accomplish its goals.

Client and staff turnover. What is the length of an average client relationship? You may be signing a one-year contract, but how often do clients renew those contracts year after year? Make sure your agency can keep the PR program fresh and

adjust their tactics to meet your evolving goals. Also ask about the average tenure of employees. A growing agency can provide growth opportunities. If employee turnover is low, the agency must be providing the positive work environment that leads to engaged and happy employees who are more likely to be vested in their team, their company and your success.

Budget. It's important for a company to establish an adequate budget for an agency to provide the necessary service for your account. Ask peers what their programs and budgets are before launching an agency search and share the budget range and strategic priorities with agencies as part of your search process. That way neither party wastes time if an agency feels it's not feasible to achieve your objectives with your budget. Agencies can then respond to your search with a plan they believe offers the best ROI. This may include a core program with optional additional tactics with a la carte pricing.

References. What do references say about the agencies? Are they just checking the boxes in their response to your queries or are they passionate advocates for the agency, its individuals and services based on the success and relationships they have built together? Hiring an agency is like hiring employees. If references don't proactively vouch for their exceptional abilities and say, "You have to hire them," then don't.

Chemistry. At the end of the day, are you confident that the agency can help you achieve your objectives? Are they passionate about partnering and succeeding together with you? And do you want to work with them? Make sure you can have candid conversations with one another and that you're inclined to trust them. This is the foundation upon which long-term relationships are built. Along with celebrating successes together, there will always be things that you wished had gone better. Find an agency with which you feel comfortable debriefing and adjusting the plan and process and you're likely to enjoy a successful long-term relationship.

Bill Haynes is Founder and CEO of Back-Bay Communications. ●



Bill Haynes

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Misses, hits and optimism for what's next

A look at some of the trends and challenges that are expected to impact brands and communications professionals this year.

By Matt Kucharski

In the June 2020 issue of *O'Dwyer's*, my colleagues at Padilla and I laid out six predictions that we believed would come to bear once we emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our intention was to look beyond the challenge of the day and share thoughts on what professional communicators would be managing over the long term. In the interests of holding ourselves accountable, we thought we would see how we did roughly one year later.

First, let's acknowledge where we missed:

- Our predictions were written and submitted before George Floyd was killed by police—and before the nation experienced subsequent protests, violence and destruction—laying plain the long-simmering frustration of racial injustice and social inequities present in our society. These events sparked a widespread evaluation and acceleration of DE&I commitments and actions that we hope will continue.

- We had a presidential election that was anything but routine, with allegations of fraud, a sitting president unwilling to concede and an unprecedented attack on the Capitol. The wave of attempted state-level election reforms—most based on unfounded claims—has resulted in corporate leaders speaking out against voter suppression, which affirms that companies who had normally tried to remain under the radar now are being compelled to make their opinions known to employees, customers, investors and communities.

- And this damn pandemic. I think most of us were hopeful that we would be returning to some sense of normalcy at the beginning of the year, but here we are well into 2021 and while there's light at the end of the tunnel and many of us have gotten at least that first jab, the fatigue is reaching its limits.

To be fair, we weren't the only ones who weren't able to predict these events, so that being said, let's look at where we hit the mark and what's next for brands and communicators.

New stakes for engagement and culture

The Prediction: Smart businesses would use the stress of the past year to anticipate and adjust to what kind of employer they wanted to be over the long term, emphasizing the need for employees to be agile and resilient and involving them in shaping the future.

The Evidence: A recent article in *Becker's Hospital Review* highlighted how health systems across the country are using employee feedback to bounce back from the pandemic and using the strategic communications tools they created during COVID-19.

LinkedIn is leveraging Microsoft Viva, an analytics tool, to survey employees and use that feedback to improve employee well-being after the pandemic more accurately and continuously. Given numerous studies point to a post-pandemic exodus of employees from their current jobs, an emphasis on employee experience and workplace culture will continue for the foreseeable future.

Reinventing the customer experience

The Prediction: Innovations introduced during COVID-19 to prevent lost revenue, including re-imagining of digital experiences, would not revert after the pandemic.

The Evidence: OKCupid frequently uses customer surveys to gauge values and behaviors. The online dating app leveraged that feedback to incorporate a new feature related to finding a date who is passionate about climate change. For every Advocate Profile Badge that someone adds to their dating profile, OKCupid will donate a dollar to earthday.org.

Audi has launched a new flagship store where “the latest innovations from the fields of sustainability, architecture and digitalization” intersect. Digital points of contact throughout the location make it more than your average auto showroom. For many companies, the pandemic ushered in changes to the customer experience that they've been wanting to implement for years.

Fighting anxiety with clarity, transparency

The Prediction: Companies requiring financial communications will need to be more diligent about communicating at key inflection points to reduce uncertainty and put important events in perspective.

The Evidence: More than 60 leading public companies have signed on to support the World Economic Forum's Stakeholder Capitalism Metrics, which outline a commitment to adopt a set of universal, comparable disclosures of Environmental, Social and Governance factors and help assure progress toward U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

A few short years ago it would have been unheard of for companies from different industries to agree to adhere to common metrics on social responsibility.

The rise of legal disputes

The Prediction: Lawsuits challenging how businesses and government entities respond to re-opening would require legal and communications departments to stay in lockstep.

The Evidence: Next to public relations professionals, some of the busiest people during this pandemic have been in the legal profession. New

Jersey parents have sued to re-open schools after COVID-19 closures. The State of California has sued the country's largest chain of senior living communities for misleading consumers on quality ratings relating to COVID-19, and there's a cottage industry of lawyers writing—and challenging—employee and customer liability waivers.

Community relations gains relevance

The Prediction: Corporate community relations will shift toward addressing inequities in food, health, education and other basic needs. The pandemic and the death of George Floyd exposed gaps in these systems.

The Evidence: Examples exist across the board in every state and in every industry. Retail giants Walmart and Sam's Club are teaming with Feeding America. A coalition of 35 Minnesota-based companies pooled resources to deliver \$2.35 million in grants to address the state's digital divide, and the University of Minnesota launched a \$5 million anti-racism health equity research program with funding from Padilla client Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

What's next?

The challenge for communicators is to hold onto the strategic seat at the table they earned by being essential to their company's success during the pandemic. Across a wide range of industries, we're seeing communicators rise to the occasion and engage more strategically and more meaningfully with the C-Suite, which is a positive outcome after an incredibly challenging 18 months.

Matt Kucharski is President of Padilla, based in Minneapolis with six offices across the U.S. Padilla is part of the AVENIR GLOBAL network of agencies. ○



Matt Kucharski

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Let's bring more women into PR leadership positions

Why are there so few women in leadership roles at public relations agencies?

By Art Stevens

As someone who's been in PR agency life for numerous years, I've worked with many more women than men. While studies show that women and men enter the workforce in approximately equal numbers, the sad reality is that women tend to lag in promotions—and leadership roles—from their very first foray into management.

One eye-opening study shows that 75 percent of overall PR practitioners are female, but only 20 percent of PR leaders are women. Why is this the case?

For starters, I think what has held many women down professionally are the antiquated, old-school attitudes long-held by some men: the view that women had nothing to offer in the world of business.

I've never found that to be the case. I'm proud of the women who've passed through my former public relations firm, which ranked among the top 25 independent firms in the U.S. I'm equally proud to say that a number of women who worked there have gone on to become senior leaders at major agencies and corporations.

I'm also thrilled to have given women the opportunity to blossom professionally and prove themselves worthy of any organization. In fact, I'm still in touch with many of these inspiring females; they've helped me professionally over the years in a variety of instances.

When it comes to brains, smarts, talent and professionalism, in my opinion, there's nothing that can hamper and stunt the professional direction of women today.

I interact and engage with more women PR agency CEOs than men, so I question the premise that not enough women have the top jobs.

PR ahead of the curve for female pros

While many other industries and professionals are behind in opening the doors to women, the public relations world has been ahead of the curve.

The late Marilyn Laurie, former EVP of PR and brand management at AT&T and past president of the Arthur W. Page Society and the PR Seminar, is a good example. One of the giants of PR, she was the first woman to head up PR for a company the size of AT&T. She's also known for her communications work contributing to Earth Day's launch. Laurie truly set the stage for countless females in the PR industry.

Another good example can be seen in the life and experiences of Barri Rafferty, EVP, Head of Communications, Wells Fargo. In a recent discussion we had, she said she believes we're at a tipping point where big firms are being seen as run by women just as easily as smaller firms.

Rafferty joined Wells Fargo in July 2020 from Ketchum, where she was the agency's president and CEO, the first woman to be the CEO of a top-five public relations agency. She transformed the agency into a marketing communications consultancy and has been an "intrapreneur," launching and evolving businesses from digital, social, analytics, influencer, sports, entertainment and experiential.

During our conversation, she recalled how excited they were when her partner group hit 50-50, especially seeing more and more women in top positions.

"Ultimately, both men and women in the field have to be advocates to make sure that we can eliminate the bias in the system and that there are equal opportunities for women to reach those highest ranks and in greater numbers in the future," she said.

This is powerful advice from someone who was the first female CEO of a top-five global PR firm.

Bridging the gap

I believe there are numerous steps that women can take to improve their position and achieve PR workplace equality.

One is to level the playing field: we must strive to offer women the chance to take up leadership positions without being diminished.

It's also critical to engage and collaborate on these issues on a more significant scale.

For example, today's female influencers can utilize their PR and communications skills to create awareness and spread the word about gender bias at the executive levels. With this strategy, more and more female leaders can step up to the cause and leave a better world for future generations.

During a recent interview I had with Marian Salzman, SVP, Global Communications, Philip Morris International, she imparted the following: "I give the same advice to both young women and young men—you must treat everyone in the workplace as you would a fraternal twin. Treat men and women with that same level of care and concern." Sage words indeed.

Looking ahead

The position of women in the modern world is no doubt changing for the better. Yet, there's still much work to be done.

From my experience and through conversations with countless accomplished female leaders in the world of PR, I've come to realize that the key to improving these odds lies with all senior leadership—both male and female—to ensure women are not left behind.

As leaders, both male and female, we must demonstrate conscious inclusion as a business priority. The single most powerful thing a PR agency or firm can do to promote more women leaders is to help build the desire and encourage employees to make decisions.

I truly believe there's never been a better time for women to climb into leadership positions in PR, because both on the client and agency side, there's an obligation that we must do better to ensure gender equality. This gives everyone equal advantages and access, levels the playing field, strengthens an agency's culture and, most importantly, provides equal opportunities for all.

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



Art Stevens

PR news brief

ICR puts Topps back on Wall Street

ICR Inc. is handling Topps trading card company's return to Wall Street as it agrees to merge with Mudrick Capital Acquisition via a SPAC deal valued at \$1.3 billion.

The investment firm of former Walt Disney Co. Chief Michael Eisner bought Topps—which launched in Brooklyn 82 years ago—in 2007.

Topps has license deals with Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, World Wrestling Entertainment, Disney and Formula 1, as well as digital gift card relationships with Uber, Hulu, Netflix, Nike, DoorDash, Airbnb, Instacart and Deliveroo.

The firm's "edible entertainment" unit markets confections under the Bazooka, Ring Pop, Push Pop, and Baby Bottle brands.

Topps enjoyed record sales of \$567 million in 2020, up 23 percent from 2019.

"The strong emotional connection between the Topps brand and consumers of all ages is truly foundational, and when combined with our growing portfolio of strategic licensing partnerships, creates a profitable business model with meaningful competitive advances," said Eisner in a statement.

Topps will trade on the NASDAQ when the SPAC deal is completed by the third quarter.



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O'Dwyer's Industry Rankings: #8 Healthcare and #19 Overall

Tech firms ride out a tough 2020

The tech PR market took a small hit during the pandemic year, but there were plenty of bright spots in the midst of a taxing situation.

By Steve Barnes

While the top 10 firms overall in O'Dwyer's rankings of technology PR firms saw net fees from tech clients drop by 4.9 percent in 2020, six of those firms—Highwire PR (#4), Walker Sands (#6), PAN Communications (#7), ICR (#8), The Hoffman Agency (#9) and Inkhouse (#10)—actually billed more last year than they did in 2019.

Meeting the challenges

Hotwire CEO, North America Heather Kernahan said that despite the hurdles of the past year, the agency “maintained a really strong business.”

It remained in the number-two spot in the tech rankings, and Kernahan said “the business performance underscores our position as trusted, strategic consultants for our clients and our ability to create momentum in challenging circumstances.”

She added that the accelerated pace demanded by the past year's many changes has both a downside and an upside. The speed of technological development has led to a growth in opportunities for communicators, she noted. “Companies have had to deliver at an incredible pace and I think we'll continue to see the need for enterprise tech to continue to deliver in new ways, faster.”



Heather Kernahan

Client needs have changed as well, Kernahan said, with the uncertainty of the current environment meaning that for many clients “throwing out the playbook and navigating how to adjust plans” was a necessity.

She also said that the changes brought about by the work-from-home environment are here to stay. One of the biggest challenges firms face in the coming year, she said, is making sure that the lessons learned from the pandemic remain in place. “As the world creates a new normal, communicators can't lose sight of the guidelines we put in place this past year that helped determine what messages were most important, most helpful and most authentic.”

Making an impact

Highwire PR brought on 15 people in 2020, and grew by 24 percent. According to Highwire Principal Emily Borders, that's because the agency “outlined a strategy at the beginning of the pandemic that saw us through the entire year.”

That strategy was based on helping clients and employees navigate the disruption caused by the pandemic. “With swift action,” Borders said, “we were able to create an environment where our teams and work had a real impact.”

There was an increased demand for integrated digital offerings, virtual event support and experiential marketing in the past year, according to Borders. She also said that Highwire has “noticed more conversation around data-driven PR and the use of data-driven insights.”

Highwire's beefed-up digital team allowed the agency to expand its digital services “beyond owned social media program into sophisticated amplification across multiple channels.”

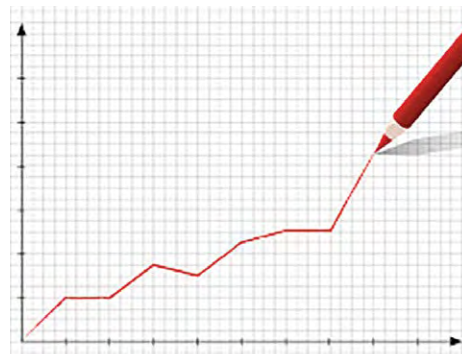
Borders sees “the intersection of health and technology” as an area primed for major growth over the next year. That doesn't mean just COVID-related efforts, either. “We're also seeing the same level of transformation across treatment for chronic conditions, heart health and mental health/wellness.”

For success in 2021 and beyond, Borders said that “creating a thoughtful approach to building culture and positive team dynamics will be critical.”

She also stresses the importance of creating “full top-to-bottom strategic communications programs,” including brand building, sales enablement, lead generation and internal employee engagement. “Demonstrating a distributed wealth of expertise,” she said, “will put agencies in the best position to succeed.”



Emily Borders



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

Getting closer to clients

Moving up one spot on the list, Walker Sands had “a great 2020,” according to CEO Mike Santoro. Fees from tech clients rose from \$18.8 million to \$20.2 million, a jump of 7.5 percent.

In addition to a team that has been “working their butts off,” that performance was driven by “our strong reputation for B2B marketing and a world-class sales and marketing team.”

As far as the tech sector is concerned, Santoro zeroes in on two major trends: SPACs and a potential antitrust backlash against Big Tech. “Tech companies have been the big beneficiaries” of SPACs, he said, and any meaningful activity on the antitrust front “could unleash new VC investment as money follows new opportunities.”



Mike Santoro

Walker Sands' clients exhibited increased interest in branding, web design and development, and marketing strategy work, Santoro said. “In Q2 and Q3,” he noted, “many clients ramped down customer acquisition spend and took a fresh look at brand-oriented projects they had been putting off.”

One positive effect of the pandemic, he said, is that “we've been able to get closer and much more personal with many of our clients ... That personal connection has led to more candid conversations and ultimately stronger relationships.”

While Santoro said that Walker Sands has “learned to pitch new business and handle large quarterly business reviews remotely,” he still sees some role for in-person professional interaction in the new normal. “But given the time saved and the nature of distributed teams, I think you'll continue to see some of the big in-person moments continue in a virtual environment.”

A focus on flexibility

“There's no doubt this year challenged us in all aspects,” said PAN Communications Executive Vice President Mark Nardone, “but we saw a roughly five percent increase in revenue.”

PAN saw its tech-related fees rise from \$19.3 million in 2019 to \$20 million last year, an increase that Nardone attributes to “solid performance around organic growth and a very healthy new business pipeline.”

Another strong point is the resiliency and flexibility of the tech sector in general, allowing tech companies “to be able to adapt

Continued on page 60

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Deterministic Targeting
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Influence Mapping

Faction Bridging
Truth Vectoring
Racial Equity
Social Activism
Remote Work
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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN TECHNOLOGY

Firm	2020 Net Fees	Firm	2020 Net Fees
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$250,632,000	34. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	\$1,598,940
2. Hotwire , New York, NY	41,748,611	35. Peppercomm , New York, NY	1,586,040
3. Finn Partners , New York, NY	30,050,000	36. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	1,500,000
4. Highwire PR , San Francisco, CA	24,163,050	37. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	1,192,965
5. Zeno Group , New York, NY	20,875,754	38. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	1,037,427
6. Walker Sands , Chicago, IL	20,169,584	39. CommCentric Solutions, Inc. , Tampa, FL	897,706
7. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	19,918,991	40. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	880,082
8. ICR , New York, NY	18,443,930	41. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	774,003
9. Hoffman Agency, The , San Jose, CA	15,115,000	42. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	756,713
10. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	11,755,489	43. Bob Gold & Associates , Redondo Beach, CA	601,064
11. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	10,800,000	44. Feintuch Communications , New York, NY	575,314
12. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	10,041,000	45. Bellmont Partners , Minneapolis, MN	434,588
13. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	9,281,740	46. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	409,349
14. Clarity , New York, NY	9,035,115	47. Landis Communications , San Francisco, CA	362,000
15. MWWPR , New York, NY	8,232,993	48. Montieth & Company , New York, NY	323,000
16. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER), Columbus, OH	7,867,949	49. Berk Communications , New York, NY	314,500
17. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	7,113,910	50. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	282,000
18. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	6,242,285	51. BoardroomPR , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	275,000
19. Touchdown PR , Austin, TX	5,600,633	52. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	275,000
20. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	5,471,510	53. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC , Annapolis, MD	231,017
21. Lumina Communications , San Jose, CA	5,204,425	54. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	230,150
22. SourceCode Communications , New York, NY	5,168,512	55. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	188,194
23. March Communications , Boston, MA	3,869,104	56. WordWrite Communications LLC , Pittsburgh, PA	117,000
24. Idea Grove , Dallas, TX	3,577,000	57. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	107,500
25. Crenshaw Communications , New York, NY	3,061,499	58. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	75,436
26. ARPR , Atlanta, GA	3,022,086	59. Akrete , Evanston, IL	65,607
27. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	3,019,908	60. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	61,933
28. Havas Formula , New York, NY	2,966,409	61. J Public Relations , New York, NY	52,500
29. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	2,634,085	62. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	46,542
30. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	2,629,819	63. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	42,016
31. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	2,315,110	64. Stuntman PR , New York, NY	7,500
32. Hunter , New York, NY	1,700,000	65. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	5,000
33. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	1,600,000		



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Ignite possibility

Financial firms thrive amid chaotic year

O'Dwyer's interviewed executives at some of the top PR agencies representing the financial services sector to find out what factors contributed to their survival during the pandemic year and what the future holds as economic recovery looms on the horizon.

By Jon Gingerich

The top 10 public relations firms ranked by *O'Dwyer's* for financial PR and investor relations earned a combined total of \$267 million in net fees in 2020, a \$37 million climb from the \$230 million they brought in during pre-COVID 2019. Eight of those firms revealed gains this year, one of them by double digits.

Granted, the financial services sector wasn't impacted to the same degree as verticals such as travel, entertainment and hospitality, but still, PR firms working in the financial sector weren't exactly spared the challenges wrought by the COVID-19 crisis. *O'Dwyer's* asked leaders at some of the top financial PR and investor relations firms how they see the industry going forward as the economy begins to rebound from a year that was anything but normal.

ICR posts double-digit gains

New York-based investor relations firm ICR posted \$60 million in finance-related net fees in 2020 to retain the number-two spot in *O'Dwyer's* financial PR rankings, revealing an impressive \$11.6 million gain from the \$49 million the agency accounted for in 2019.

How does an agency achieve double-digit growth during a once-in-a-century pandemic? ICR co-Founder and CEO Tom Ryan told *O'Dwyer's* that when the world shut down last March and as clients either terminated their economic relationship with the agency or put it on hold, ICR made a conscious effort to keep working for those management teams regardless.

"Not only was this the right thing to do as a long-term partner, but we felt it would build goodwill. As the year wore on, those clients re-established our economic relationship

and many needed additional services like ESG advisory and crises management which ICR benefitted from," Ryan said.

The tail-end of the 2020 saw a resurgence in the stock market and green shoots in the economy, and with that came an explosion of SPAC transactions, where ICR has maintained a dominant market share.

Looking forward, Ryan said he believes the increased scrutiny of public companies is here to stay and the lines between communicating with investors, the media, em-

ployees, customers and other stakeholders will continue to blur.

"In our opinion, this will require that agencies bring a broad suite of services to the table. Telling the corporate ESG story will also remain at the forefront for public and soon-to-be public clients and options for liquidity will remain much broader than a decade ago," Ryan said. "We expect SPACs to remain a popular option as well as traditional IPOs and Direct listings. Helping companies through these milestone events, and in the after-market post-transaction will require significant support and an understanding of not only communications but the capital markets in general."

APCO unveils new offerings

APCO Worldwide retains the number-four spot in *O'Dwyer's* financial rankings this year after posting \$17.7 million in 2020 finance-related fees, revealing a hearty gain of more than \$6.5 million from the \$11.2 million the D.C.-based PR giant posted in 2019.

APCO President Evan Kraus told *O'Dwyer's* that the COVID-19 pandemic spurred the agency to take innovative and bold decisions in the way of new offerings, acquisitions and strategic partnerships in an effort to meet clients' needs and collaborate across regions and practices in an effort to help clients maintain business continuity with confidence.

Responding to client demand, APCO also launched regional hubs for innovation and growth across North America to better focus on pressing client needs, namely: C-suite advisory; shifting demographic, social, culture and behavioral changes; geopolitical dynamics and fallout



Evan Kraus



Tom Ryan



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

from elections; virtual meeting and events; advancing disruptive business models; and serving as a partner for medical diagnostics, vaccine and other COVID-19-related healthcare companies.

"These new offers and expansions enabled APCO to achieve strong financial results with growth in key markets," Kraus said.

Vested sees banner year

One of the strongest gains in *O'Dwyer's* financial/IR rankings this year came from number-five ranked Vested, which totaled \$12.4 million in finance earnings in 2020, a \$3.1 million uptick from 2019's \$9.2 million.

Vested co-Founder and President Binna Kim told *O'Dwyer's* that 2020 was the best year on record for the New York-based agency. Kim attributed this success to a variety of factors, chief among them being co-Founder Dan Simon's decision to create in January 2020 an action plan for staff and clients in the event that the coronavirus would end up becoming a true pandemic.

"Thanks to his foresight, by March 2020, we were fully equipped to immediately go remote and kick our plans into action," Kim said. "We launched a COVID-19 resource center for our clients with resources on employee and client communications. We launched a networking community for financial CMOs and CCOs called Financial Narrative to provide leaders in our space the opportunity to talk to one another, swap notes, and share best practices in a crisis for which many companies did not have a playbook."

Kim said the financial services industry is becoming increasingly human-focused.

"Financial services firms both large and small are focused on issues that impact their employees, their communities and the clients they serve. This includes continued focus on ESG and DE&I to even how firms are creating a culture in which their employees can thrive, post-COVID. This will influence, in very big ways, how brands market to and communicate with their stakeholders, from their board members to their clients to their employees and beyond."



Binna Kim

— Continued on page 60

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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN FINANCE

Firm	2020 Net Fees	Firm	2020 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$85,037,000	26. Montith & Company, New York, NY	\$976,997
2. ICR, New York, NY	60,808,716	27. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	969,263
3. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	53,950,000	28. MWWPR, New York, NY	716,450
4. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	17,747,900	29. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	525,000
5. Vested, New York, NY	12,409,000	30. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	423,103
6. Finn Partners, New York, NY	9,572,000	31. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	416,154
7. Stanton, New York, NY	7,572,300	32. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	334,000
8. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	6,996,485	33. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	333,423
9. Dukas Linden Public Relations, New York, NY	6,396,315	34. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	332,054
10. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	6,158,000	35. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	322,205
11. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	5,000,000	36. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	307,045
12. BackBay Communications, Boston, MA	4,086,462	37. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	275,309
13. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	3,825,925	38. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	269,505
14. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	3,786,945	39. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	233,827
15. Havas Formula, New York, NY	3,271,576	40. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	200,000
16. Caliber Corporate Advisors, New York, NY	3,270,780	41. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	194,250
17. Zeno Group, New York, NY	3,243,118	42. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	188,629
18. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	2,905,600	43. Berk Communications, New York, NY	155,000
19. Hewes Communications, New York, NY	2,705,723	44. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	126,735
20. Lansons Intermarket, New York, NY	2,473,605	45. Akrete, Evanston, IL	108,512
21. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	2,100,528	46. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	99,526
22. Peppercomm, New York, NY	1,891,942	47. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	70,588
23. Buttonwood Comms. Group, New York, NY	1,291,188	48. 360PR+, Boston, MA	45,802
24. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,157,383	49. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	4,958
25. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	980,300		

The logo for BackBay Communications, featuring a dark blue square with three white wavy lines above the company name in white text.

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A background image showing two silhouetted business professionals walking away from the camera on a modern, glass-enclosed walkway or bridge. The structure has a blue-tinted metal railing and large glass panels that reflect the surrounding environment.

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Healthcare firms saw fees rise more than 30% in 2020

The top healthcare PR firms ranked by *O'Dwyer's* posted big gains during pandemic 2020 as they scrambled to counsel clients on how to deal with a national medical emergency.

By Kevin McCauley

Fee income at *O'Dwyer's* top 50 ranked healthcare firms grew 30.5 percent to \$910.4 million in 2020. The Top 10 firms boasted even heftier growth, soaring 34.5 percent to \$760 million.

Real Chemistry, formerly W2O Group, tightened its grip on the No. 1 healthcare rankings spot as CEO Jim Weiss registered a robust 59.5 percent surge in income to \$349.2 million, driven in part by an acquisition binge that added seven firms to the San Francisco-based firm's roster.

Edelman maintained its second position in the healthcare category as income rose 9.2 percent to \$168.8 million.

Ruder Finn took the No. 3 slot with income of \$36 million, up 15.4 percent from last year's performance.

Finn Partners, up 10.3 percent to \$34.2 million, advanced to the No. 4 slot. The New York firm passed APCO Worldwide, which grew 3.2 percent to \$32.6M, and Spectrum, down 2.9 percent to \$32.9 million.

Evoke KYNE (+23.5 percent to \$31 million), Crosby Marketing Communications (+20.5 percent to \$28.2 million), Imre (+14.3 percent to \$24.1 million) and ICR (+21.2 percent to \$22.9 million) round out the Top 10 firms.

Health is everyone's business

Kirsty Graham, CEO of Edelman Public Affairs and Global Chair of its healthcare sector, said the COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that healthcare is everyone's business.

"From new partnerships across the health industry to new voices joining vaccine confidence efforts, even those once considered far outside the health sector now have a

role to play," she said.

"Healthcare is a societal rather than personal responsibility, an explicit expectation and an opportunity that applies to individuals, organizations and communities alike."

While the healthcare sector made record achievements in launching world-class vaccines, Graham said there is an urgent need to address the inequities in the system.

She noted that Edelman's Trust Barometer found that globally, 62 percent agree that those with less education, less money and

fewer resources are being unfairly burdened by the pandemic.

"This is an urgent call to address not only the symptoms and spread of COVID-19 but the flaws and inequalities it exposed in our healthcare systems and our coordination mechanisms in and across countries," said Graham.

She said corporate commitments to diversity, inclusion and equity in healthcare must be rooted in public policies and backed by action.

Graham is encouraged to see healthcare companies getting their own houses in order—increasing diversity in their leadership and workforce, building relationships within their communities, and ensuring better representation across races and ethnic groups in clinical trials.

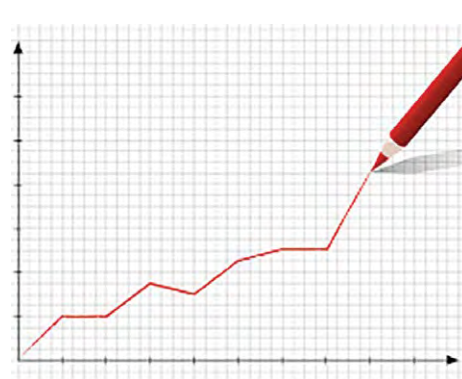
She said Edelman and its sister agency, Salutem, are proud to work alongside leaders from Merck, Bristol Myers Squibb and Eli Lilly and Company to support these important efforts.

"Our future achievements in healthcare will be rooted in trust—trust that an organization is sharing truthful information, trust that the benefits of science are available to all," said Graham, who joined Edelman from Pfizer just before the COVID-19 outbreak. "The profile and importance of health issues will endure long after the pandemic, as will the need to ensure healthcare is treated as a right and not a privilege."

Finn keeps double-digit growth intact

Finn Partners' healthcare group has achieved double-digit annual growth every year since it was launched in 2015.

Gil Bashe, who heads the unit, said the practice has grown from \$5 million in 2015 to more than \$34 million in 2020, which was one of the most challenging years for US business.



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

The practice champions product innovators, providers, patient advocacy groups, payers, and policy organizations—including Let's Win for Pancreatic Cancer, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Alkermes, Amgen, Amylyx, Biogen, Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic, Sheba Medical Center, and other firms that are changing the future of health delivery.

Bashe noted the addition of Lazar Partners has helped the health group expand its offerings to include brand and corporate communications, integrated digital marketing services, investor relations, patient recruitment services, scientific writing, executive thought leadership, social media analytics and research, sustainability and social impact, and medical meeting support.

He also noted that the numbers given to *O'Dwyer's* complement the larger collaborative role that the health practice plays within Finn Partners in generating fees and business for other practices and specialty services, which *O'Dwyer's* tracks separately.

Finn Partners' 2021 is shaping up to be an equally promising year, as the healthcare unit has added more than 20 new clients with \$4 million in annualized fees.

M Booth Health settles in during COVID

Next Fifteen Communications acquired Health Unlimited's US arm and merged it into M Booth as M Booth Health just as the pandemic outbreak hit.

While the first year of any acquisition can be challenging in the best of times, M Booth Health CEO Tim Bird said staffers spent their start-up year working remotely at a new agency with new colleagues to build a new brand to position the shop as one that catalyzes conversation and connections that lead to better health.

Bird said the COVID-19 outbreak did provide his firm a boost. "As the world was shutting down, a new specialty in public health consultancy took shape at M Booth Health: COVID-19 communications for



Gil Bashe



Kirsty Graham



Tim Bird

Continued on page 34



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Healthcare roundup

— Continued from page 32

all our clients across the health spectrum of pharmaceutical companies, medical device manufacturers, government agencies, universities, medical societies, and advocacy organizations,” said Bird. His firm’s long track record in public health and issues communications gained it several highly prestigious clients working on COVID-19 such as the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, focused on containing the pandemic and educating the public about where this epidemic was heading.

He said the M Booth connection helped his healthcare unit land clients that would have been beyond reach prior to the deal.

“Penn State University tapped us to develop a campaign to encourage students to wear a mask so they could return safely to school and keep campus open,” he said. “Within six weeks, our ‘Mask Up or Pack Up’ campaign was launched across 24 campuses.”

It was a full collaboration with M Booth, landing on a message and creative execution that Bird knew from their research would resonate with those reluctant to wear masks.

“Booth Health is a growing and exciting agency, ahead of the curve and well-positioned in the new normal,” said Bird. “Our success is a testament to the resilience and resourcefulness demonstrated by our talented team working together.”

Sam Brown surges ahead

Staffers at Sam Brown Inc. Healthcare Communications have been working remotely since Laura Liotta launched the firm 22 years ago, so while the PR world adjusted to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, it was business as usual at O’Dwyer’s 15th ranked healthcare firm.

Sam Brown’s fees jumped 27 percent to \$8 million in 2020 due to organic growth and the addition of a slew of new innovative clients

Liotta said the shop helped Biohaven Pharmaceuticals take a digital-first approach to win FDA approval for the launch of Nurtec ODT, for the acute treatment of migraine.

The agency formulated and executed a far-reaching celebrity PR and media campaign for the drug’s launch, featuring Khloé Kardashian, Tori Spelling and Whoopi Goldberg.

A grassroots storytelling campaign featuring migraine macro-influencers in a variety of settings reached multiple audiences, raising the company profile among multiple key stakeholders.



Laura Liotta

Liotta said key wins for 2020 include Adverum, Axial Therapeutics, Code Bio, Graphite Bio, JSR Life Sciences, Neximmune, Passage Bio, Sensei Bio, Trillium and Zymeworks.

“These are among the broad array of innovative pharma and biotech companies who are on course to treat and cure serious diseases though their bold science in immuno-oncology, gene therapy, vaccine development, and other cutting-edge scientific fields,” she said.

McCabe counsels ‘pandemic pivot’

Washington, D.C.-based McCabe Message Partners represents nonprofits and philanthropies, including organizations that advocate for infectious disease experts, older adults, nurses, public health workers, emergency physicians, senior housing providers and hospitals.

Patrick McCabe said many of his firm’s clients were on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis, so his firm had to quickly reposition communications plans to provide and maintain emergency responses to COVID-19.

“Account leaders stretched their consulting muscles by helping nearly every client through a rapid ‘pandemic pivot’ to ensure their messaging and strategies were appropriate and timely,” he said. “MMP’s nonprofit healthcare clients have long focused on disparities, but 2020 meant looking at the impact of race, ethnicity, age and income in a new light. Events demanded more direct communication acknowledging and beginning to act upon painfully obvious inequities and racial discrimination in America.”

During 2020, MMP invested in new team members to handle clients’ quickly evolving and expanding needs, especially in message development, media outreach, social media strategy and graphic design. Recruiting, hiring and onboarding team members via Zoom presented obvious challenges, as did sharing office culture.

McCabe said his firm experienced personal losses and felt the deep pain of nationwide angst. While MMP refuses to acknowledge “silver linings” when more than 550,000 Americans died from the virus, the shop learned a lot over the past year. “The gratitude team members have for clients and the meaningful work they do deepened. Our ‘old way’ of working was profoundly challenged and the agency was nimble, fast, and flexible in its response. As we return to the office over the next several months we will be challenged to marry ‘the



Patrick McCabe

new way’ with the old. To state the obvious, it is a challenge we eagerly look forward to.”

LaVoie forges tie with Omnicom

LaVoieHealthScience formed a global strategic alliance with Omnicom in early 2020 that fueled expansion of business with US-China company launches, social media and digital programming and IPO/SPAC strategy, preparation and execution.

The firm launched 12 new companies spanning gene therapy, ophthalmology, neurology, rare diseases and more—all with unique platform technologies that promise to advance the way these diseases are treated today, according to Donna LaVoie.

LHS moved its headquarters within Boston and launched a New York regional unit under the leadership of James Heins, Senior VP/Managing Director.

“Our team came together remotely, building from both markets and adding team members from the South Florida and London markets,” said LaVoie. “We were tied together by our strong history of working together and our past success in building LHS and doing the right things for our health and science clients.”



Donna LaVoie

JPA Health rebrands

Carrie Jones said JPA Health spent the pandemic year rebranding the agency, tapping new talent, investing in professional development and launching new offerings.

“We also established specialist practice groups for our client segments: biotech PR, patient advocacy, public affairs, brand marketing, public health and federal government,” she said.

JPA’s HR team expanded company benefits, including taking added steps to support working parents and caregivers and offering reimbursement for the cost of emergency backup care for children, older relatives and dependent adults.

This program was designed to help staff manage backup care needs, so they did not have to miss time at work.

The firm also changed its eight-hour workday policy to a more flexible work week policy in support of employees who act as caregivers or were facing challenges navigating these unprecedented times.



Carrie Jones

— Continued on next page

'Watershed year' for Crosby

Ray Crosby, who heads Crosby Marketing Communications, called 2020 a "watershed year," saying clients counted on the firm more than ever before for trusted counsel to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic to educate and motivate consumers, patients, providers, payors, and policymakers.

The firm's ability to rapidly develop content and deliver integrated paid, earned, shared and owned programs proved invaluable to drive important conversations and positive health behaviors," he said.

The Annapolis-based firm handled the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' effort to connect with the American public about COVID-19 through social media; helped drive record online donations for Shriners Hospitals for Children; supported the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force through national media relations efforts; and created a business-to-business campaign for Kaiser Permanente that positioned its forward-thinking care and coverage to major employer groups.

Crosby's health practice landed new clients including Refuah



Ray Crosby

Health in upstate New York, the Santa Clara County California Department of Health, and a major contract to support the launch of Telehealth.HHS.gov to engage the consumer and provider community.

To support its growth in public health and commercial sectors, the firm added senior executives including Edelman alums Megan Humphries as an EVP and Julia Krahe as Senior VP, as well as Julian Hernandez as a VP.

Crosby said one of his major challenges is finding exceptional talent who have a passion for working with health care brands and causes and are a strong fit for the agency's culture. "We are also carefully thinking through what the future of the workplace looks like while there are still so many variables at play," he said.

Ruder Finn helps clients get noticed

Ruder Finn healthcare head Christie Anbar said the pandemic made it more difficult to capture mindshare for non-COVID related health issues and treatments, though they were equally important.

The firm's rich healthcare heritage in biotech and pharma communications and digital first, "what's next" mindset, was well positioned to help existing and new clients quickly pivot when the pandemic hit, according to Anbar. "From optimizing virtual medical congresses to dialing up digital and

social storytelling, to going beyond Zoom for high-impact virtual events—Ruder Finn ensured clients' messages resonated with the right person at the right time, inspiring changes in mindset and behavior," she said.

Anbar added that the firm's leadership has long understood that an agency is only as good as its people and prioritizes employee well-being and job satisfaction by keeping a collaborative, supportive culture, emphasizing the importance of training and bringing in new clients that offer diverse, rewarding work across therapeutic categories.

"This priority never waned during the pandemic—from making sure employees had the right technology to support remote work, to hosting virtual happy hours and morning 'Coffee, Tea and Chat' sessions, to training staff on new technology platforms or regulatory processes to expanding the agency's biotech and pharma client roster," she said.

Anbar said RF's health group thrived in 2020 by partnering with an expanding array of clients to deliver on their business goals through powerful storytelling, which fueled team expansion and growth. ○



Christie Anbar

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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN HEALTHCARE

Firm	2020 Net Fees	Firm	2020 Net Fees
1. Real Chemistry , San Francisco, CA	\$349,187,000	40. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	\$1,004,771
2. Edelman , New York, NY	168,838,000	41. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	964,375
3. Ruder Finn , New York, NY	35,988,000	42. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	955,731
4. Finn Partners , New York, NY	34,129,000	43. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	900,000
5. Spectrum , Washington, DC	32,900,000	44. Agency Ten22 , Cumming, GA	867,365
6. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	32,660,000	45. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	832,094
7. Evoke KYNE , New York, NY	30,984,000	46. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	727,285
8. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	28,214,934	47. Landis Communications , San Francisco, CA	516,800
9. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	24,123,700	48. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	515,573
10. ICR , New York, NY	22,932,982	49. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	508,797
11. JPA Health , Washington, DC	14,818,927	50. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	487,357
12. M Booth Health , New York, NY	14,433,794	51. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	428,820
13. Zeno Group , New York, NY	10,799,226	52. Bellmont Partners , Minneapolis, MN	402,540
14. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	10,100,000	53. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	376,113
15. Sam Brown Inc. , Wayne, PA	8,001,820	54. Rosica Communications , Fair Lawn, NJ	370,737
16. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	7,548,984	55. Serendipit , Phoenix, AZ	356,741
17. McCabe Message Partners , Washington, DC	6,407,087	56. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	347,900
18. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	5,878,498	57. Singer Associates PR, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	334,159
19. Hunter , New York, NY	5,500,000	58. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	311,038
20. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	5,004,000	59. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	305,702
21. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	4,811,473	60. Perry Comms. Group, Inc. , Sacramento, CA	305,237
22. LaVoie Health Science , Boston, MA	4,459,686	61. Hoyt Organization Inc., The , Torrance, CA	300,000
23. MCS Healthcare PR , Bedminster, NJ	4,405,889	62. Butler Associates, LLC , New York, NY	290,176
24. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	4,300,000	63. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	201,698
25. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	4,179,000	64. BoardroomPR , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	200,000
26. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	3,620,030	65. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	178,319
27. MWWPR , New York, NY	3,482,345	66. WordWrite Communications LLC , Pittsburgh, PA	170,000
28. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	3,083,928	67. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	163,087
29. Lovell Communications , Nashville, TN	3,066,369	68. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	163,000
30. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	2,747,711	69. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC , Annapolis, MD	152,599
31. 720 Strategies , Washington, DC	2,520,210	70. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	151,316
32. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	2,263,389	71. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	148,814
33. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	2,189,682	72. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	104,914
34. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	1,649,525	73. J Public Relations , New York, NY	101,000
35. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	1,509,211	74. Hodges Partnership, The , Richmond, VA	100,000
36. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	1,471,455	75. Peppercomm , New York, NY	87,550
37. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	1,300,000	76. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	20,000
38. Havas Formula , New York, NY	1,284,762	77. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	3,000
39. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	1,244,679		

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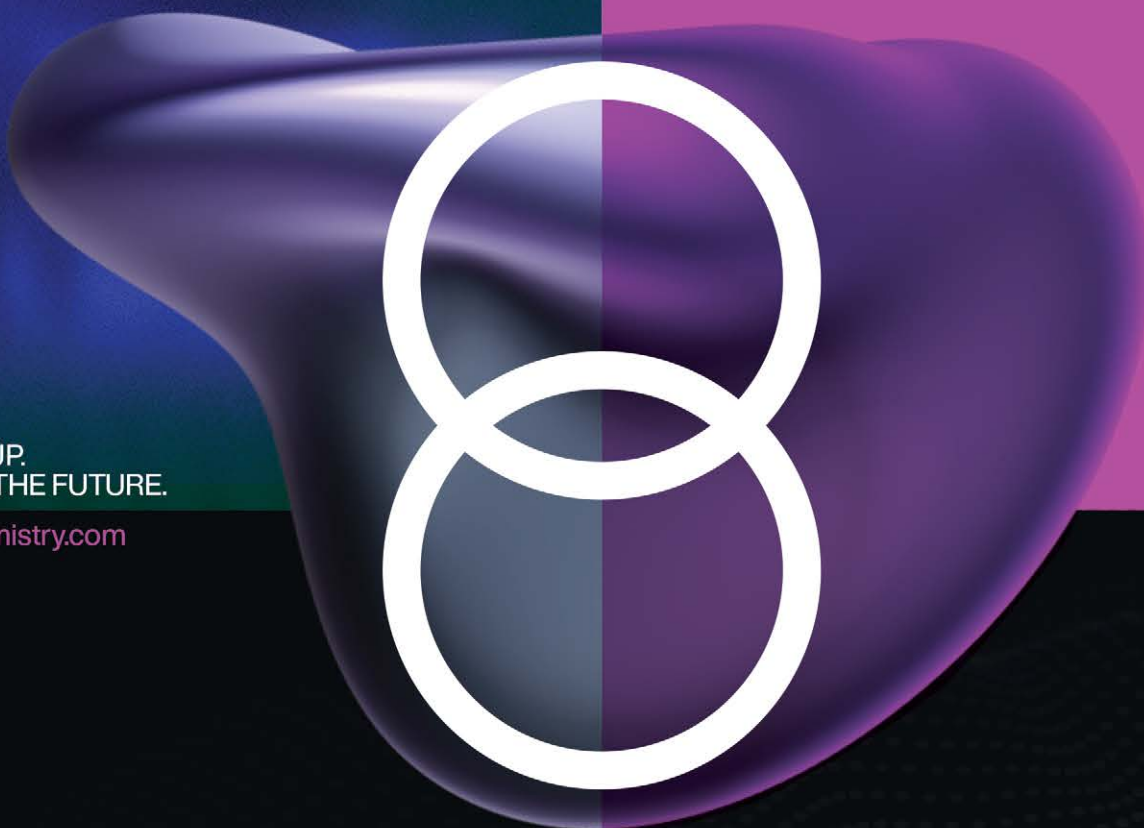
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REAL

CHEMISTRY

PR pros, journos say partisanship won't end under Biden

Journalists and communications professionals believe our ongoing climate of political polarization will continue under the Biden Admin., but recognize it may bring about a positive change regarding how their professions are perceived, according to USC Annenberg's Global Communications Report.

By Jon Gingerich

The historic events of 2020—kicked off by the COVID-19 pandemic, and furthered by the nationwide protests in response to the killing of George Floyd and finally, the November Presidential election—triggered an unprecedented domino effect of disruption in the United States, one that arrived on top of the fake news phenomenon and an ongoing climate of political polarization.

So, now that President Trump has left office, can we expect this era of political divisiveness to end? Not so fast, according to the latest annual Global Communications Report conducted by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations.

The report, which analyzed emerging trends in the global communications world by surveying PR professionals, members of the press and the general public, discovered that Americans don't exactly have a rosy outlook for the U.S. political landscape in a post-Trump world.

More than half of U.S. voters (53 percent) said they expect polarization of opinion on social issues to stay the same despite President Biden's promise to bring people together. Fewer than half (48 percent) believe Biden's election will have the effect of bringing about national unity and nearly a

third (31 percent) predict that polarization will increase. Nearly a quarter (23 percent) believe the Biden era will actually result in civil unrest.

Additionally, nearly three-quarters (72 percent) of Americans think racism in the U.S. will remain the same or even increase under Biden, and only 18 percent expect their empathy towards people who disagree with them will grow.

That said, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of all Americans surveyed admitted they have a positive outlook and remain hopeful for the next four years, although sentiment was starkly divided when respondents were broken out by political ideology, with those on the political left expressing markedly more optimism than those on the right (78 percent versus 41 percent, respectively).

These attitudes in the communications and press world were only slightly more positive than those of the average U.S. citizen.

More than three-quarters (77 percent) of journalists surveyed predicted the spread of fake news and the proliferation of conspiracy theories would stay the same or increase during the Biden administration, and 43 percent additionally expect to see growth in the use of social media for politi-

cal purposes, which they believe will result in more government regulation of social media platforms.

Nearly half (45 percent) of PR pros predict increased polarization in the U.S., and 72 percent expect activist demands placed on businesses to increase. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) said they think consumer expectations of businesses' role in society would also increase.

Despite all this, it's clear that PR pros and journalists foresee promising developments in a post-Trump world. More than a third (39 percent) of PR professionals and 37 percent of journalists said they think the Biden era will usher in a greater respect for their profession, and 78 percent of reporters believe the credibility of the White House Press Corps will improve. 85 percent of PR pros think the new administration will boost the United States' global reputation.

USC Annenberg's 2021 Global Communication Report, "Politics, Polarization and Purpose," was compiled using data from two separate online surveys, one of which polled 833 U.S. residents and another that surveyed 1,450 PR professionals and journalists. Surveys were conducted between November 2020 and January 2021. ○

COVID-driven uncertainty shakes press world

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed what journalists are writing about as well as their workload—if they're lucky enough to still have a job—according to a Muck Rack report.

By Jon Gingerich

COVID-19 has irrevocably changed the journalism profession, an industry that wasn't exactly on steady ground before the outbreak. According to a new report from journalist database, media monitoring and coverage reporting platform Muck Rack, the pandemic has changed the type of news coverage reporters are writing and has left many taking on additional work in light of the ongoing layoffs and furloughs that have rocked the news publishing world.

The Muck Rack report discovered that COVID-19 has affected 86 percent of journalists' work in some way or another and virtually all reporters surveyed (94 percent) said at least some of their reporting has pivoted to COVID-19 angles. More than a third (39 percent) said that most of their reporting has shifted to COVID-19

stories, and four percent said they now report exclusively on COVID-related developments.

More than half (65 percent) said they're currently writing more stories about COVID-19 and/or health and wellness, and a third (33 percent) said they're writing more stories about remote work and/or virtual communication. About a quarter (23 percent) said layoffs and/or furloughs at their publication have increased their workload, and 19 percent said they've been personally affected by a layoff, which has resulted in less writing work.

Given everything, most of the journalists polled by the Muck Rack survey (58 percent) said they're optimistic about their profession, compared to 42 percent who characterized their feelings as pessimistic. This optimism is on par with press senti-

ment last year (58 percent) and actually reveals a slight uptick from years prior (57 percent expressed optimism in 2019 and 55 percent expressed optimism in 2018).

The average journalist now works three or more beats, according to the survey, and a 42 percent of the journalists surveyed now write for online-only publications, while fewer than a third (30 percent) report primarily in print. Only 10 percent report for television, while eight percent work in radio, two percent report for a newsletter and one percent report for a podcast.

A majority (56 percent) of reporters said they're just as likely to respond to PR pitches as they were a year ago, but admitted only a quarter (25 percent) of the stories they end up writing come from pitches. Instead, 84 percent said academic experts are the best sources for their reporting. ○

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RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **AGRICULTURE**

1. G&S Business Comms., New York, NY	\$11,011,809
2. Edelman, New York, NY	7,098,000
3. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	3,562,000
4. Peppercomm, New York, NY	3,387,964
5. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	2,491,698
6. Zeno Group, New York, NY	2,361,826
7. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	1,499,128
8. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	757,370
9. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	688,995
10. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	636,513
11. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	394,698
12. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	379,717
13. Inkhous, Waltham, MA	237,010
14. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	234,390
15. Akrete, Evanston, IL	10,500

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
TRAVEL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$28,919,000
2. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	12,000,000
3. Finn Partners, New York, NY	10,409,000
4. Development Counsellors Int'l, New York, NY	9,410,923
5. J Public Relations, New York, NY	8,717,500
6. MMGY NJF, New York, NY	8,203,073
7. Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	7,728,941
8. Lou Hammond Group, New York, NY	7,350,509
9. Zeno Group, New York, NY	6,753,013
10. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	4,505,341
11. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations, New York, NY	2,991,360
12. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,800,000
13. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	2,379,630
14. MWWPR, New York, NY	1,781,726
15. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	1,766,461
16. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	1,635,372
17. Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	1,089,067
18. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,033,802
19. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	1,000,000
20. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	742,735
21. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	519,911
22. 360PR+, Boston, MA	419,304
23. Berk Communications, New York, NY	374,400
24. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	352,000
25. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	254,598
26. Inkhous, Waltham, MA	240,663
27. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	200,000

Travel & Economic Development cont.

28. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	\$188,334
29. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	164,145
30. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	130,000
31. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	116,800
32. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	116,059
33. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	114,344
34. Hunter, New York, NY	100,000
35. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	97,181
36. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	91,100
37. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	87,408
38. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
39. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	31,500
40. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	31,300
41. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	28,250
42. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	28,128
43. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	21,650
44. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	18,000
45. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	5,000
46. Akrete, Evanston, IL	2,000

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

1. Taylor, New York, NY	\$9,000,000
2. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	3,715,615
3. MWWPR, New York, NY	2,438,110
4. Berk Communications, New York, NY	1,918,970
5. Edelman, New York, NY	718,000
6. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	522,227
7. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	416,000
8. 360PR+, Boston, MA	204,321
9. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	200,000
10. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	150,000
11. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	137,825
12. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	127,219
13. Havas Formula, New York, NY	118,767
14. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	89,699
15. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	85,500
16. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	60,000
17. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	54,618
18. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	45,328
19. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	31,865
20. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	28,229
21. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	28,000
22. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	16,910
23. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	5,300

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

1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$79,029,000
2. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	7,873,326
3. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	7,678,163
4. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	6,500,000
5. Zeno Group , New York, NY	3,726,978
6. Turner , a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	3,213,690
7. Hunter , New York, NY	2,600,000
8. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	2,400,000
9. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	2,300,000
10. AMP3 Public Relations , New York, NY	1,442,023
11. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	1,008,500
12. Taylor , New York, NY	1,000,000
13. Havas Formula , New York, NY	811,371
14. Berk Communications , New York, NY	805,250
15. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	652,111
16. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	633,112
17. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	596,421
18. Serendipit , Phoenix, AZ	435,839
19. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	310,433
20. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	310,156
21. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	307,255
22. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	297,536
23. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	290,000
24. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	233,255
25. J Public Relations , New York, NY	136,000
26. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	86,467
27. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	57,500
28. BoardroomPR , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
29. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	41,770
30. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	31,897
31. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	24,490
32. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	13,500
33. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	2,471

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
HOME FURNISHINGS

1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$10,456,000
2. G&S Business Comms. , New York, NY	5,231,879
3. Hunter , New York, NY	4,400,000
4. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	3,400,000
5. Zeno Group , New York, NY	3,213,446
6. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	3,172,136
7. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	2,100,000
8. Havas Formula , New York, NY	1,919,477
9. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	1,800,000

Home Furnishings cont.

10. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	\$1,762,220
11. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	1,620,695
12. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	558,300
13. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	546,466
14. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	312,606
15. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	233,610
16. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	196,943
17. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	166,064
18. Landis Communications , San Francisco, CA	160,000
19. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	71,094
20. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	56,744
21. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	50,422
22. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	37,750
23. Serendipit , Phoenix, AZ	19,937
24. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	18,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **ENTERTAINMENT**

1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$15,609,000
2. Finn Partners , New York, NY	5,900,000
3. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	4,901,294
4. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	2,999,218
5. Taylor , New York, NY	2,150,000
6. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,600,000
7. MWWPR , New York, NY	1,102,083
8. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	977,974
9. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	914,459
10. Zeno Group , New York, NY	860,650
11. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	655,110
12. Havas Formula , New York, NY	649,227
13. Berk Communications , New York, NY	365,750
14. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	297,362
15. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	259,438
16. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	166,905
17. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	144,017
18. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	138,590
19. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	107,000
20. Bob Gold & Associates , Redondo Beach, CA	104,079
21. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	89,262
22. Serendipit , Phoenix, AZ	72,879
23. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	62,500
24. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	53,373
25. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	29,705
26. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	27,157
27. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	18,100
28. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	6,179

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **NON-PROFITS**

1. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	\$6,514,661
2. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	4,060,628
3. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	734,074
4. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	694,798
5. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	348,605
6. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	336,000
7. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	270,000
8. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	264,000
9. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	243,841
10. Zeno Group, New York, NY	232,660
11. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	229,899
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	223,156
13. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	218,600
14. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	192,943
15. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	190,000
16. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	147,689
17. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	126,257
18. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	125,000
19. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	118,700
20. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	110,000
21. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	105,793
22. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	100,000
23. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	100,000
24. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	94,500
25. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	81,500
26. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	68,708
27. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	49,070
28. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	43,900
29. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	43,500
30. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	24,000
31. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	13,590
32. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	2,500

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **EDUCATION**

1. Finn Partners, New York, NY	\$7,257,000
2. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	6,687,800
3. Zeno Group, New York, NY	3,177,048
4. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	2,705,693
5. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	1,979,000
6. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	1,229,000
7. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	1,175,517
8. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	757,653
9. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	501,200
10. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	480,000
11. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	465,682
12. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	451,212
13. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	450,000
14. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	403,000
15. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	349,665
16. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	325,277
17. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	305,050
18. 360PR+, Boston, MA	277,027
19. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	269,783
20. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	250,829
21. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	248,224
22. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	200,000
23. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	86,774
24. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	75,511

Education cont.

25. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	\$57,954
26. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	56,046
27. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
28. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	45,285
29. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	43,542
30. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	33,500
31. Peppercomm, New York, NY	8,500
32. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	1,275

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **ENVIRONMENTAL, SUSTAINABILITY & GREENTECH**

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$54,278,600
2. Edelman, New York, NY	16,218,000
3. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,750,000
4. Finn Partners, New York, NY	6,700,000
5. MWWPR, New York, NY	3,586,299
6. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	3,356,000
7. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	2,918,614
8. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	2,761,753
9. Perry Communications Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	1,849,278
10. Zeno Group, New York, NY	1,339,368
11. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	813,221
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	702,005
13. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	541,369
14. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	506,868
15. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	464,561
16. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	421,166
17. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	305,000
18. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	296,396
19. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	258,865
20. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	252,300
21. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	250,000
22. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	224,180
23. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	214,001
24. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	130,872
25. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	125,968
26. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	100,000
27. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	70,000
28. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	50,000
29. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	40,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **PURPOSE/CSR**

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$2,385,700
2. Zeno Group, New York, NY	1,526,777
3. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,363,553
4. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	869,087
5. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	781,000
6. Taylor, New York, NY	750,000
7. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	341,261
8. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	288,130
9. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	270,000
10. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	210,497
11. Berk Communications, New York, NY	190,000
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	142,500
13. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	85,951
14. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	84,000
15. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	17,957

**RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
REAL ESTATE/FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	\$1,819,046
2. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	1,429,794
3. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,023,946
4. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,000,000
5. Akrete, Evanston, IL	946,887
6. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	888,056
7. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	827,470
8. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	650,000
9. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	617,385
10. Havas Formula, New York, NY	602,861
11. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	488,000
12. Zeno Group, New York, NY	438,164
13. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	397,625
14. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	272,237
15. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	255,250
16. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	254,281
17. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	245,500
18. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	240,447
19. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	223,198
20. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	200,000
21. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	103,772
22. J Public Relations, New York, NY	99,500
23. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	83,500
24. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	82,660
25. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	50,000
26. 360PR+, Boston, MA	46,910
27. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	35,400
28. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	26,042
29. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	25,101
30. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	23,673
31. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	22,500
32. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	5,318
33. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	3,156

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN INDUSTRIAL

1. Zeno Group, New York, NY	\$6,025,318
2. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	3,385,515
3. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	2,626,775
4. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	1,958,400
5. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,213,732
6. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	984,230
7. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	932,200
8. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	625,709
9. Havas Formula, New York, NY	622,600
10. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	400,669
11. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	255,223
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	254,126
13. Peppercomm, New York, NY	228,607
14. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	125,000
15. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	115,900
16. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	101,038
17. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	87,400
18. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	86,221
19. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	72,000
20. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	68,800

Industrial cont.

21. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	\$53,000
22. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	38,877
23. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	25,000
24. J Public Relations, New York, NY	10,000
25. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	7,177
26. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	7,000

**RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
AUTOMOTIVE/TRANSPORTATION**

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$10,449,300
2. Zeno Group, New York, NY	5,014,833
3. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	3,144,000
4. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,250,000
5. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	1,916,000
6. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	1,250,000
7. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,168,639
8. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	748,474
9. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	606,147
10. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	494,934
11. 360PR+, Boston, MA	414,636
12. Havas Formula, New York, NY	413,382
13. Peppercomm, New York, NY	271,940
14. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	269,672
15. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	250,000
16. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	120,000
17. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	108,000
18. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	105,285
19. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	86,555
20. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	85,400
21. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	66,628
22. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	50,000
23. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	42,000
24. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	26,195
25. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	8,750

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN ENERGY

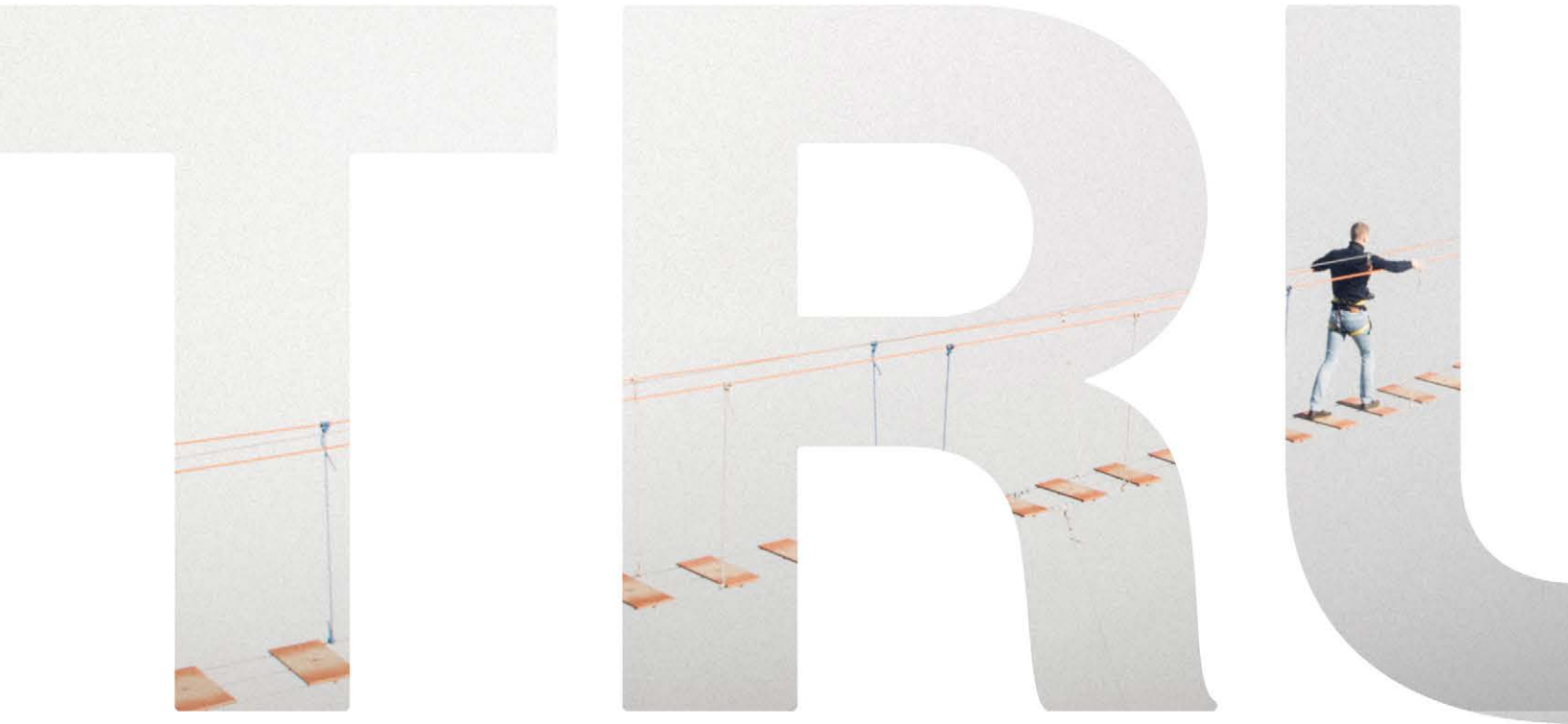
1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$8,058,300
2. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	6,187,529
3. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	3,748,142
4. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	2,712,930
5. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	1,411,063
6. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	807,552
7. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	697,431
8. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	676,829
9. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	660,744
10. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	626,378
11. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	571,772
12. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	350,000
13. Zeno Group, New York, NY	256,620
14. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	236,366
15. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	172,625
16. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	97,954

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Firm	2020 Net Fees	Firm	2020 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$69,583,000	28. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	\$704,394
2. MWWPR, New York, NY	9,162,755	29. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	572,031
3. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	8,000,000	30. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	567,463
4. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	7,157,914	31. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	531,770
5. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	6,667,400	32. Berk Communications, New York, NY	499,750
6. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	5,622,975	33. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	461,000
7. Infinite Global, New York, NY	5,609,950	34. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	431,907
8. Real Chemistry, San Francisco, CA	4,700,000	35. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	377,254
9. Zeno Group, New York, NY	3,967,695	36. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	369,002
10. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	3,700,000	37. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	337,389
11. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	2,088,208	38. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	300,279
12. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	2,013,974	39. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	275,061
13. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,012,781	40. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	192,634
14. Ripp Media/PR, Inc., New York, NY	2,000,000	41. Peppercomm, New York, NY	192,386
15. Havas Formula, New York, NY	1,759,629	42. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	140,000
16. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,500,000	43. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	120,190
17. Finn Partners, New York, NY	1,500,000	44. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	109,838
18. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	1,500,000	45. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	80,063
19. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,493,050	46. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	52,800
20. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	1,335,757	47. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	49,535
21. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	1,168,224	48. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	38,500
22. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	1,088,936	49. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	37,408
23. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	1,009,183	50. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	34,000
24. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	1,003,398	51. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	28,430
25. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	852,556	52. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	4,500
26. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	850,766	53. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	2,075
27. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	845,198		

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

Firm	2020 Net Fees	Firm	2020 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$107,883,000	26. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	\$510,000
2. Hunter, New York, NY	17,300,000	27. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	448,429
3. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	15,980,003	28. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	425,229
4. Zeno Group, New York, NY	12,181,516	29. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	400,000
5. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	10,692,400	30. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	346,994
6. MWWPR, New York, NY	8,375,400	31. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	331,714
7. Havas Formula, New York, NY	8,254,657	32. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	307,692
8. Taylor, New York, NY	6,800,000	33. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	293,209
9. Real Chemistry, San Francisco, CA	6,300,000	34. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	259,300
10. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	6,000,000	35. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	202,220
11. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	5,000,000	36. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	168,000
12. Citizen Relations, Los Angeles, CA	4,988,553	37. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	139,983
13. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	4,598,362	38. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	124,445
14. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	3,648,775	39. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	114,867
15. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	3,534,990	40. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	108,360
16. 360PR+, Boston, MA	3,402,308	41. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	100,000
17. Finn Partners, New York, NY	3,380,000	42. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	98,962
18. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	1,688,000	43. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	78,302
19. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	1,257,349	44. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	69,243
20. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	1,230,040	45. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	60,000
21. Berk Communications, New York, NY	1,083,743	46. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	53,250
22. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,070,000	47. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	25,000
23. Peppercomm, New York, NY	758,060	48. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	6,000
24. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	706,118	49. J Public Relations, New York, NY	2,500
25. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	608,708		





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.

Independent PR firms posted 3.8% growth in 2020

The top 130 independent PR firms participating in *O'Dwyer's* 2021 annual rankings posted a 3.8 percent gain to \$3 billion in combined fee income during pandemic 2020.

By Kevin McCauley

The top 130 independent PR firms posted a 3.8 percent gain to \$3 billion in combined fee income during pandemic 2020 and a 2.9 percent dip to 15,832 in year-end overall employment, according to *O'Dwyer's* 2021 annual rankings.

Seventy-two firms posted income gains, while 48 suffered declines. Nine reported flat income.

One firm, Lansons Intermarket at No. 104 on the list, could not provide comparable 2019 figures due to a revamp in its accounting system triggered by a change in ownership.

The Top 25 firms combined for a five percent gain to \$2.3 billion in fee income. Employment dropped 2.2 percent to 12,135.

Edelman, which posted a 5.8 percent decrease in fees to \$840 million, retained its No. 1 position in *O'Dwyer's* rankings. It had 530 fewer employees at the end of 2020 compared to 2019.

Real Chemistry, the former W2O Group, posted a robust 61 percent rise in income to \$360.2 million, powered in part by the acquisition of seven firms: 21GRAMS, Symplur, Discern Health, Elysia Group, starpower, Swoop and IPM.ai.



Jim Weiss

CEO Jim Weiss noted that 2020 marked the 19th consecutive year of double-digital growth at his healthcare-oriented firm.

Real Chemistry worked with clients on the pandemic frontlines, supporting about 50 COVID-19-related initiatives and clients developing vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and devices.

"We leveraged our machine and AI data engine to provide vital information about the pandemic to media and the life sciences industry and committed significant agency time and resources to positively impact those affected," said Weiss.

The firm established the Networks for Emergencies & Relief non-profit, which raised more than \$450,000 to source and distribute 2.3 million+ PPE to organizations in critical need and partnered with the Ad Council to launch a \$50 million pro bono campaign that enlisted Dr. Anthony Fauci and other KOLs to improve vaccine confi-

dence.

Real Chemistry also guided the Black Coalition Against COVID group as it launched "A Love Letter to Black America," mobilizing advocates to build vaccine confidence within Black communities.

Weiss bolstered First Chemistry's ranks by recruiting a global chief experience officer; group president of transformation, consumer activation and marketing; head of DE&I; and presidents of CRM/marketing solutions and corporate & capital market communications.

He said the transformation from W2O to First Chemistry in March 2021 is designed to improve outcomes across the healthcare ecosystem and closely integrate operations "to deliver data-driven tech-enabled health marketing and communications solutions."

Zeno Group restores sacrificed salaries

Zeno Group achieved its 11th consecutive year of growth in 2020 amid the global pandemic and social unrest.

The firm, which relies on technology, healthcare, food, beverage and manufacturing for 50 percent of its US business, counseled more than 85 clients on COVID-19 and racial justice matters.

"Clients within those sectors on both sides of the business spectrum—some battered, others surging—turned to Zeno's integrated capabilities including research, creative, corporate reputation, crisis, digital, analytics and purpose," said CEO Barby Siegel.

The firm added Hyatt Global Corp., Crate & Barrel and Ancestry to its roster in 2020.



Barby Siegel

"While the year at times was overwhelming and unnerving, Zeno's years-in-the-making culture of kindness, compassion and people first led the way on how the agency handled a new normal amid the pandemic," said Siegel, who sent nightly global emails to staffers that addressed fears and anxiety while offering hope and strength.

In June, Zeno implemented salary cuts for VPs and above to protect and preserve business. The pay was restored on September 16.

"We built our business back and continued our consecutive yearly growth," said Siegel, and paid back the sacrificed salary in February.

Pandemic spurs innovation at APCO

The unprecedented nature of the pandemic spurred APCO Worldwide to take innovative and bold decisions with new offerings, make acquisitions and strategic partnerships to meet clients' needs, and collaborate across regions and practices to help clients maintain business continuity and look forward with confidence, according to Evan Kraus, President of APCO Worldwide.



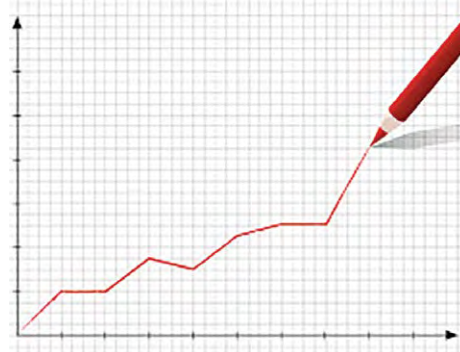
Evan Kraus

The Washington-based firm took the No. 3 slot in *O'Dwyer's* rankings with net fees of \$143 million, up one percent from 2019.

As the pandemic took hold, APCO launched a "coronavirus hub" to provide key intelligence through a series of surveys and expert insights into global sentiments and critical issues around the pandemic.

The firm evolved its crisis response capabilities and launched "Come Back Stronger" to help clients navigate the challenges of the pandemic and move towards recovery.

Due to strong demand, APCO established regional hubs for growth and innovation. "The hubs will help anticipate what's next for the company and its clients, and focus on important client needs, including C-suite advisory; shifting demographic, social, culture and behavioral change; geopolitical dynamics and fallout from elections; and advancing innovative and disruptive



O'Dwyer's rankings of PR firms, pg. 52

Continued on next page

business models,” said Kraus.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, CEO Brad Staples has led a dedicated international APCO task force to monitor, assess, communicate and guide the company’s pandemic response.

Kraus said employee well-being and mitigating business risk were top priorities during 2020.

“We seamlessly shifted to fully remote operations, provided complete flexibility to meet employees’ challenges at home, converted global learning and development programs to be completely online, and hired experts and created social outlets to protect employees’ mental wellbeing,” said Kraus.

APCO also stepped up its efforts on the equity and social impact fronts. It tapped Charlene Wheelless as senior advisor for equity and justice and launched “Accelerate What’s Right”—an effort designed to address the “right now”—to fight systemic racism and discrimination, and to create a lasting effort to advance equality and inclusion.

Core values guide Finn Partners

While 2020 posed tremendous challenges—personally and professionally—to the team at Finn Partners, “our values emerged as our compass, guiding business decisions and providing clarity amid the chaos,” said CEO Peter Finn.

He said when the pandemic hit, the firm shifted swiftly from profits to the protection of its staff and client relationships.

Finn Partners reallocated underutilized staff, bolstered its data and analytics practice and retrained/upskilled workers for new jobs. “We can proudly say that we had no COVID-related layoffs or pay cuts, and in fact, gave bonuses during a time when so many others were shedding staff,” said Finn.

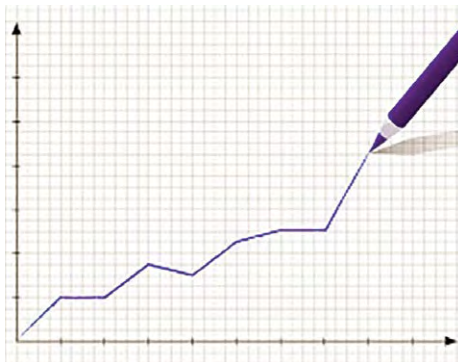
The No. 4 ranked *O’Dwyer’s* firm was in the forefront in the fight for social justice. It supported the Black Lives Matter movement, created a 100-person DEI committee of volunteers and promoted the push for greater voting access.

“We lived in the trenches with our clients, guiding them daily through COVID crisis communications, digital transformation, and shaping their sector leadership voice across policy, product and public issues,” said Finn.



Peter Finn

He said Finn Partners’ first-quarter 2021 results were the best in the firm’s history, further validating that “our purpose-driven, people-centric model is in demand.”



O’Dwyer’s rankings of top gainers, pg. 55

ICR sticks with ex-clients

Tom Ryan, CEO of ICR, said 2020 ranked as “one of the most gratifying years” in the financial firm’s 22-year history and “maybe its most prolific in terms of absolute dollar growth.”

Once the pandemic hit in March, many of ICR’s clients in the restaurant, retail and consumer sectors either left the shop or suspended fees. “Yet as a management team, we made the conscious decision to keep supporting those former clients regardless of their ability to pay,” said Ryan.

The firm created a COVID-19 website in April to help clients navigate the impact of the pandemic, provide continual real-time insights and information about what was occurring, and monitor what industry peers were doing and how it affected them and their communication.



Tom Ryan

“Ultimately, as markets priced in a recovery, most clients came back to ICR in the second half of the year with a new-found demand for a broader level of engagement, including integrated investor communications, business & financial media strategy, crisis preparedness and management and governance advisory,” said Ryan.

That client comeback accelerated ICR’s growth across every service and industry



O’Dwyer’s rankings of firms by region, pg. 56

sector, particularly technology and health-care.

ICR also witnessed an explosion in the SPAC market where it is a leader in terms of market share, transactions executed and market value.

Ryan noted that ICR established a formal Inclusion & Diversity initiative and focused on team member engagement and communication, which he believes will be key to unifying a geographically disperse workforce going forward.

Coyne maintains family ties

Coyne PR, which is proud of its family atmosphere, experienced a free-fall drop in revenue during the second quarter of 2020 due to COVID-19.

That decline caused a 13 percent decline to \$28 million in full-year fee income for the No. 20 firm on *O’Dwyer’s* list.

Despite the revenue shortfall, CEO Tom Coyne and his leadership team promised not to lay off or furlough a single employee.

“We made it clear that salaries and medical benefits would remain intact and that the health and safety of the extended Coyne PR family would always come first,” said Coyne.

As a firm dedicated to being the best place to work, Coyne PR developed innovative approaches to conducting business; created novel ways to stay connected and forged caring and compassionate policies for serving the family of loyal employees.



Tom Coyne

Leadership unveiled a new program dubbed “Work Your Way,” which gave every employee across all levels a completely flexible work alternative.

Employees were given the freedom to work from home full-time, relocate to a different office, or select a new office in the expanded space the company acquired to accommodate social distancing guidelines more safely.

Working remotely posed a unique challenge to tight-knit Coyne PR, which is noted for employee events like scavenger hunts, happy hours, themed lunches and corn hole tournaments.

With the shelter-in-place mandate, the firm produced “Coyne Connect,” an initiative to keep people in the loop.

Some highlights are: “Don’t Get Crazy: Cooking with Computer Mark” virtual cooking demonstrations from a former chef and Coyne’s IT department head; “Storytelling with Jenn” sessions of heartbreak, career

Continued on page 48

O'Dwyer's rankings

— Continued from page 47

triumphs and lessons learned hosted by executive VP Jennifer Kamienski; “Mediation with Meg,” led by social media strategist Megan Schuster; “Nutrition Rules! Bootcamp” taught by Jackie Peskin of the food/nutrition team and the #CoynePeloton-Crew exercise bike program.

Coyne said staffers really pulled together during the pandemic and adapted communications programs that generated more than \$10 million in new revenues.

Kivvit increases headcount

Kivvit, which registered a three percent spurt in 2020 fee income to \$34.1 million, used the pandemic year to accelerate its “agency of the future” model, according to Molly Scherrman, COO.



Molly Scherrman

She said O'Dwyer's No. 14 ranked firm invested to expand its leadership team, increased headcount by 20 percent, bolstered the use of data tools and technology, and developed new brand strategy teams, ranging from data-driven insights to motion graphics.

“We are immensely proud of our team, who responded nimbly to the new work environment and supported one another in addition to delivering incredible client work, which included campaigns on behalf of government agencies in six states on critical issues ranging from COVID-19 to the 2020 census to voting and to healthcare enrollment,” Scherrman said.

Ruder Finn's bolsters digital, tech savvy

The rapid transformation driven by the COVID-19 landscape pushed Ruder Finn to invest in new digital and technological capabilities, according to CEO Kathy Bloomgarden.

O'Dwyer's No. 6 independent firm, with \$87.8 million in fees, expanded its Techlab, which explores emerging tech in AI voice, VR/AR and robotics, and develops AI-driven apps, analytics tools and voice skills.



Kathy Bloomgarden

The New York-based firm's pharma unit and employee engagement practice earned it assignments at the forefront of COVID vaccines, therapeutics development and the tech-enabled virtual workspace, according to Bloomgarden.

Recognizing the power of honest dialogue

to bring communities together, quell anxiety and spark innovative solutions, Ruder Finn launched a pandemic-centered salon series, bringing top communicators across industries together to brainstorm solutions, share insights and hold difficult conversations about topics such as how to inspire innovation and engagement among employees, while still upholding a sense of security and well-being.

Bloomgarden said: “Due to the strength of our portfolio, the digital DNA and architecture of our organization, and the energy and agility of our people, Ruder Finn was able to pioneer a smooth transition throughout the pandemic to not only avoid all furloughs, pandemic layoffs and salary cuts but support business continuity as we onboarded 17 key new hires and achieved double-digit growth in 2020.”

Defining year for 5WPR

5W Public Relations chief Ronn Torossian called 2020 “a defining year” for the firm that ranks No. 11 on O'Dwyer's roster with fees of \$38.1 million.

He said when the pandemic jeopardized the business of clients and the future of the New York shop, staffers shined. “They quickly pivoted—adjusting strategies from client pitches to new business tactics, and thanks to this creative thinking, tireless work ethic, and calmness under pressure, managed to not only retain the majority of their clients, but also sign an impressive number of new ones,” he said.



Ronn Torossian

The pandemic year was one of 5WPR's most profitable years, which Torossian considers an “unbelievable accomplishment given the state of the world, and testament to the phenomenally talented professionals at this company.”

During 2020, 5W added GNC, CarParts.com, EPICOR, Medallia, Jamf, Columbia Care, Payless, SmileDirectClub, Isopure and Coca-Cola's Fairlife unit to the client roster.

The firm used the lockdown to rebrand with a new logo, manifesto, and tagline to better communicate its services. That new identity also helps to unite employees who are working from home, according to Torossian.

IMRE pairs empathy, optimism

IMRE, No. 12 on O'Dwyer's list with 2020 fees of \$36.8 million, attributes its solid 10.2 percent growth rate to a healthy pairing of empathy and optimism, according to CEO David Imre.

The Baltimore-based firm's growth result-

ed from a combination of organic and new business in its pharmaceuticals, CPG, biotech, automotive, financial services and retail practices.

“While the world turned upside down, we began with what we are good at—intentional, radical listening. This gave insight into the insecurities our clients and staff were feeling, and swiftly refocused our energies on new ways of working with and for our partners,” Imre said.



David Imre

The firm added 27 staffers in 2020, a signal of its ability to attract talent.

They mostly joined the firm's innovators practice, which is a mix of PR, creative, brand strategy, digital marketing, social media, and data analysts working in concert with one another.

Evoke KYNE leans into larger purpose

Evoke KYNE entered 2020 after a transformational year in which it combined Evoke PR & Influence and KYNE to create a unified team to advance healthcare and wellbeing.

“We entered 2020 in a strong position to weather what would be a very difficult year for all,” said David Kyne, CEO.

He said the global pandemic, a long-overdue racial reckoning and social unrest for Black Americans and others facing systemic racism and discrimination, and a fraught political landscape causing great anxiety, stress and tension all around the globe highlighted the need for PR to combat misinformation and educate the public on health issues.

As a result, Evoke KYNE, which is No. 18 on O'Dwyer's list with fees of \$30.1 million, enjoyed robust organic growth and 15 new client engagements.



David Kyne

“Our teams leaned into our larger purpose and delivered impactful and award-winning programs for clients and partners in COVID-19 and beyond, helping them to re-shape plans, pivot to a virtual environment and counseling them on how to support hard-hit communities,” said Kyne.

The firm hired about 50 people, including heads of reputation and social media, and expanded its creative, digital and earned media teams.

Kyne said that after a year like no other, his firm “is proud to have played a significant role in harnessing the power of communications to change the world for the better while continuing to be a best place to work.” ●



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

Firm	2020 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2019
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$840,022,000	5,143	-5.8
2. Real Chemistry , San Francisco, CA	360,187,000	1,350	61
3. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	142,960,000	799	1
4. Finn Partners , New York, NY	108,897,000	745	-8.7
5. ICR , New York, NY	105,955,111	260	20.0
6. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	87,775,000	732	13.0
7. Zeno Group , New York, NY	85,994,010	513	8.5
8. Prosek Partners , New York, NY	61,950,000	209	13.2
9. Hotwire , New York, NY	41,748,611	253	2.0
10. MWWPR , New York, NY	38,878,161	160	-9.0
11. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	38,092,948	169	12.6
12. IMRE, LLC , Baltimore, MD	36,739,100	185	10.2
13. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	35,862,295	165	-4.0
14. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	34,069,946	123	3.0
15. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	33,159,488	122	2.7
16. Spectrum , Washington, DC	32,900,000	120	0
17. Hunter , New York, NY	31,600,000	161	30.0
18. Evoke KYNE , New York, NY	30,984,000	139	24.0
19. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	29,092,172	99	18.6
20. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	28,000,000	139	-13.0
21. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	25,111,105	142	-18.0
22. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER), Columbus, OH	24,991,200	165	-15.0
23. Highwire PR , San Francisco, CA	24,163,050	87	23.3
24. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	23,410,631	152	-7.4
25. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	23,359,021	148	4.6
26. Havas Formula , New York, NY	22,673,654	118	-11.5
27. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	22,540,000	167	-2.7
28. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	20,902,415	103	-15.4
29. Walker Sands , Chicago, IL	20,169,584	129	7.1
30. Taylor , New York, NY	19,700,000	86	-2.0
31. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	19,182,393	111	-4.9
32. Regan Communications Group , Boston, MA	18,157,434	101	-4.2
33. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	16,376,510	103	-12.0
34. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	15,400,000	46	0
35. Hoffman Agency, The , San Jose, CA	15,115,000	34	1.0
36. JPA Health Communications , Washington, DC	14,818,927	64	44.0
37. Bravo Group, Inc. , Harrisburg, PA	14,562,475	70	0
38. M Booth Health , New York, NY	14,433,794	43	-12
39. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	14,221,393	57	28.9
40. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	13,650,000	74	29.1
41. Marathon Strategies , New York, NY	13,504,883	40	15.0
42. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	13,091,113	78	-7.0
43. JeffreyGroup , Miami, FL	12,448,292	233	-6.0
44. Vested , New York, NY	12,409,000	30	18.0
45. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	11,912,000	57	-35.0
46. Davies , Santa Barbara, CA	11,750,000	34	4.7
47. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	10,780,275	79	-5.0
48. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	9,931,133	66	4.8
49. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	9,452,995	38	7.0
50. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI) , New York, NY	9,410,923	55	-5.7
51. J Public Relations , New York, NY	9,119,000	53	-20.3
52. Clarity , New York, NY	9,035,115	65	47.0
53. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	8,575,221	49	-17.0
54. Peppercomm , New York, NY	8,312,989	27	-7.3
55. MMGY NJF , New York, NY	8,203,073	39	-23
56. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	8,184,000	37	-6.6
57. Sam Brown Inc. , Wayne, PA	8,001,820	51	26.2
58. Stanton , New York, NY	7,572,300	26	9.1
59. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	7,542,661	35	0
60. Lou Hammond Group , New York, NY	7,350,509	40	-9.0
61. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	6,802,560	32	-2.0
62. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	6,632,137	37	16.5
63. McCabe Message Partners , Washington, DC	6,407,087	39	10.7
64. Dukas Linden Public Relations , New York, NY	6,396,315	24	1.1
65. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	5,902,120	22	-19.0
66. Berk Communications , New York, NY	5,707,363	24	32.5
67. Singer Associates Public Relations, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	5,682,442	19	4.0
68. Infinite Global , New York, NY	5,609,950	29	-5.9

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

Firm	2020 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2019
69. Touchdown PR, Austin, TX	\$5,600,633	12	14.7
70. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	5,281,963	18	40.0
71. Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	5,204,425	27	13.0
72. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	5,170,757	22	4.3
73. SourceCode Communications, New York, NY	5,168,512	27	52.0
74. Raffetto Herman Strategic Communications, Seattle, WA	5,119,092	28	64.0
75. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	4,886,767	30	10.0
76. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	4,804,411	36	13.7
77. LaVoie Health Science, Boston, MA	4,459,686	17	36.0
78. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, NJ	4,405,889	17	1.0
79. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,206,450	18	-11.0
80. BackBay Communications, Boston, MA	4,086,462	16	11.0
81. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,970,006	17	9.4
82. March Communications, Boston, MA	3,869,104	23	-17.0
83. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	3,726,153	28	20.0
84. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	3,691,386	20	3.2
85. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,577,000	28	7.2
86. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	3,473,116	23	-7.1
87. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	3,442,304	15	1.0
88. BoardroomPR, Fort Lauderdale, FL	3,400,000	17	13.0
89. CashmanKatz, Glastonbury, CT	3,325,000	24	4.5
90. Caliber Corporate Advisors, New York, NY	3,270,780	16	11.0
91. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	3,070,461	29	20.0
92. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	3,066,369	17	3.8
93. Crenshaw Communications, New York, NY	3,061,499	15	0
94. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	3,022,086	17	14.9
95. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations, New York, NY	2,991,360	22	-49.0
96. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	2,985,370	10	0
97. Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	2,918,614	15	-19.8
98. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	2,900,376	23	-14.0
99. Brandware, Atlanta, GA	2,820,232	13	1.0
100. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	2,806,267	17	4.0
101. Hewes Communications, New York, NY	2,705,723	7	-2.0
102. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	2,559,300	12	0
103. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	2,537,332	16	19.6
104. Lansons Intermarket, New York, NY	2,473,605	13	NA
105. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	2,357,623	13	20.4
106. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,236,134	16	-3.3
107. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	2,234,463	10	-35.0
108. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	2,100,062	7	2.0
109. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	2,070,753	13	3.0
110. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc., New York, NY	2,000,000	7	-25.0
111. Stanton Communications, Washington, DC	1,977,988	10	-1.0
112. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	1,935,060	10	-11.3
113. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	1,779,362	14	0
114. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	1,547,713	8	4.7
115. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	1,442,023	8	26.4
116. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	1,293,586	7	-17.0
117. Buttonwood Communications Group, New York, NY	1,291,188	8	6.5
118. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	1,247,312	8	-19.7
119. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	1,218,152	9	1.4
120. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,148,669	16	-35.7
121. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,133,507	5	-26.0
122. Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	1,089,067	8	-18.5
123. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	973,955	5	4.0
124. Perry Communications Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	960,053	8	-25.3
125. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	897,706	7	0
126. Agency Ten22, Cumming, GA	867,365	4	7.9
127. Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	823,443	8	-22.9
128. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	810,000	6	-26.0
129. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	772,511	9	1.0
130. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	772,147	4	-1.0
131. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	699,370	4	0
132. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	673,552	7	-20.0
133. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	616,208	4	-3.5
134. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	575,314	3	17.9
135. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	494,706	3	NA
136. Judge Public Relations, Tampa, FL	474,942	3	-12.4

Trust in media on the upswing

A perceived public trust in journalism has been steadily on the rise since Trump's first year in office, but relatively few journalists believe that Americans' trust in the press will change significantly with our new Presidential administration, according to an annual media survey conducted by Cision.

By Jon Gingerich

The events of 2020 presented another devastating economic blow to newsrooms, an industry already beset by years of declining circulation and plummeting advertising revenues. But despite the ongoing challenges facing today's media world, journalists feel that public trust in the media has improved in the last year, a trend that many believe will continue going forward, according to findings in the latest State of the News Media report issued by Chicago-based PR software giant Cision.

Cision's annual report, which surveyed members of the press around the world to uncover the emerging trends and top challenges facing the media industry today, found that more than half (53 percent) of journalists polled said they feel the public lost trust in the media over the last year.

As bad as that might sound, it's actually a marked improvement from journalists' views on public trust in the last year (down from the 59 percent of journalists who said they believe the public has lost trust in the media in Cision's 2020 survey) and reveals an ongoing, steady improvement from previous iterations of the annual Cision report (63 percent in 2019, 71 percent in 2018 and 91 percent in 2017).

In the U.S., where a contentious relationship between the White House and several

media outlets were aired publicly over the last four years, 36 percent of journalists said they now think the Biden administration will help usher in a greater public trust in the media going forward, though 47 percent believe that trust in the press won't change significantly.

When it comes to what types of stories journalists are looking for this year, it appears that COVID continues to shape the news, as nearly half of reporters surveyed (46 percent) said they're still actively seeking out new angles for COVID-19 coverage. But 37 percent said that "feel good" stories regarding how companies and communities are helping others are a big part of their editorial strategy for 2021, a third (33 percent) said they're on the lookout for stories focused on furthering diversity, inclusion and equality and nearly the same number (32 percent) said they're looking for stories on how companies and communities are getting back to normal. Nearly a third (31 percent) said they're looking for stories on new technologies that are helping businesses and consumers and 29 percent said they're interested in more research-based, thought leadership content covering topical issues.

As in previous years, the journalists surveyed reported that they find themselves overworked and strapped for resources

while facing increased pressure to do more. A majority of the reporters polled (47 percent) said they currently cover five or more beats and a majority (33 percent) now file 10 or more stories per week. In addition, more than one in four journo's (28 percent) said they currently receive more than 100 PR pitches per week, the majority of which end up in the virtual trash due to irrelevance.

Most journalists (78 percent) said press releases remain the kind of content they want to see most from brands and PR professionals, while 68 percent are looking for original research such as trends and market data. Nearly half (45 percent) want invitations to events, 43 percent want initial ideas for story development and 34 percent want invitations to meet spokespeople (either virtually or in-person). Bottoming out the list were offers of comment on current news (26 percent), data-driven predictive insights on a story's potential performance (17 percent) and guest blog posts or byline articles (16 percent).

Cision's "2021 Global State of the Media Report" surveyed 2,750 journalists and media professionals in 15 countries between February 1 and March 1, 2021. Respondents were sourced from Cision's Media Database as well as from PR Newswire for Journalists database. ●

Vaccine hesitancy driven by lack of information

Americans who are most resistant to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine cite a lack of critical information regarding vaccines' safety and potential side effects, according to a recent study.

By Jon Gingerich

Americans who resist receiving a COVID-19 vaccine say they're hesitant due to potential safety issues and side effects, according to a recent study conducted by healthcare marketing agency LevLane and marketing research company MarketVision.

The study, which sought to gain insight into what's driving Americans' ongoing vaccine hesitancy, discovered a surprising number of Americans remain resistant to being vaccinated: Overall, more than a quarter of all participants (28 percent) said they're hesitant to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, citing concerns surrounding medical

privacy, levels of confusion or unfavorable reviews of the U.S. vaccine rollout.

While this lack of trust presents a challenge to federal, state and healthcare officials, the study identified key reasons for this hesitancy, suggesting what the government and healthcare leaders can do to overcome these concerns in an effort to get more Americans vaccinated. More than half (51 percent) of the study's participants said they think the vaccines were developed too quickly. And almost the same number (47 percent) said they're leery of potential side effects.

Among those who think the vaccines were

developed too quickly, nearly three-quarters (71 percent) are over the age of 65 (61 percent also identified as Baby Boomers and 54 percent identified as women). Among the respondents who said they're unsure of side effects, 55 percent identified as Hispanic, 55 percent identified as women and 50 percent identified as Black.

Virtually every senior polled (100 percent) said they want to see more information regarding potential side effects, as did 71 percent of the Gen X members (ages 41-56) and 64 percent of female respondents. More than half (58 percent) of Baby Boomers and 50 percent of seniors said they'd like to know more about the differences between current COVID-19 vaccine options.

In total, more than a third of all respondents (39 percent) said they want to know more about how much immunity they'll really get from a COVID-19 vaccine. ●

LEADING GAINERS AMONG PR FIRMS

Firm	2020 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2019
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Firms in the top 25 (representing fees from \$23.4M to \$840M)

1. Real Chemistry, San Francisco, CA	\$360,187,000	1,350	+61.0
2. Hunter, New York, NY	31,600,000	161	+30.0
3. Evoke KYNE, New York, NY	30,984,000	139	+24.0
4. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	24,163,050	87	+23.3
5. ICR, New York, NY	105,955,111	260	+20.0
6. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	29,092,172	99	+18.6
7. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	61,950,000	209	+13.2
8. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	87,775,000	732	+13.0
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	38,092,948	169	+12.6
10. IMRE, LLC, Baltimore, MD	36,739,100	185	+10.2

Firms ranked 26 through 50 (representing fees from \$9.4M to \$22.7M)

1. JPA Health, Washington, DC	\$14,818,927	64	+44.0
2. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	13,650,000	74	+29.1
3. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	14,221,393	57	+28.9
4. Vested, New York, NY	12,409,000	30	+18.0
5. Marathon Strategies, New York, NY	13,504,883	40	+15.0
6. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	20,169,584	129	+7.1
7. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	9,452,995	38	+7.0
8. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	9,931,133	66	+4.8
9. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,750,000	34	+4.7
10. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	15,115,000	34	+1.0

Firms ranked 51 through 100 (representing fees from \$2.8M to \$9.1M)

1. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms., Seattle, WA	\$5,119,092	28	+64.0
2. SourceCode Communications, New York, NY	5,168,512	27	+52.0
3. Clarity, New York, NY	9,035,115	65	+47.0
4. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	5,281,963	18	+40.0
5. LaVoie Health Science, Boston, MA	4,459,686	17	+36.0
6. Berk Communications, New York, NY	5,707,363	24	+32.5
7. Sam Brown Inc., Wayne, PA	8,001,820	51	+26.2
8. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	3,726,153	28	+20.0
9. Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	3,070,461	29	+20.0
10. Bospar, San Francisco, CA	6,632,137	37	+16.5

Firms ranked 101 through 136 (representing fees from \$475K to \$2.7M)

1. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	\$1,442,023	8	+26.4
2. Montith & Company, New York, NY	2,357,623	13	+20.4
3. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	2,537,332	16	+19.6
4. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	575,314	3	+17.9
5. Agency Ten22, Cumming, GA	867,365	4	+7.9
6. Buttonwood Communications Group, New York, NY	1,291,188	8	+6.5
7. Butler Associates, LLC, New York, NY	1,547,713	8	+4.7
8. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	973,955	5	+4.0
9. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	2,070,753	13	+3.0
10. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	2,100,062	7	+2.0

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY

Firm	2020 Net Fees	FT Empl.	Firm	2020 Net Fees	FT Empl.
CONNECTICUT			NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY		
1. ICR, Norwalk, CT	\$35,835,313	66	1. Edelman (includes Rochester)	\$218,572,000	906
2. CashmanKatz, Glastonbury, CT	3,325,000	24	2. Prosek Partners	51,280,000	159
CHICAGO			3. 5W Public Relations	38,092,948	169
1. Edelman (includes Detroit)	\$80,441,000	478	4. Finn Partners	37,466,000	219
2. Zeno Group	30,269,515	159	5. ICR	36,720,472	118
3. Walker Sands	20,169,584	129	6. Hunter	31,600,000	161
4. Finn Partners (includes Detroit)	9,920,000	53	7. Evoke KYNE	30,984,000	139
5. Kivvit	9,438,668	34	8. MWWPR	29,239,445	90
6. Greentarget Global LLC	8,184,000	37	9. Coyne PR	28,000,000	139
7. APCO Worldwide	6,680,100	22	10. Havas Formula	22,673,654	118
8. Public Communications Inc.	4,804,411	36	11. Zeno Group	20,077,744	98
9. G&S Business Communications	4,243,040	23	12. Kivvit	17,972,062	60
10. L.C. Williams & Associates	4,206,450	18	13. M Booth Health	14,433,794	43
11. Zapwater Communications, Inc.	2,900,376	23	14. Bliss Group, The	14,221,393	57
12. O'Malley Hansen Communications	1,935,060	10	15. APCO Worldwide	13,954,700	65
13. MWWPR	1,341,222	6	16. Marathon Strategies	13,504,883	40
14. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,133,507	5	17. Vested	12,409,000	30
15. Taylor	300,000	2	18. Taylor	12,200,000	58
16. Infinite Global	193,447	1	19. Development Counsellors Int'l (DCI)	9,410,923	55
FLORIDA			20. J Public Relations	9,119,000	53
1. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee	\$15,400,000	46	21. G&S Business Communications	8,733,941	48
2. rbb Communications, Miami	13,091,113	78	22. MMGY NJF	8,203,073	39
3. JeffreyGroup, Miami	12,448,292	233	23. Stanton	7,572,300	26
4. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee	9,452,995	38	24. Lou Hammond Group	7,350,509	40
5. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale	3,473,116	23	25. Peppercomm	6,695,322	23
6. BoardroomPR, Fort Lauderdale	3,400,000	17	26. Dukas Linden Public Relations	6,396,315	24
7. Edelman, Orlando	2,606,000	10	27. LaunchSquad	5,876,510	45
8. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale	1,148,669	16	28. Berk Communications	5,707,363	24
9. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa	897,706	7	29. SourceCode Communications	5,168,512	27
10. Kivvit, Miami	708,824	5	30. MCS Healthcare PR, Bedminster, NJ	4,405,889	17
11. Judge Public Relations, LLC, Tampa	474,942	3	31. MWWPR, E. Rutherford, NJ	3,964,540	30
BOSTON			32. Infinite Global	3,675,484	19
1. PAN Communications	\$23,359,021	148	33. Caliber Corporate Advisors	3,270,780	16
2. Matter Communications	22,540,000	167	34. Crenshaw Communications	3,061,499	15
3. Regan Communications Group	18,157,434	101	35. Hawkins Int'l Public Relations	2,991,360	22
4. Racepoint Global	11,912,000	57	36. Hewes Communications	2,705,723	7
5. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	10,358,678	63	37. Lansons Intermarket	2,473,605	13
6. ICR	7,006,024	4	38. Montieth & Company	2,357,623	13
7. 360PR+	6,862,207	38	39. Clarity	2,130,281	9
8. Rasky Partners, Inc.	5,902,120	22	40. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc.	2,000,000	7
9. Finn Partners	5,744,000	32	41. 360PR+	1,714,014	11
10. LaVoie Health Science	4,459,686	17	42. Inkhouse	1,676,675	8
11. BackBay Communications	4,086,462	16	43. Butler Associates, LLC	1,547,713	8
12. March Communications	3,869,104	23	44. AMP3 Public Relations	1,442,023	8
13. LaunchSquad	2,500,000	17	45. Buttonwood Communications Group	1,291,188	8
WASHINGTON, D.C.			46. Lumina Communications	1,197,018	10
1. Edelman	\$71,864,000	277	47. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	973,955	5
2. APCO Worldwide	41,414,500	169	48. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	699,370	4
3. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	36,739,100	185	49. Lawlor Media Group	673,552	7
4. Spectrum	32,900,000	120	50. Stuntman PR	616,208	4
5. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	29,092,172	99	51. Feintuch Communications	575,314	3
6. ICR, Baltimore, MD	15,730,472	17	PENNSYLVANIA		
7. JPA Health	14,818,927	64	1. Bravo Group, Inc., Harrisburg	\$14,562,475	70
8. Finn Partners	10,274,000	54	2. Gregory FCA, Ardmore	10,780,275	79
9. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	7,542,661	35	3. Sam Brown Inc., Wayne	8,001,820	51
10. McCabe Message Partners	6,407,087	39	4. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia	3,442,304	15
11. Kivvit	5,950,392	24	5. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr	1,293,586	7
12. 720 Strategies	5,281,963	18	6. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh	1,247,312	8
13. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	2,537,332	16	MIDWEST CITIES		
14. MWWPR	2,061,343	10	1. Edelman (includes Detroit), Chicago, IL	\$80,441,000	478
15. Stanton Communications	1,977,988	10	2. Zeno Group, Chicago, IL	30,269,515	159
16. Zeno Group	863,548	13	3. Fahlgren Mortine (incl. TURNER), Columbus, OH	24,991,200	165
17. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	494,706	3	4. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	20,169,584	129

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY

Firm		2020 Net Fees	FT Empl.	Firm		2020 Net Fees	FT Empl.
5.	Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	13,650,000	74	9.	Taylor	900,000	5
6.	Finn Partners (includes Detroit), Chicago, IL	\$9,920,000	53	10.	Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	823,443	8
7.	Kivvit, Chicago, IL	9,438,668	34	11.	Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	\$810,000	6
8.	Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	8,184,000	37	12.	Clarity	755,191	3
9.	APCO Worldwide, Chicago, IL	6,680,100	22	13.	MWWPR	643,896	13
10.	Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	5,170,757	22	SAN FRANCISCO & NORTH CALIFORNIA			
11.	Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	4,804,411	36	1.	Edelman (includes Silicon Valley)	\$41,726,000	173
12.	G&S Business Communications, Chicago, IL	4,243,040	23	2.	Highwire PR	24,163,050	87
13.	L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,206,450	18	3.	Hotwire	17,697,530	3
14.	Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	3,970,006	17	4.	LaunchSquad	16,376,510	103
15.	Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	2,900,376	23	5.	Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	15,115,000	34
16.	Beehive Strategic Comm., St. Paul, MN	2,234,463	10	6.	Zeno Group, Redwood Shores, CA	12,868,599	50
17.	Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	2,070,753	13	7.	Inkhouse	6,751,566	31
18.	O'Malley Hansen Comms, Chicago, IL	1,935,060	10	8.	Bospar	6,632,137	37
19.	FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	1,779,362	14	9.	Singer Associates Public Relations, Inc.	5,682,442	19
20.	MWWPR, Chicago, IL	1,341,222	6	10.	Finn Partners	5,309,000	22
21.	Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,133,507	5	11.	Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	4,007,407	17
22.	Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	772,147	4	12.	Clarity	3,244,239	14
23.	Taylor, Chicago, IL	300,000	2	13.	Edelman, Sacramento, CA	3,198,000	18
24.	Infinite Global, Chicago, IL	193,447	1	14.	Landis Communications	2,100,062	7
TEXAS				15.	Infinite Global	1,741,019	9
1.	Edelman (includes Dallas & Houston), Austin	\$19,284,000	94	16.	Peppercomm	1,617,667	4
2.	Pierpont Communications, Houston	6,802,560	32	17.	Perry Comms. Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	960,053	8
3.	Touchdown PR, Austin	5,600,633	12	WESTERN CITIES			
4.	TruePoint Communications, Dallas	3,726,153	28	1.	Edelman (incl. Silicon Valley), San Francisco, CA	\$41,726,000	173
5.	Champion Management Group, Dallas	3,691,386	20	2.	Edelman, Seattle, WA	35,263,000	164
6.	Idea Grove, Dallas	3,577,000	28	3.	Edelman (incl. Beverly Hills), Los Angeles, CA	32,031,000	119
7.	SPM Communications, Dallas	2,236,134	16	4.	Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	24,163,050	87
8.	BizCom Associates, Plano	772,511	9	5.	Hotwire, San Francisco, CA	17,697,530	31
9.	Zeno Group, Dallas	612,488	4	6.	Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	15,115,000	34
SOUTHEAST				7.	Zeno Group, Redwood Shores, CA	12,868,599	50
1.	French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	\$33,159,488	122	8.	Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,750,000	34
2.	Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	20,902,415	103	9.	LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	8,000,000	41
3.	Edelman, Atlanta, GA	18,249,000	88	10.	Edelman, Portland, OR	7,570,000	37
4.	Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	15,400,000	46	11.	Inkhouse, San Francisco, CA	6,751,566	31
5.	Finn Partners, Nashville, TN	14,010,000	85	12.	Bospar, San Francisco, CA	6,632,137	37
6.	rbb Communications, Miami, FL	13,091,113	78	13.	Singer Associates PR, San Francisco, CA	5,682,442	19
7.	JeffreyGroup, Miami, FL	12,448,292	233	14.	Finn Partners, San Francisco, CA	5,309,000	22
8.	G&S Business Comms., Raleigh, NC	12,134,124	71	15.	Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms., Seattle, WA	5,119,092	28
9.	MP&F Strategic Comms., Nashville, TN	9,931,133	66	16.	Finn Partners, Portland, OR	4,717,000	22
10.	APCO Worldwide, Raleigh, NC	6,955,000	29	17.	Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	4,007,407	17
11.	Taylor, Charlotte, NC	6,300,000	21	18.	Zeno Group, Santa Monica, CA	3,600,340	15
12.	Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	4,886,767	30	19.	Finn Partners, Los Angeles, CA	3,533,000	34
13.	BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	3,400,000	17	20.	Clarity, San Francisco, CA	3,244,239	14
14.	Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	3,066,369	17	21.	Edelman, Sacramento, CA	3,198,000	18
15.	ARPR, Atlanta, GA	3,022,086	17	22.	Serendipit, Phoenix, AZ	3,070,461	29
16.	Brandware, Atlanta, GA	2,820,232	13	23.	IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	2,985,370	10
17.	Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	2,806,267	17	24.	Cerrell Associates, Los Angeles, CA	2,918,614	15
18.	Edelman, Orlando, FL	2,606,000	10	25.	BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	2,559,300	12
19.	Hemsworth Comms., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,148,669	16	26.	APCO Worldwide, Seattle, WA	2,455,300	11
20.	Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	1,089,067	8	(includes employee presence from CA to CO)			
21.	CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	897,706	7	27.	Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	2,100,062	7
22.	Agency Ten22, Cumming, GA	867,365	4	28.	Infinite Global, San Francisco, CA	1,741,019	9
23.	Kivvit, Miami, FL	708,824	5	29.	Peppercomm, San Francisco, CA	1,617,667	4
24.	Judge Public Relations, LLC, Tampa, FL	474,942	3	30.	Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	1,218,152	9
LOS ANGELES				31.	Perry Comms. Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	960,053	8
1.	Edelman (includes Beverly Hills)	\$32,031,000	119	32.	Taylor, Los Angeles, CA	900,000	5
2.	Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,750,000	34	33.	Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	823,443	8
3.	Zeno Group, Santa Monica, CA	3,600,340	15	34.	Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	810,000	6
4.	Finn Partners	3,533,000	34	35.	Clarity, Los Angeles, CA	755,191	3
5.	IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	2,985,370	10	36.	MWWPR, Los Angeles, CA	643,896	13
6.	Cerrell Associates	2,918,614	15				
7.	BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	2,559,300	12				
8.	Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	1,218,152	9				

Adapting to our post-pandemic's digital realities

Brands must acknowledge recent shifts in how Americans shop, interact and view wellness if they want to stay relevant and establish connections with consumers in our post-pandemic era.

By Kathy Bloomgarden

While the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic has come and gone, the ways in which it has impacted society remain steadfast. Over the past twelve months, our world has become more digitally-dependent than ever, influencing and informing everything we do, from the way we think to how we behave. As the pandemic accelerated our world into a remote state of living seemingly overnight, digital became both the backbone and blueprint for our new society. From how patients schedule and carry out doctor's visits, to how students learn, to how consumers shop, and how singles date—our behaviors have become enmeshed in a new digital matrix, one that will remain intact long after the pandemic leaves our shores.

In order to operate in this new society, communication has and will continue to be critical to ensure challenges are circumvented and opportunities are seized. In a world of constant screen time—where the average attention span has now fallen to 12 seconds for Millennials and a mere eight seconds for Gen Z—it's paramount that effective communication be clear, transparent, authoritative and easily digestible, because consumers are looking for fast answers. (There is, after all, a reason TikTok rose to become 2020's most popular app.)

As behaviors evolve amid this new digital milieu, so too must communication. Here are three ways to effectively communicate in the post-pandemic digital era:

Don't just tell—story tell

In today's digital era, it has become harder than ever to capture consumers' attention. So how, then, do brands build an authentic bond with their intended audience? The key lies in developing an emotional connection, rendered through compelling and heartfelt stories around the brand's ethos. In fact, research has found that 92 percent of consumers want advertising and content that feel like stories; stories are 22 times more memorable than facts and figures alone.

At Ruder Finn, we're driving this type of storytelling through a new, analytics-driven content marketing offering dedicated to strengthening our clients' storytelling capabilities in a multi-platform approach.

The new specialty uses story-mining tools and leading technologies to help build deep relationships by developing branded content that entertains, educates and engages consumers in a real, relevant and repeatable way.

Embrace new ways of connecting

While there's no real replacement for human interaction, many new and emerging technologies are offering an alluring respite from the social isolation of the pandemic "normal," particularly as consumer concerns over the coronavirus linger. Just consider a new EY study, which found that despite the recent stabilization brought on by mass COVID-19 vaccination administration, people are more worried than ever. Indeed, the percentage of people who think they will live in fear of COVID-19 for at least another year has risen from 37 to 40 percent in the past four months. So, it's really no surprise that 77 percent of consumers have changed the way they shop.

With this change in consumer behavior, and as consumers continue to prioritize their health and safety over all else—continuing to leverage virtual experiences over in-person ones—meeting consumers where they are and bringing in-store experiences into consumers' homes will become ever-important. To do this, brands are increasingly using new and emerging platforms—from TikTok to Clubhouse—to retain earnest connections with consumers—and in some cases even crowdsource revolutionary new products.

Acknowledge the wellness economy

Between lockdowns, limited in-person social interactions and constant screen time, consumers have faced mounting health challenges over the past year. In fact, a Kaiser Family Foundation poll from July found many adults are reporting negative impacts on their mental health and well-being as a result of their pandemic stress, from difficulty sleeping (36 percent) or eating (32 percent) to worsening chronic conditions (12 percent).

But while there have certainly been several pain points, in many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic and its resultant digital culture has simultaneously allowed consumers to take charge of their well-being more decidedly than ever before. With healthcare tools at their fingertips, today's

consumers are eager to become purveyors of their own wellbeing, utilizing new platforms to communicate with physicians, leveraging apps to track health conditions and make decisions and practicing more agency in their well-being by taking virtual fitness classes. Therefore, to stay relevant and connect with consumers, brands are encouraged to map this new wellness value shift, better positioning themselves to resonate with consumers in today's wellness economy by underscoring their purpose-driven brand story in a way that resonates with consumers' core wellbeing values.

In the end, no matter how they go about doing so, amid today's changing consumer behaviors, it's imperative that brands become better listeners than they have ever been before—using new tools of discovery to connect with consumers and tell their brand story with empathy and understanding.

Kathy Bloomgarden is CEO of Ruder Finn, Inc. ○



Kathy Bloomgarden

Media brief

Amazon controls 10% of U.S. digital ad market

Amazon's share of the U.S. digital ad market grew by 52.5 percent in 2020, according to a recent eMarketer analysis.

The e-commerce giant's advertising revenues now total \$15.73 billion, accounting for 10.3 percent of all digital ad spending the U.S., compared to 7.8 percent in 2019.

eMarketer's analysis cites search revenues from Amazon's Sponsored Products and Sponsored Brands ads, as well as video ad revenues from properties such as Amazon Fire TV, Twitch and IMDb TV as reasons for the increased market share.

Amazon is the third-largest ad publisher in the U.S., behind Facebook (25.2 percent) and Google (28.9 percent).

eMarketer predicts Amazon's digital ad business will continue to cut into Google's leading share of the U.S. digital ad market, gaining by another 30 percent this year to surpass \$20 billion by the end of 2021.

eMarketer similarly predicts Amazon's search ad business will grow to surpass \$14.5 billion in 2021 to account for 19 percent of U.S. search ad revenues, second only to Google, which still maintains a sizable lead (56.8 percent) in the U.S. search ad market.



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Technology roundup

— Continued from page 24

to the potential crisis that arose during the pandemic.”

Nardone also said that in the past year “companies relied upon agencies and corporate communications teams to help them step into a bigger role in their industries, and some cases, in society.”

Sectors that had a good year include remote work, cybersecurity, automation, healthcare, vertical tech, fintech, and logistics and supply chain. Areas facing a bit of pushback included B2B technology that sold into travel-hospitality, small businesses and early-stage brands.

Nardone is optimistic about what the coming year will bring. He said that “HRtech and enterprise tech are a driving sector that is becoming increasingly important as remote work remains relevant.” He also sees major opportunities in such sectors as fintech, automation, cybersecurity and healthcare.

But he cautions against growing too rapidly and “losing focus on what truly differentiates your firm.” To keep that focus, he said that firms should be “people-first” operations, prioritizing “great talent, amazing training and development, and a culture



Mark Nardone

that emphasizes work/life balance.”

Clients are asking for more

With \$9 million in tech-related fees in 2020, Clarity enters the *O'Dwyer's* tech listings at #16.

Clarity Founder and CEO Sami McCabe said that his agency achieved growth across several fronts last year. “We increased revenues by 47 percent, staff numbers by 42 percent and promoted 19 people globally.” The firm also established a partner network across 30 countries and acquired a wholly owned office in Amsterdam.

Clients are asking more from agencies in the wake of 2020's events, according to McCabe. “When the world shut down, clients were looking for a team that could adapt to their needs in real time,” he said, “as well as one that could service their business in a world that had suddenly become borderless.”

To succeed with tech clients, he said, firms need to look at the sector “not just as an industry vertical but as a mind-set for businesses looking to drive positive change.”

Because of that, the definition of a tech client has extended outside the sector's previous boundaries. “We are seeing more and more opportunities to partner with companies outside of the traditional ‘tech’ industry, but companies that have established and



Sami McCabe

grown themselves with the mentality of the new tech business model.”

Demonstrating the importance of PR

Although Bospar Principal and co-Founder Curtis Sparrer said that the early days of the pandemic caused the loss of nearly a quarter of the firm's business, it came back in a big way over the course of 2020, with an 8.8 percent jump in tech-related fees (from \$5.7 million to \$6.2 million), moving up one spot on the *O'Dwyer's* tech rankings to #18.

Bospar fought the “knee-jerk reaction” from many companies to cut PR spending during the COVID-19 crisis by providing clients with research and talking points showing the need for PR during economic downturns. “The research was compelling,” Sparrer said, “showing a near majority of Americans can trace their purchase decisions to PR.”

Sparrer said “anything the cloud touched” had a good 2020, while “anything that related to travel, hospitality and being around people” took a hit.

On the horizon for the coming year, Sparrer sees a comeback for the travel and hospitality clients that were so strongly impacted by the pandemic. And the power of the cloud will remain front and center. “The cloud is the infrastructure of the future,” he said. “And infrastructure matters.” ●



Curtis Sparrer

Finance roundup

— Continued from page 28

Lambert grows with acquisitions, hires

In spite of the pandemic, Lambert's finance practice managed to gain more than a million in fees last year to total \$6.2 million. The Detroit-based agency now ranks number-10 in *O'Dwyer's* rankings of financial PR and investor relations firms.

“Like many companies, Lambert faced a number of challenges over the past year,” said Managing Partner Mike Houston.

Houston cited the agency's ability to thrive during the COVID outbreak on its adoption of the latest technology in an effort keep working safely and seamlessly.

Lambert also completed an agency acquisition as well as a strategic co-investment in two others firms during this time, launched a fintech start up and made two strategic hires to lead strategic growth initiatives that attract and cultivate major clients.



Mike Houston

Moving forward, Houston said the macro landscape remains uncertain for many industries, creating an opportunity for financial communications firms to provide counsel that cuts through the volatility and uncertainty.

BackBay goes the extra mile

BackBay Communications accounted for more than \$4 million in net fees last year to take the number-12 spot in *O'Dwyer's* finance rankings.

Founder and CEO Bill Haynes said that while the COVID crisis caused a couple of the agency's clients to drop off and a few others to temporarily cut their retainers, BackBay's integrated approach, combined with a lot of hard work, eventually put the agency back in the black.

“I talked with the BackBay team and said, ‘We're going to have to work very hard and be very creative to help our clients get through this time. We need them to view BackBay as being absolutely essential to their business success.’ And that's precisely what we did,” Haynes said. “We worked long hours, went the extra mile and basically helped clients rewrite their marketing plans to better suit the new environment, emphasizing content

and digital communications.”

BackBay also spent more time on its own marketing efforts, which drove a lot of inbound new business inquiries across its financial services focus areas.

“It was amazing but not surprising, to see our team step up and deliver exceptional results. It was a true team effort across all client accounts. No single BackBay client comprises more than eight percent of our total revenue, and our largest clients stayed with us, so all of our retainer clients and projects contributed to our success.”

“I continue to believe that an integrated approach will continue to be essential for success including earned and owned media. I also believe that strong content, sometimes bolstered by research and delivered in different lengths over different mediums, will continue to be essential. I expect that creative proprietary events will continue to become more important, as well as fresh and strong design on brand materials.” ●



Bill Haynes

Sink *or* Swim?

When a crisis occurs, communicators must make complex decisions quickly and under pressure.

Establishing a process for decision making—*before trouble strikes*—can make the difference between sinking or swimming in difficult times.

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PR pioneer Aaron Cushman dies at 96

Aaron Cushman, a public relations executive who founded Chicago-based agency Aaron D. Cushman and Associates, died on April 17. He was 96.

A decorated World War II combat pilot, Cushman founded Aaron D. Cushman and Associates in 1952. At first, he represented primarily local clients in the entertainment field, which eventually brought him to work with celebrities such as the Three Stooges, Milton Berle, Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Sammy Davis Jr., Gene Autry, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and Sarah Vaughan.

Aaron D. Cushman and Associates grew at one point to become the 10th largest independent PR firm in the U.S., maintaining additional offices in New York, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Omaha, Nebraska. It counted Motorola, Con Agra, Quaker Oats, the Chrysler and Ford Motor corporations, Marriott Hotels, Century 21 Real Estate, Philip Morris USA, RGA Reinsurance, and Warner Lambert Pharmaceuticals as clients.

Cushman's firm was also agency of record for the Chicago White Sox from 1959 to 1975. Cushman later became co-owner of the team and joined its board of directors.

Former journalist Thomas Amberg joined Aaron D. Cushman and Associates in 1983 and purchased it fourteen years later, rechristening it Cushman/Amberg Communications. The agency folded in 2012.

Cushman is preceded in death by his wife Doris as well as one grandchild. He is survived by children Gary Cushman, Amy Wilton (Tom Lichamer) and Pamela Cushman (Randy Miller); nine grandchildren; and 12 great grandchildren. ○



Aaron Cushman

Hager Sharp's Taylor jumps to Weber

Trish Taylor, Executive VP at Hager Sharp, has joined Weber Shandwick to lead its Washington healthcare practice.

The more than 20-year veteran also did stints at KRC Research, Ogilvy and FCB.

She has handled the



Trish Taylor

National Institutes of Health, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (Let's Move! and President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the White House's Office of National Drug Council Policy.

At the Interpublic unit, Taylor will work on public health, patient advocacy, public affairs and health provider education initiatives. ○

WPP's Smith takes DEI post at FH

Adrianne Smith, who served as WPP's first Global Director of Inclusion and Diversity, is moving to FleishmanHillard, where she'll take on the role of Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

She replaces Emily Graham, who was promoted to Chief Equity and Impact Officer at Omnicom, FH's parent company, in January 2021.

In her new role, Smith is tasked with advancing FleishmanHillard's global diversity, equity and inclusion strategy. Reporting to FleishmanHillard President and CEO John Saunders, she will be a member of the agency's global leadership cabinet, heading up the work of its DE&I taskforce.

She'll work in partnership with Leela Stake and Adiya Mobley, co-leaders of True MOSAIC, FleishmanHillard's capability created to provide DE&I counsel and solutions to clients.

At WPP, Smith led the team responsible for building an internal global inclusion and diversity resource platform for its network of agencies. ○



Adrianne Smith

Ab MacGregor snags Sard's Reid

Abernathy MacGregor has hired Sard Verbinen & Co.'s Matt Reid as Managing Director and head of its Los Angeles office.

He was Managing Director and co-head of SVC's LA outpost, advising technology, life sciences and educational institutions on M&A activity, crises, regulatory matters, litigation and activist defenses.

Before joining SVC



Matt Reid

in 2013, Reid led external affairs at BSA | The Software Alliance, focusing on PA and global advocacy in the areas of intellectual property, privacy, cybersecurity and cloud computing.

Earlier, he established Waggener Edstrom's PA unit and counseled the Portland Trailblazers, Microsoft, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Texas Instruments and Mercy Corps. ○

MDC picks Pewarski for VP-IR

MDC Partners hires Michaela Pewarski as VP-Investor Relations. Pewarski joins MDC from artificial intelligence company Afiniti, where she served as Director of Investor Relations, FP&A and corporate development. She previously worked for Macquarie Capital as a Vice President in its equities sales division, where she managed the bank's relationship with institutional investors in the New York and Mid-Atlantic regions.

In her new role, Pewarski will manage all aspects of shareholder relations and drive a strategic investor relations program focused on building and maintaining MDC Partners' relationships with buy-side investors and sell-side analysts. ○



Michaela Pewarski

Current Global snags media vet Hamilton

Interpublic's Current Global arm has hired Chris Hamilton as Senior VP-Media Relations.

Most recently, Hamilton was head of U.S. media for Publicis Groupe's MSLGroup, where he generated earned media results for clients such as Procter & Gamble, Emirates Airlines, Home Depot, Campbell's Soup and Mike's Hard Lemonade.

He also was Corporate Media Director at WPP's BCW (IHOP, Pitney Bowles, Moët Hennessy and King's Hawaiian) and VP-Financial and Consumer Media at Omnicom's Ketchum (7-Eleven, Chase, Frito-Lay, and MasterCard).

Hamilton reports to Current Global North America President Amy Colton. ○



Chris Hamilton

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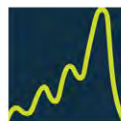
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jority women-owned business.

Most importantly, we are a trusted partner to our clients. We help them anticipate, plan, execute and secure impact through our curiosity, insights and diverse expertise.

Our clients benefit from APCO leaders who have the pulse of the dynamically changing global environment that defines the marketplace; the first-hand experience of having faced significant issues or opportunities; the ability to harness the power of data, insights and technology; and the passion to deliver unparalleled results.

Our expertise and integrated approach enable us to provide a full range of services, across industry sectors and global markets, allowing us to offer effective counsel and programs for boards of directors and CEOs. We meet the evolving needs of executives and their teams in communications, public affairs, government relations, legal, risk, organizational transformation, international relations, corporate responsibility and brand marketing.

We measure success in the transformations we help to catalyze, our clients' impact on society and their continued profitable growth and progress.

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Bill Haynes, Founder & CEO

BackBay Communications is an integrated public relations, content development and digital marketing firm focused on the financial services sector. BackBay specializes in private equity and venture capital, asset management, fintech, and impact investing. With offices in Boston and London, BackBay serves companies in North America, Europe, and elsewhere, leveraging global partners.

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

nancial 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 business and financial media. At BackBay, 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'Dwyer's* for the fifth year in a row and was recognized as Communications Firm of the Year by M&A Advisor. BackBay also consistently ranks as a top 10 global PR Agency in The Deal's private equity league tables.

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Monica Feid, President
Melissa Rubin, Vice President

For over two decades, we have helped dynamic entrepreneurs, innovative franchise chains and other creative business leaders promote their products and services worldwide. We've done it for hot young start-ups. We've done it for established multinationals. We can do it for you!

Today the lines between PR, marketing and advertising have almost completely disappeared. At the same time, the growing influence of the citizen journalist coupled with the explosion of social media has diluted the impact (and availability) of traditional media.

As a result, strategic marketing

communications campaigns increasingly require expertise in a variety of areas to most effectively help your brand tell its story, increase awareness and touch your customer.

At BizCom, our publicity, digital marketing, design and publishing divisions provide you with the scope of tools needed to reach and engage today's audiences when, how and where they want to be reached.

Our clients include high profile global brands such as Edible, Gold's Gym, School of Rock, 9Round Fitness, Neighborly, Best Life Brands, Restoration 1, New Method Wellness, Brix and many others.

To find out how we can give your emerging concept a growth spurt or bring a fresh approach to marketing your mature brand, contact Scott White at scottwhite@bizcompr.com or 214/458-5751.

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Matt Kovacs, President

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

Clients include: BIOHM Health, Bushwick Kitchen, ESPN, Golden West Food Group, Hilton Hotels, Loop Neighborhood Stores, Mary's Gone Crackers, Mayweather Boxing + Fitness, Nature's Path, Ono Hawaiian BBQ and Youtheory.

THE BLISS GROUP

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Miles Hill, **Morgan Musikantow**,
Nicole Cassidy, VPs

The Bliss Group is a data-driven integrated marketing communications agency that specializes in building value for top-tier healthcare, financial and professional services companies. The Bliss Group creates proprietary algorithms and media models to give its clients a unique advantage in their respective markets.

Bliss is pioneering the use of Audience Architecture to align clients with their customers through real-time data and strategic insights. The agency's full-spectrum communications offering leads with a top earned media expertise that is complemented by end-to-end PESO capabilities.

What sets Bliss apart is the combined subject matter expertise of its executives, significant experience navigating regulated industries and complex sectors, and proprietary analytics tools that create unique business and marketing insights.

Clients include some of the most respected names in the industries served. Average tenure among large clients is eight plus years and reflects the team's unwavering commitment to support their clients in all situations.

Clients include: BDO, Berkadia, Bill.com, BioTE Medical, Cece Health, CFP Board, Coventry, CVS Health and Aetna, E*Trade, Evolent Health, Exponent Women, Funding Circle, Ichor Strategies, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, KeyCorp, Kotter, Kroll Bond Rating Agency, LeaseQuery, Lincoln International, MSD Japan, Nationwide Advisory Solutions, RapidRatings, TransCelerate, TriVista, USO, Versant Health

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

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Location: Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Orlando, Tampa and Naples

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Todd Templin, Executive VP
Jennifer Clarin, **Michelle Griffith**,
Laura Burns, **Eric Kalis**, VPs

Boardroom Communications (BoardroomPR) is a full-service public relations and integrated marketing agency, leveraging the skills of our staff of journalists, PR and marketing professionals and multimedia specialists to provide visibility across numerous platforms. Our creative solutions increase awareness and understanding, establish credibility and ultimately improve business.

BoardroomPR bridges traditional and new media, combining print, television and radio media with excellent digital expertise in website development, social media management and email campaigns. We incorporate research, search engine optimization, pay-per-click and online reputation management and offer branding capabilities, consisting of logo, graphic design, copywriting and video production.

BOB GOLD & ASSOCIATES

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Bob Gold, President

PR and marketing agency, Bob Gold & Associates delivers tangible, targeted results in every engagement; not promises. The agency was founded in 1997 and along the way, Bob has been named Public Relations Society of America's (PRSA-LA) 2019 Communications Professional of the Year and inducted as a Cable TV Pioneer.

The company has launched or grown more than 20 TV sports networks, numerous streaming services, many major cable TV operators and hardware and software companies and associations in the industry. Widely recognized as a specialist in the space where technology meets entertainment, the agency is also called upon when reputations need to be enhanced or even saved.

With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Bob Gold & Associates co-founded WIN PR Group, an international association of independently owned hi-tech PR agencies, offering clients immediate global resources for projects or campaigns with consistent pricing and centralized management.

Clients Include: Cisco, Plume, Nice Label, Blonder Tongue Labs, Future Today Inc, CommIT, Advocado, and The Hong Kong Trade Development Council, among others.

BOSPAR

Serving 15 locations, including: San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Chicago and Austin.

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Chris Boehlke, **Curtis Sparrer**,
Tom Carpenter, Principals
Tricia Heinrich, Chief Content Officer

Hey! Yeah, you, the person reading this.

Is it us, or do all these agency descriptions sound alike?

"We're an integrated global communications and marketing agency that BLAH, BLAH, BLAH."

That's not the kind of thinking that's going to get you noticed.

Yet, the industry has noticed Bospar for our work in tech PR.

Forbes named us one of the best PR agencies of 2021.

PROvoke named us their innovator of the year for 2021.

PRWeek named Bospar its "Outstanding Boutique Agency of the Year" for two years in a row.

PRNews included Bospar on its Agency Elite Top 100 list.

Bospar is a team of hard-driving tech PR professionals with purpose and relentless joy for what we do. We are comprised of former journalists from social and traditional media and marketing, influencer, financial, SEO and public affairs experts. As a team, we get smart on contact, build relationships and launch PR campaigns, grounded in strategy and infused with creativity.

If you want to get known fast, accelerate adoption, or drive impact, Bospar exceeds all expectations.

With breakthrough coverage and visibility, simply put: our clients speed ahead—no "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" about it!

The July issue of *O'Dwyer's* will profile Travel & Tourism PR firms. If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Steve Barnes at 646/843-2089 or steve@odwyerpr.com



Buchanan Public Relations helps brands own and tell their stories.

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Founded in 1998, Buchanan Public Relations LLC is an award-winning, dog-friendly, national communications agency based in Philadelphia. We specialize in media relations, digital, and crisis communications, with expertise in healthcare, life sciences, financial services, professional services, not-for-profit, real estate and consumer goods.

With excellence and integrity as guiding principles, we help brands find and share stories that matter. We pride ourselves on solid, long-term relationships with our clients.

We are a certified woman-owned business. Our account teams comprise those with differing ethnic and racial backgrounds and sexual orientations, and we rely on those unique viewpoints to create impactful work for our clients.

Those clients include: Anthony & Sylvan, AtlantiCare, Bimbo Bakeries USA, Barsz, Gowie, Amon & Fultz, LLC, Chester Up-land School District, DELCORA, ECFMG | FAIMER, Opportunity Finance Network, Philadelphia

Insurance Companies, Ramboll, Troutman Pepper, Tyson Foods and Wissahickon Trails.

A founding member of the Public Relations Global Network (PRGN), we offer clients access to 50 top-tier, independent PR firms around the world.

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Butler Associates is a team of exceptional communicators with a proven track record of consistent, creative, high-impact results. It is the winner of PRSA-New York's 2020 & 2018 Best Legal Marketing Communications Campaign, 2019's Best of the Best Award, 2018's Best Business & Best Public Affairs Campaigns, and much more. With clients across the nation, Butler is among the New York media market's top agencies for its legal, business, financial, professional services, public affairs, environmental and crisis management practice results.

Butler Associates campaigns range from victorious *Fortune* 50 shareholder proxy matters, messaging for significant litigations, crisis, public affairs, and public safety campaigns. The CEO's and organizational leaders we advocate on behalf of, are highly visible and respected experts and opinion

leaders within their industries. The Butler group includes smart, seasoned media and communications pros absolutely committed to their clients and delivering results. Its Litical Solutions division produces intelligent and highly targeted digital engagement.

Clients Include: American Triple I Partners, Association of BellTel Retirees, Inc., Association of DuPont Retirees, Barasch McGarry P.C., Clear Vision Impact Fund, Cognitive Assessment Group, Core Theatre Company, Davidoff Hatcher Citron LLP, De Caro & Kaplan LLP, Election Systems & Software, Fleet Financial, FDNY EMS Local 2507, Friars Club, Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association, Greenport Harbor Brewing Company, Home Health Care Workers of America, Home Health Care Employers Association of New York, Hooks for Heroes, Hunts Point Cooperative Market, Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Rice University, Knights of Saint Patrick of New York City, M-Fire Suppression, Inc., Metropolitan Package Store Association, New York City Fire Pension Fund, New York Production Alliance, Patriot Bank, NA, Plaza College, Sharps Technology, Inc., Siebert Williams Shank & Co., L.L.C., Stamford Innovation Week, Stamford Partnership, Stamford Police Association, Zalkin Law Firm and Zara Realty Holdings Corp.

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What makes Caliber unique?

At Caliber, we make it our business to stay up-to-date on emerging industry trends, issues and marketplace evolutions. Our dedicated expertise on what's happening in relevant, and timely, news enables us to continuously discover compelling ways to position our clients with their key audiences. We take pride in bringing a fresh perspective to corporate leadership

as external marketing advisors, and in offering welcome relief to internal resources as an extension of your talented, yet overloaded, team. With offices in New York City and Austin, we are very selective about our clients and only work with about 40 companies at a time. Our reach as a result of our dedicated efforts influences millions.

COYNE PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Tom Coyne, CEO
Rich Lukis, John Gogarty,
Presidents
Kelly Dencker, Jennifer Kamienski, Tim Schramm, Lisa Wolleon, Exec. VPs

Coyne PR is one of the nation's most sought-after full-service integrated communications agencies. This year, as we celebrate our 30th Anniversary, we want to recognize the incredible clients and dedicated employees who have helped us become one of the top independent public relations firms in the United States. Our reputation is built upon three decades of creativity, strategy and service. It is confirmed by more than 1,000 industry awards including Midsize Agency of the Year, Consumer Agency of the Year, Creative Agency of the Year, North American Creative Agency of the Year, and of course ... Best Agency to Work For.

While we are proud of all our agency honors, we are especially proud of our consistent recognition as a Best Place to Work. We have made it our mission to create a work environment that attracts the best people by giving them the freedom to do their best work. As a result, we enjoy the highest employee retention rate in the industry! With wildly creative offices in New York and New Jersey, more than 150 talented minds now call Coyne PR—HOME.

Our clients include many of the world's most respected companies... and those that want to be. We help these clients develop integrated strategies across all paid, earned, shared and owned platforms with the help of our digital production studio. A true full-service agency with a range of integrated services, Coyne provides

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**Producing results
when it matters most.**

Take Control.

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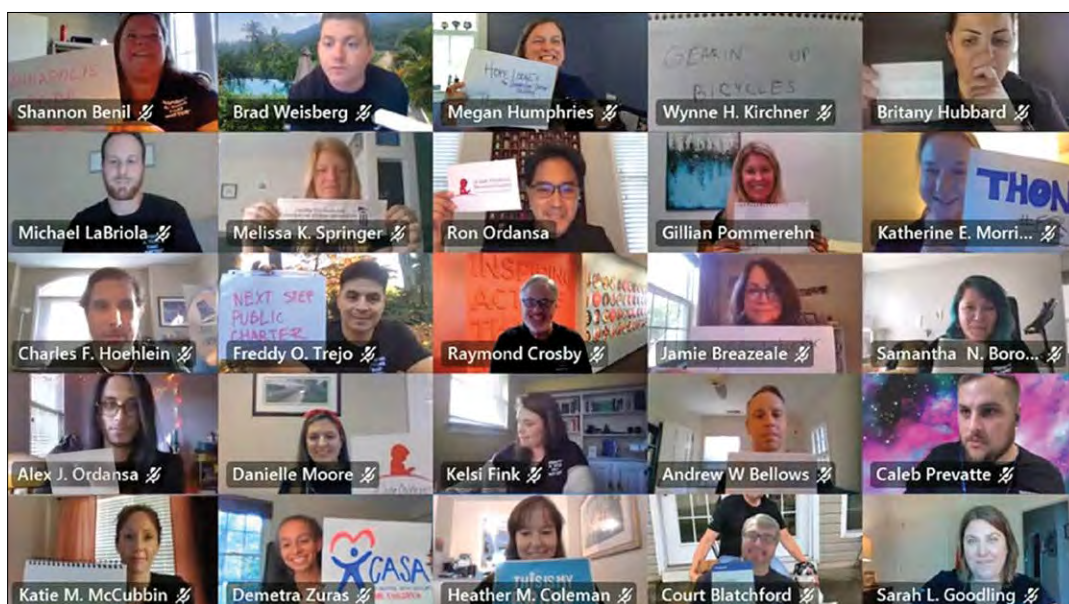
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In September 2020, Crosby's annual Day of Service went virtual, with staff donating \$20,000 online to 100 non-profits.

COYNE

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clients with best-in-class, channel-agnostic, communications strategies. These multi-platform solutions influence the relationship between brand and stakeholder to drive visibility, engagement and growth. This includes deep experience in public relations, a dedicated social media practice, an expert digital marketing group and an award-winning advertising team.

Coyne's experience with high-profile, international clients has provided us with a unique view of global communications and the importance of a consistent worldwide brand message. As a member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, the world's leading partnership of independently owned PR firms, Coyne has partners operating in over 115 cities, 49 countries and six continents. These partnerships provide clients with on-demand access to in-depth communications expertise from professionals who understand the language, culture and customs of the geographic areas in which they operate.

Clients come to Coyne PR for our results, but they stay with us for our client service. We work tirelessly to ensure our clients' success and do whatever it takes to get the job done. As an extension of our client's team, we operate as one seamless unit providing direct access to senior leadership so that clients have immediate access to strategic counsel and direction. This ensures that we not only meet all our client's needs, but that we

anticipate them and exceed them. Our humble beginnings compel us to add value every single day, and it shows in the long-standing relationships we have with our clients

CROSBY

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The Crosby team is passionate about helping clients Inspire Ac-

tions 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.

Crosby has specialized practices in Healthcare, Government, Non-profits & Causes, and Military & Veterans. It has headquarters in Maryland's state capital of Annapolis and offices in Washington, D.C.

Clients Include: Agency for Healthcare Research & Quali-

ty (AHRQ), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Dept. of Defense/Military OneSource, EPA ENERGY STAR program, Kaiser Permanente, OrganDonor.gov, Partnership to Fight Cybercrime, Refuah Health

Shriners Hospitals for Children, Social Security Administration, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Veterans Health Administration and Wallace Foundation.

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Our passion is places. Established in 1960, Development Counsellors International (DCI), is focused on elevating the lives of people living, traveling and working in the places we serve by engaging our passions for travel, exploring new cultures, and doing good. During the



In 2020 and 2021, Development Counsellors International partnered with SATW to conduct multiple research studies on what travel media, digital influencers and public relations professionals need from each other in order to successfully navigate the COVID-19 pandemic.

last half century, we have worked with more than 500 cities, regions, states, provinces and countries to help them attract visitors, business investment (economic development) and talent. Our Tourism Practice partners with destinations to increase leisure, corporate and association visitor arrivals and spending. How? By winning the support of key influencers – media, digital influencers, meeting planners and the travel trade. We combine smart strategy with the right tactics to deliver powerful results. DCI's work has been recognized annually by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International, achieving Best In Show and Platinum awards. The firm is globally connected through TAAN Worldwide, a network of 46 agencies in 29 countries. Over the years we have partnered with the world's strongest travel brands, from Visit California, Travel Texas and Visit Florida, to Tourism Australia, Prom Peru and South African Tourism.

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Zach Leibowitz, Executive VP

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.

Ranked #9 on *O'Dwyer's* list of top financial PR firms, we're driven by a passion to deliver targeted



From top: DLPR Chairman & CEO Richard Dukas, President Seth Linden.

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 creation, media and presentation coaching, crisis and special situations communications, online rep-

utation management and internal communications.

DLPR's clients include well-known, large and middle-market companies in key areas of finance, including: institutional investing, mutual funds, ETFs, wealth management, alternatives and private equity, and investment and community banking. DLPR 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.

DLPR has an exceptionally strong broadcast group that, on average, secures approximately 50 bookings per month, primarily on CNBC, Bloomberg, Fox Business and Yahoo! Finance.

Clients Include: ARK-Invest, Adams Street Partners, BlueMountain Capital, Brandes Investment Partners, Brightstar Capital Partners, Brown Advisory, Crossmark Global Investments, Duff & Phelps, EisnerAmper, Global X Management, JMP Group, Kearney, Livingstone Partners, Navigant, Neuberger Berman, OceanFirst Bank, Raymond James and Robeco Global.

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Edelman is a global communications firm that partners with businesses and organizations to evolve, promote and protect their brands and reputations. Our 6,000 people in more than 60 offices deliver communications strategies that give our clients the confidence to lead and act with certainty, earning the trust of their stakeholders. Our honors include the Cannes Lions Grand Prix for PR; *Advertising*

Age's 2019 A-List; the *Holmes Report's* 2018 Global Digital Agency of the Year; and, five times, Glassdoor's Best Places to Work. Since our founding in 1952, we have remained an independent, family-run business. Edelman owns specialty companies Edelman Intelligence (research) and United Entertainment Group (entertainment, sports, lifestyle).

THE EHRHARDT GROUP

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Being local and knowing local is more important than ever. The way to win in the U.S. Gulf South is to have a firm that deeply understands talking to the people of the Gulf South.

For 25 years, The Ehrhardt Group has moved people to act by crafting messages that compel, inspire and educate. Our work touches the people and communities most important to our clients, colleagues and fellow citizens across Louisiana, Mississippi, coastal Alabama and the Florida Panhandle.

We believe in action and acting wisely. Rarely do time and fresh air solve problems. Understanding the challenges and understanding how to engage with the people of the Gulf South at the right time and with the right message do.

Since 1996, we have successfully advised *Fortune* 500 corporations, local and regional institutions and public entities in the critical areas of issues management, media relations, reputation management, crisis communications, social media and public affairs.

EVOKE KYNE

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Evoke KYNE is an award-winning communications agency that harnesses insight, experience and creativity to advance health



The Evoke KYNE team, February 2020.

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EVOKE KYNE

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and wellbeing around the world. We are part of Evoke — a leading marketing, media and communications agency bound by a common purpose: Health More Human™. Our heritage is in two strong firms, Evoke PR & Influence and KYNE, which joined forces in 2019 to become one of the world's largest health communications agencies.

We work with leading biotech and pharmaceutical companies, non-profits and foundations, offering full-service communications with core capabilities in brand and data communications, corporate reputation and social impact, disease awareness programming, global public health, patient advocacy relations and partnerships and stakeholder engagement. We bring together stakeholders to address some of the world's biggest health challenges—from COVID-19 to cancer to flu.

We have global reach with offices in New York City, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Dublin and London, and key team members in Canada, France, Portugal and Uganda. Our team lives by the genuine belief that communication can be a powerful health intervention.

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Fahlgren Mortine is an integrated communications company helping brands engage in ways that are precise and meaningful. Locations include Columbus (headquarters), Cleveland and Dayton, Ohio; Charleston, W. Va.; Boise, Idaho; Denver, Colo.; Myrtle Beach, S.C.; Miami; Chicago and New York City. The agency is a member of the global IPREX network.

Industry expertise includes B2B, CPG, economic development, healthcare, higher education, manufacturing, logistics, retail, technology, and travel and tourism.

Fahlgren Mortine helps brands get to precisely what matters using



Henry Feintuch (front) during pre-pandemic times, after receiving multiple awards from PRSA-NY in 2019.

a powerful combination of data, design and creativity. Doing work that dares to make a difference and remaining accountable for getting measurable results has resulted in a client satisfaction net promoter score 200% higher than industry benchmark and entices clients to stay with the company at a tenure 182% longer than industry average. Fahlgren Mortine regularly earns Best Place to Work and Agency of the Year honors from various trade organizations, as well as industry-specific recognition for campaign excellence.

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

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Henry Feintuch, President
Doug Wright, Senior Account Director

Feintuch Communications (FC) is an award-winning and tech savvy PR firm providing senior counsel, experience and tactical support to a broad range of organizations—from the *Fortune* 500 to emerging companies, non-profits and associations.

Key market segments include AV, adtech, cleantech, consumer electronics, e-commerce, fintech and financial services, industrial tech, professional services and start-ups.

Our focus is on business results—helping our clients to position and launch products/services,

build distribution, boost sales and strengthen their corporate or brand image. Every client engagement is managed—hands-on—by a senior practitioner and is accountable for results. We provide clients with an integrated blend of public relations, social media, advertising/marketing, investor relations, web/digital marketing and other services.

FC serves on the board of the PR World Alliance (www.PRWorldAlliance.com), a global partnership of premier independent communications consultancies and we are a member of TheNetworkOne providing our clients with resources from 1,200 agencies in 115 countries.

Clients include: ClassWallet, HDMI LA, Leclanché, NCSolutions, Nexans, SeaChange, XL Construction and ZeeVee.

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VAUGHAN

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Founded: 1997

Rick French, Chairman & CEO
David Gwyn, President
Natalie Best, COO

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency, a distinction it has held since 2001. FWV is ranked No. 15 on the list of the nation's largest PR firms (2021 *O'Dwyer's* Ranking of Top U.S. PR Firms) and has been in the top 20 for nearly two decades. FWV is the only N.C.-based public relations firm to capture National Agency of the Year honors, something it has now done 20 times since its founding in 1997.

The firm is led by Chairman & CEO Rick French, President David Gwyn and Chief Operating Officer Natalie Best. Among its operating divisions are: FWV Fetching, a pet and veterinary PR and marketing agency; AMP3 PR, a fashion, beauty, luxury and lifestyle PR firm based in New York City; CGPR, an active lifestyle, outdoor, ski, fashion, technology and travel PR and consumer brand marketing agency based in Greater Boston; and Prix Productions, the company's longform content feature and documentary film division, with offices in Raleigh and L.A. FWV employs more than 120 public relations, public affairs, social media, advertising and digital marketing experts between its Raleigh, N.C., headquarters and offices around the country.

FWV is also a partner in IPREX, a \$380 million + network of global communication agencies, with 1,600 staff and 110 offices worldwide.

FWV maintained Top Five national rankings in three practice areas in the latest *O'Dwyer's* rankings, moving up one spot to No. 2 in Sports and holding the No. 3 position in both the Beauty, Fashion & Lifestyle; as well as Entertainment categories. The agency also ranks in the Top 10 in Agriculture (No. 7); Automotive & Transportation (No. 9); and Travel, Hospitality & Economic Development (No. 10); followed by Top 15 rankings in eight categories: Environmental, Sustainability & Greentech (No. 12); Industrial (No. 12); Nonprofit (No. 12); Purpose & Corporate Social Responsibility (No. 12); Professional Services (No. 13); Real Estate Finance & Development (No. 13); Food & Beverage (No. 14); and Home Furnishings (No. 14).

FWV has amassed more than 1,100 PR, advertising and digital marketing awards on behalf of its blue-chip client roster. It has also become one of the nation's go-to agencies for issues management and crisis counseling work, having defended the reputation of dozens of high-profile individuals, institutions, companies and associations.

Clients include: ABB, American Pet Products Association, Atlantic British, Bern, BurgerFi, California Innovation, Case Knives, City of Durham (NC), Concord Hospitality Enterprises, Crazy, Cree, Derma E, Disney, ECOS Paints, First Nation Group, Fossil Group, Healthy Pet, HR Florida, I-CAT, IDEXX, International Gemological Institute, Keen, Lenzing AG, LifeStraw,

Locus Biosciences, Iowa, Melitta, My True 10, NC Department of Transportation, NC Museum of Natural Sciences, NC SweetPotato Commission, New Hanover Community Foundation, Nite Ize, Northeast Veterinary Dermatology Specialists, Nutramax Laboratories Consumer Care, Inc., PBS North Carolina (formerly UNC-TV), Pendleton Whisky, PSCU, QC Terme, Quest Diagnostics, Reborn Clothing Co., Sherpa Collaborative, SkyTrak, Softies by Paddi Murphy, SYNLawn, Teen Cancer America, The V Foundation for Cancer Research, Town of Cary (NC), Tree Top, Turnbridge Equities, Vermont Creamery, Vester-gaard, Vets Pets, Visit Greenville, NC, Volvo Group, Wilmington and Beaches CVB and Wrangler.

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Doug Hampel, Managing Director, Client Service
Caryn Caratelli, Managing Director, Client Service
Stephanie Moore, Managing Director, Client Service
Kate Threewitts, Managing Director, Human Resources

G&S Business Communications helps innovative companies change the world. Our mission is to inspire people to take action, resulting in business growth for our clients. Our vision is to fuel transformation in the 5 key industries we serve, Advanced Manufacturing & Energy, Agribusiness, Financial & Professional Services Healthcare, and Home & Building.

Our researchers, media strategists, storytellers, and engagement experts meet each client at the intersection of business and communications. Our strategies help B2B



Founded in 1997 as a PR firm, FWW is now nationally recognized as a pioneering influencer in PR and integrated marketing.

clients meet their business goals, and our work produces meaningful results that move markets. Our commitment to measurement ensures that we are constantly learning and improving to make your program better.

We have a global staff of 140+ people, who operate primarily from four offices, New York, Raleigh, Chicago and Basel, but we offer our clients a global network of support through PROI World-wide partners.

GREENTARGET GLOBAL GROUP

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Aaron Schoenherr, Founding Partner
John Corey, President & Founding Partner
Laura Miller, Executive VP

Greentarget is a strategic public relations firm that helps professional and financial services organizations create unique positions of authority by helping them to participate skillfully in the conversations that matter most to their key stakeholders. Our multi-channel communications approach empowers professional services firms to increase market share, attract leading talent and achieve a higher purpose.

Founded in Chicago, Greentarget has grown into a world-class team spread across five offices and infused with the same entrepreneurial spirit that led to the firm's creation. Our culture reflects Greentarget's core values: hard work, risk-taking, authenticity, creative thinking and individual and team

growth.

We deliver a mix of earned media, content, research, digital and special situations counsel to help clients communicate and influence through normal business cycles and in times of crisis. This powerful combination positions our firm to elevate the brands and reputations of clients across earned, owned, shared and paid media channels.

HAVAS FORMULA

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Michael A. Olguin, CEO

Founded in 1992, Havas Formula is an award-winning, national public relations agency headquartered in New York, with offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, San Diego, Miami and Denver. Part of Havas, the agency is committed to making a meaningful difference to brands, businesses and people. Havas Formula specializes in general market and Hispanic PR, digital and experiential marketing, and crisis communications. Its corporate philosophy — Be Brave — stems from the belief that for a brand to truly differentiate itself in the marketplace it must exhibit bravery. The agency's core practice areas include consumer, lifestyle, consumer technology, high-tech, sports and entertainment and travel, with category expertise in food and beverage, consumer packaged goods, spirits and retail/restaurants.

Clients include: Jaguar Land Rover, JPMorgan Chase, Panda Express, Jim Beam, Maui Jim,

Wholly Guacamole, Sun-Maid, Schlage, Justin's, Shure, RE/MAX, TurboTax and LiveRamp

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Boutique in size, limitless in energy, and boundless in experience, Hawkins International is a recognized leader and global player in public relations, communications, and digital strategy for premier luxury travel, hospitality, wellness, and entrepreneurial lifestyle brands. Founded by Jennifer Hawkins in 2002, the agency takes an innovative and integrated approach to public relations, digital, and social media when designing and executing creative campaigns. It is also a go-to resource for trends, and together with its spin-off agency Maverick Creative, founded in 2019, publishes its findings in its annual "TrendHawk Report." Taking pride in delivering timely news and insights for editors, crafting compelling stories for reporters, creating authentic content for publishing, and promoting industry thought leaders to precise audi-

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HAWKINS INTERNATIONAL

— Continued from page 71

ences, the agency is sought after for how it cleverly and carefully secures coverage for clients. Hawkins International was most recently honored with a prestigious 5-Star rating as one of “America’s Best PR Agencies 2021” from *Forbes*.

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Lydia Lau, CFO / EVP 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: Axis Communications, Baidu, Blackberry, Cypress, City of Fremont, First Tech, Graphcore, Lam Research, Leno, Lumileds, Nautilus, NextFlex, Nokia, Nutanix, Rambus, SRI, SuperMicro, Tealium, TSMC, Twitter, Twitch, Workiva and Zoom

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Chris Paxton, Chief Strat. Officer
Fiona Chilcott, Chief People & Culture Officer
Tara O'Donnell, Managing Director, United Kingdom

Hotwire is a global tech communications consultancy that helps businesses better engage and connect with their customers. From Sydney to San Francisco, we operate with a borderless mindset across 12 locations covering the US, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Australia, together with a partner network spanning 29 cities around the world.

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HUNTER is an award-winning consumer marketing communications firm with offices in New York, Los Angeles and London and partnerships that extend our reach globally. Our 160-person firm employs a powerful blend of marketing solutions including strategic planning, earned media relations,

social and digital media, talent and influencer engagement, experiential marketing, multicultural outreach, and content creation and distribution across all platforms and channels to earn attention for some of the world’s best known and most beloved brands.

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 across the Food + Beverage, Wine + Spirits, Health + Beauty, Home + Lifestyle, Retail + Ecommerce, Travel and Education sectors. Our motto is “we earn it,” and at HUNTER we focus on doing so in three key areas: earning consumer attention, earning client relationships and earning staff dedication. Our creative approach, client service-orientation and values-driven culture has led to one of the longest average staff tenures in the business and some of the most enduring client relationships including TABASCO® Pepper Sauce, our first client 32 years ago and still a client today.

ICR

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Established in 1998, ICR partners with companies to execute strategic communications and advisory programs that achieve business goals, build awareness and credibility, and enhance long-term enterprise value. The firm’s highly-differentiated service model, which pairs capital markets veterans with senior communications professionals, brings deep sector knowledge and relationships to more than 750 clients in approximately 20 industries. ICR’s healthcare practice operates under the Westwicke brand. Today, ICR is one of the largest and most experienced independent communications and advisory firms in North America, maintaining offices in New York, Norwalk, Boston, Baltimore and Beijing. ICR also advises on capital markets transactions through ICR Capital, LLC.

Sample 2020 Clients include: Abbott Laboratories, American Well, Asana, BigCommerce Hold-



Whether it’s remote collaboration or from our World Trade Center New York headquarters, HUNTER executes strategic, integrated communications programming that builds brand equity, increase engagement and drive measurable business results.

ings, CarGurus, New York City REIT, Beyond Meat, Boot Barn, Butterfly Network, Cano Health, Capri Holdings, Cardlytics, Inc., CareDx, Inc., Chunghwa Telecom Co. Ltd., Colgate-Palmolive, Darden Restaurants, Datadog, DraftKings, Green Dot, Freshpet, Genuine Parts Co., Harman, Heidrick & Struggles, The Hershey Company, Hims & Hers, Inc., Intel/Mobileye, Jamieson Laboratories Ltd., Kymera Therapeutics, Legg Mason & Co., LLC, Leslie's Poolmart, Lordstown Motors, lululemon athletica, MongoDB, Inc., New Relic, Paige AI, Paramount Group, Inc., Peloton, Planet Fitness, Red Hat, Inc., Rite Aid, Shake Shack, Starwood Property Trust, Sonos, Inc., Tencent Music Entertainment Group, Utz Quality Foods, Waitr, Welltower, Workiva and Zoom, ZoomInfo.

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Dave Imre, CEO & Founder
Mark Eber, Partner & President
Crystallyn Stuart, Partner & President
Jeff Smokler, Partner & President

Growth Propelled by an Emphasis on Agency Values.

imre witnessed steady growth, up 10.2% to \$36.7M in 2020, on top of the 52% increase in 2019.

CEO Dave Imre attributes the agency's 2020 success to a healthy pairing of empathy and optimism. "While the world turned upside down we began with what we're good at—intentional, radical listening. This gave insight into the insecurities our clients and staff were feeling, and swiftly refocused our energies on new ways of working with and for our partners," Imre said.

Another bright spot was the



imre Founder & CEO, Dave Imre.

agency's success retaining and attracting top talent with 27 new employees joining the agency in 2020, especially across the agency's Innovators practice, a mix of Public Relations, Creative, Brand Strategy, Digital Marketing, Social Media, and Data Analysts working in concert with one another.

Through a mix of organic and new business, the agency's growth crossed industries including pharmaceuticals, CPG, biotech, automotive, financial services and retail.

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Jamie Diaferia, Founder & CEO
Zach Olsen, President

Infinite Global is an award-winning strategic communications agency advising a wide range of domestic and international clients facing difficult scenarios in which reputational, legal and commercial risk is high.

We advise organizations and individuals, providing counsel and tactical support to mitigate risk and protect reputations when it matters most. We have broad sector experience managing our clients' reputational risk, often involving active litigation, regulatory and political pressure, media attention and heightened public scrutiny. Infinite has an established data breach response practice that helps clients across a range of industries—including financial and legal services, education and healthcare—mitigate, prepare for and respond to the risks endemic to housing sensitive data.

Our work spans each phase of the crisis lifecycle: from pre-crisis preparation and planning, to rapid crisis response and post-crisis reputational repair.

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Inkhouse is an integrated PR agency for innovative thinkers, creators and leaders who believe in the power of stories to effect positive change. We bring new ideas to market. We were founded in 2007 and have grown to an agency of more than 130 people across four offices. Find us in the real world in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Seattle and in the digital one at www.inkhouse.com.



Inkhouse CEO and Founder Beth Monaghan.

Client list: Aircall, AT&T Cybersecurity, Atomwise, BlueVine Capital, Cambium Learning, Capella Space, Checkmarx, Cockroach Labs, CropOne, Crunchbase, Databricks, Datto, Deepgram, Engie, Ergotron, Eversource Energy, EVgo, Gravy Analytics, Incredible Health, Inrupt, Matillion, Molekule, NEXT Insurance, Nutanix, Okta, Qumulo, Raytheon, SmartRent, Starburst, Talespin and Thermo Fisher Scientific

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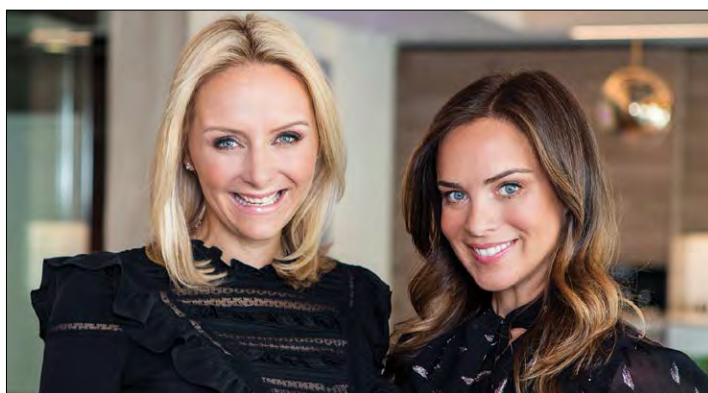
A global communications agency with a specialization in public relations, social media, content creation and digital marketing. With 55+ team members across four U.S. offices including New York City, San Diego, Los Angeles and Nashville, two international offices in London and Toronto, plus a presence in Denver and Arizona, JPR is a trusted leader in integrated media relations, social media and brand strategy, trend forecasting, guest programming, brand partnerships, experiential activations, influencer engagement and crisis communications.

Established in 2005, JPR has consistently risen as a leader in the travel and hospitality spaces. Today, the agency's growing portfolio spans many markets outside of travel and hospitality, with clients in lifestyle, culinary, real estate, and wellness. JPR's global roster includes more than 120+ hotels in the U.S., U.K. and throughout Europe, Mexico, Caribbean, Africa and more. JPR represents destinations such as North Carolina and Utah as well as flagship hospitality brands including Hilton Luxury Brands, Virgin Limited Edition, Relais & Châteaux, Vail Hospitality and Iconic Luxury Hotels.

JPR is continuously listed on the *Observer's* annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms and *Crain's* "Best Places to Work in New York City." The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by *PR News* and received a Five Star rating in *Forbes* inaugural list of "America's Best PR Agencies," in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success. An industry innovator, JPR became the first travel PR agency to launch a podcast in 2018, *Priority Status*.

Clients: Adare Manor—Co. Limerick, Ireland; Africa Adventure Consultants; Andronis Exclusive (multiple properties)—Santorini, Greece; Château du Grand-Luce—Loire Valley, France; Condado Vanderbilt—San Juan, PR; Curtain Bluff—Antigua; Eden Roc Cap Cana—Dominican Republic; Four Seasons Resort Lana'i—Lana'i, HI; Halepuna Waikiki by Halekulani—Honolulu, HI; Helena Bay—New Zealand; Hotel del Coronado—San Diego, CA; Iconic Luxury Hotels (multiple properties)—United Kingdom; InterContinental (multiple properties)—North America; MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa—Sonoma, CA; Monarch Beach

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J Public Relations partners Jamie Sigler O'Grady and Sarah Evans.

J PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Resort—Dana Point, CA; Old Edwards Resort & Spa—Highlands, NC; Pendry Hotels (multiple properties)—North America; Rancho La Puerta—Tecate, México; Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa—Rancho Santa Fe, CA; Relais & Châteaux; Rosendale Design—London, UK; Sugar Beach, A Viceroy Resort—Soufriere, St. Lucia; The Cloudveil—Jackson Hole, WY; The Goring—London, UK; The Ocean Club, A Four Seasons Resort—Bahamas; The Palms and The Shore Club—Turks & Caicos; The Ritz-Carlton (multiple properties)—North America; The Setai—Miami Beach—Miami, FL; The Stafford—London, UK; Vail Mountain Resorts; Vail Resorts Hospitality; Virgin Limited Edition; Visit North Carolina; Under Canvas—North America; Utah Office of Tourism; Waldorf Astoria Las Vegas; Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal; and Washington School House—Park City, UT.

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Carrie Jones, Principal

JPA Health is an award-winning public relations, marketing and advocacy firm known for sharing our clients' commitment to making people healthier. With deep experience in these core service categories, JPA offers a truly integrated model that delivers sustained business results. To offer unparalleled

insights and efficiencies to clients, JPA utilizes its proprietary tool, Gretel®, segmenting audiences and uncovering unique insights for reaching and engaging influencers in healthcare. The agency provides services to clients across the health sector, including: biopharma, medtech, and non-profit organizations. JPA Health has offices in Washington, DC; Boston; and London. Email carrie@jpa.com to learn more.

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Kivvit is one of O'Dwyer's top 15-ranked and fastest-growing independent strategic communications and public affairs firms in the United States.

What sets Kivvit apart is our unique ability to integrate cutting-edge and proprietary data, tools and technology to inform a full suite of strategic communications, content and creative development, and data-driven advertising capabilities. Our wide-ranging expertise and relentless focus on measurement means our work efficiently utilizes resources to create impactful strategies, maximize results and achieve goals for our clients.

Kivvit not only achieved record business performance in 2020, we also made significant investments to accelerate our evolution as the agency of the future and create a

world class culture that fosters collaboration, creativity, and innovation across our teams.

Our success delivering on these priorities has earned Kivvit significant recognition in 2020 as Public Affairs Firm of the Year (Reed Awards), Most Innovative Agency (Bulldog PR Awards), a top 5 Digital PR Agency in North America and a Best Agency to Work For (Provoke).

Kivvit also lead O'Dwyer's national rankings across multiple categories, including #1 for Non Profits, #2 for Energy, #3 for Corporate Social Responsibility, #3 for Real Estate, and #4 for Education.

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Jordan Custer, General Counsel

Lambert & Co. is a public relations, investor relations and integrated marketing firm focused on giving clients a strong, clear presence in today's hyperconnected world. Our unique blend of strategic thinking and creativity leads us to big ideas that we execute with enthusiasm, driving business outcomes for our clients and our growing family of companies. Lambert is home to the best and brightest with writers, strategists, media mavens, creatives, digital marketing gurus, and leaders, in talent hubs ranging from fresh water to salt water. We are a top-40 agency in the U.S. and top-10 in Automotive, IR and Financial Services, Education and Purpose

CSR, as well as the #5 M&A and private equity PR firm in 2020 (The Deal). Our expertise as a pioneer of the integrated PR/IR agency model led us to create a new industry—consumer shareholder marketing—through TiCKER, our web-based/app software startup that engages, verifies and rewards retail investors. Lambert is also a partner in EQUALSIGN, a minority-owned management consultancy that offers culture-forward solutions to business challenges, and 9thWonder, a full-service advertising and brand strategy firm. Our award-winning team has been recognized by O'Dwyer's, PR Week, PR News, IR Magazine, the Association for Corporate Growth, PRovoke Media, Inc. 5000, and PRSA among others.

LANDIS COMMUNICATIONS (LCI)

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Sean Dowdall, General Manager
Brianne Miller, Business Development Manager

Named America's #1 PR Agency (Small Firm) (Ragan's), the #1 Healthcare PR Agency in America (Ragan's) and the firm PRSA San Francisco named "Agency of the Year," San Francisco-based Landis Communications Inc. (LCI) is celebrating 30 years in business. LCI also is a two-time Gold Quill IABC Award winner, a PRSA Silver Anvil national award winner and has been named a top U.S. Social Media, Reputation Management and Media Relations Agency by TopPRAgencies.com.

LCI is an integrated public rela-



Lambert & Co. founder and CEO, Jeff Lambert speaks to staff at annual retreat / day of fun.

lations, digital/social media and marketing communications agency that specializes in healthcare, technology, environmental, consumer, consumer technology, real estate, educational, 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. Among LCI's services: public relations, marketing, content marketing, social media, digital strategies and marketing, advertising, email marketing, video production, crisis communications, media and presentation training and more. Clients include: Veldyne Lidar, Altas Health, Centre for Neuro Skills, Sutter Health, Raycop vacuums, 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 certified member of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, is an official Corporate Diversity Supplier and also is 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.

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Lansons Intermarket is the New York branch of Lansons, a leading independent reputation management consultancy based in London that employs more than 125 people globally. Lansons Intermarket primarily serves financial services, technology, B2B and corporate clients including, among others, Africa Asset Finance Corp, Asahi Kasei, Bank Leumi, Barings, Bio-Catch, Broadhaven, Cult Wines, Harris Williams, Invesco, John Hancock/Manulife, Royal Bank of Canada, Société Générale and

Stifel. Service is a key factor that sets Lansons Intermarket apart. All clients work directly with a team of experienced communications professionals who understand their business, help shape their story, and know how to make that story resonate with a variety of audiences. From media relations to content creation to digital and social media campaigns, Lansons Intermarket helps clients bring their story to life through its integrated approach to communications. Its founding membership in Global Communication Partners (GCP) enables the firm to offer clients access to on-the-ground support in 18 major financial centers across the globe and Lansons London's membership in the PROI Worldwide network expands that coverage to dozens of additional cities throughout the world.

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Ella Deych, VP, Finance & Chief Operations Officer
James Heins, SVP and Managing Director, NY Practice

LaVoieHealthScience partners with leading health and science brands to build value for their companies, attract capital and reach key stakeholders through integrated communications, access and marketing. With two decades of industry-tested counsel to more than 375 clients, we provide public relations, investor relations and strategic consulting to build recognition and increase sales and value for health science innovations

The agency has received over 50 awards in recognition of the work it has done helping health and science innovators, from development to launch and commercialization, to connect with key stakeholders. We help advance health and science innovations by providing specialized thinking to clients throughout the company and product life cycle building innovation and value for



LCI receiving its award this year from PRSA San Francisco as the best small agency of the year in the San Francisco Bay Area.

humankind. We offer direct connections to media, investors, partners, advocacy groups, and KOLs. We are focused on building trust and long-term relationships based on the quality of the work that we deliver. In January 2020, LHS and Omnicom Public Relations Group (OPRG), a division of Omnicom Group (NYSE: OMC), formed a strategic alliance to bring global clients a broader set of integrated health- and science-experienced teams.

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Norah Lawlor, Principal & CEO

Lawlor Media Group is a full-service, luxury lifestyle Public Relations and Marketing Agency with over 20 years experience in successfully meeting the needs of clients in diverse arenas including Beauty Health & Wellness, Charity Philanthropy & not-for-Profit, Entertainment and the Arts, Technology, Fashion, FMCG, Commercial and Residential Real Estate development, Travel hospitality and night life.

Lawlor Media Group's expertise covers the entire spectrum of strategic Public Relations and marketing development—from branding, marketing, buzz building, crisis management, investor relations through political communications.

Clients include: Angelo David Salon, Brownings Fitness, Decoration & Design Building, Don Hershman Art, Extel Development, Harry's of London, Lawrence Scott Events, Leesa Rowland,

Mariebelle Chocolate, Mvvo Ad Art Show, Nikki Walter-Nemickas, Regency Outdoor Advertising, Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF), Renaissance Properties, Samuel Waxman Cancer Research Foundation (SWCRF), Jean Shafiroff, Southampton Animal Shelter Foundation (SASF), Southampton Inn, Southampton Social Club, StyleScan, Thomas J. Henry Law, Union Sushi & Steak and Versante Hotel.

LOU HAMMOND GROUP

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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, culinary/spirits, real estate, lifestyle, and technology. With offices in New York, Atlanta, Charleston, Denver, Houston, 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 over 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,

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LOU HAMMOND GROUP

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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.

LUMINA COMMUNICATIONS

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Hugh Burnham, CEO
Samantha Singh, John Kreuzer,
Mike Gallo, Fay Li, Exec. VPs

As one of the top B2B tech PR agencies in the U.S., Lumina is a diverse team of PR professionals who are passionate about helping businesses develop strong brands and differentiate in crowded markets to achieve their strategic objectives. Lumina has well-established practice groups focused on cyber security, enterprise software and services, and infrastructure management.

With expertise in public relations, social media, and content marketing, Lumina's comprehensive PR campaigns have led to IPOs or strategic acquisition exits yielding enterprise value well in excess of \$30B. The Lumina team has deftly handled the most complicated and critical communications challenges for businesses of all sizes, building positive awareness among our clients' target audiences and lasting enterprise value. Our continued success is founded on long-lasting, mutually beneficial partnerships.

Clients include: Buck, Digital Shadows, Lookout, Keysight Technologies, Sanmina, TeamViewer and Vectra.

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Karen Strauss, Chief Strategy & Innovation
Julia Jackson, Practice Lead,
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Karen O'Malley, Practice Lead,
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Andrew Shih, EVP, Public Affairs/



Matter CEO and Principal Scott Signore.

Corporate Relations

M Booth Health is a global health communications consultancy for these times, with its unique mix of deep healthcare expertise and insight-infused creativity.

Companies and organizations turn to M Booth Health to advance care, access, and understanding; spark attention and conversation around new therapies; speed research and innovation; shape health policies; and reduce stigma to improve health outcomes. What truly distinguishes the M Booth Health team is its track record navigating the complex commercial, policy, and advocacy environments.

The firm's sweet spot is in facilitating conversations, fostering connections, and shaping communications that measurably lead to better health for people everywhere in the world.

M Booth Health is a Next Fifteen Communications Group (Next15) company.

We believe better health starts with better conversations. Let's talk.

MARATHON STRATEGIES

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Liz Benjamin, Mng. Dir., Albany
Alison Reemer, Mng. Dir., Client
Services

Marathon Strategies is a full-service public affairs, research, crisis,

and issues management firm with nearly 50 staff members across our New York City, Washington, D.C., and Albany offices.

Our objective is to deliver influence at speed with intelligence to every client engagement. We excel at quickly breaking down complex subject matter into compelling original content backed by research-driven data and then activating the right voices to amplify our clients' messages.

We are a team of experienced communications professionals, campaign operatives, crisis managers, journalists, researchers, digital and data experts, graphic designers, and television producers—diverse expertise that allows us to solve the most challenging problems and operate in ways that typical agencies do not. We pride ourselves on responsiveness and thinking differently about clients' challenges: We listen. We ask challenging but thoughtful questions. We are unafraid to offer big ideas even when they may be outside of a client's comfort zone. And clients trust us because we demonstrate our capacity for executing on our ideas to achieve real results.

MATTER

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Scott Signore, CEO & Principal
Patty Barry, Principal
Mandy Mladenoff, President

Matter is a Brand Elevation

Agency unifying PR, creative services, digital marketing and strategy into content-rich communications campaigns that inspire action and build value. Founded in 2003, with seven offices spanning North America and +200 employees, we work with the world's most innovative companies across high-technology, healthcare, consumer technology and consumer markets, from startups and non-profits with focused needs to well-known corporations.

We are experts in storytelling. That means we are laser-focused on getting a client's message out and heard by the right audiences, in the right places. Our strategic communications programs maximize earned, owned, shared and paid media to tell—and show—credible brand stories.

We have in-house graphic design and web development capabilities as well as video and live broadcast services for projects big and small. Our creative, video and digital marketing teams work hand-in-hand with the PR teams to create high-quality assets to support campaigns. Our digital marketing capabilities amplify brand stories to increase reach and ROI. Our teams understand how a campaign can be brought to life across multiple platforms and mediums, and the interplay between the mix. We understand how to elevate any brand.

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Patrick McCabe, President
Mike Warner, Becky Watt Knight



McCabe Message Partners staff gather daily to play games and nurture culture while working remotely.

and **Paul Skowronek**, Senior VPs

Like a stone meeting water, effective communications expand to reach and motivate many audiences. Washington, DC-based McCabe Message Partners helps clients create their own ripple effect. Focusing solely on health and issues that affect it, agency leaders bring experience in journalism, market research, public policy, consumer advocacy, corporate communications, and non-profit management. McCabe Message Partners offers the expertise and professionalism of a large agency with the warmth and passion of a small business.

MIKEWORLDWIDE (MWW)

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William Murray, MD, Public Affairs
Tom Buttle, MD, UK

Thirty-four-years young, MWW is among the world's leading independent, integrated PR agencies with offices and talent hubs across the US and the UK. With a full-service suite of capabilities, the agency marries CorpSumer™ insights, cultural opportunity, and break-

through creativity with earned-worthy impact to turn brands' reasons to believe into audiences' reasons to care. MWW combines corporate reputation, consumer marketing, crisis & issues management, and public affairs expertise with dedicated strategy, analytics, DE&I, digital, and creative and content teams.

To learn more about MWWPR, visit <http://www.mww.com> or follow us on social @MWW_PR.

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Leslie Fung, Director, APAC

Montieth & Company is a global communications consultancy that provides a fully integrated set of communications solutions to deliver high-value, measurable outcomes for your organization. We help you to achieve influence, realize your ambitions, and solve mission-critical problems. Our flexible, integrated and budget-efficient cross-border model operates in multiple money and media markets through our global hubs in New York, London and Hong Kong. In Asia-Pacific we serve our clients across all key APAC markets as Montieth SPRG. Our services in-

clude marketing communications & PR, corporate & financial communications, issue management & crisis communication, public affairs & government relations and litigation PR for financial services, professional services, technology, non-profit and public sector clients.

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Mary Elizabeth Davis, Partner
David Fox, Senior Partner
Keith Miles, Partner
Katy Varney, Partner

MP&F is a full-service communications agency based in Nashville, Tenn. Our team of 70-plus public relations, marketing, branding and advertising strategists works with clients large and small across the country in a variety of industries, from health care to technology, to education, to tourism. We are the largest locally owned, fully integrated communications firm in Tennessee and one of the largest in the Southeast.

We have a satellite office in Washington, D.C., and clients in all 50 states. Notable current clients include BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, Log Still Distillery, U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Job Corps, CSX Transportation, National Museum of African American Music, Integral Senior Living, Western Governors University and Tennessee Valley Authority.

PADILLA

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Matt Kucharski, President

Padilla is an independently operated, globally resourced public relations and communication company with offices across the United States. The agency builds, grows and protects brands and reputations worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla

includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds, and the research authorities at SMS Research Advisors. Clients include 3M, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Cargill Animal Nutrition, Dole Food Company, Mayo Clinic, Prosciutto di Parma, Rockwell Automation, Sanofi Pasteur, U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council and Winnebago Industries. Padilla is an AVENIR GLOBAL company and is a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 132 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Connect with purpose at PadillaCo.com.

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PAN Communications is a leading integrated marketing and PR agency servicing B2B tech and healthcare brands. With 25+ years of experience, PAN helps companies transform ideas into captivating stories that align to emerging, mid and late-stage growth strategies through the firm's NXT Stage approach. Recognized as Technology Agency of the Year and Best Mid-sized Agency to Work For, PAN has office locations in Boston, San Francisco, New York, Orlando and London. The agency is positioned to help brands emerge in new markets and scale globally, with experience driving integrated strategy across a variety of brands like Citrix, Radial, GYANT, athenahealth, OneStream and Payoneer. PAN strives to help today's modern marketers by integrating a combination of services to better engage with target audiences and move markets.

Connected Content—Creative Storytelling—Results that Matter!

Clients include: 908 Devices, Absolute Software, airSlate, Am-docs, App Annie, athenahealth, Ba-

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MP&F Strategic Communications, alongside client **BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee**, was awarded **Best of Show** at the **Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil** ceremony in New York City for their efforts to combat Tennessee's opioid epidemic through the "Don't Be An Accidental Drug Dealer" public education campaign. The award is the nation's top communications industry honor.



The Peppercomm team on one of its bi-weekly 12 @ 12 staff meetings (12 mins at 12 pm), which it began as a way to stay connected remotely during the pandemic.

PAN COMMUNICATIONS

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zaarvoice, ByMiles, Cedar, Citrix, CloudBees, Definitive Healthcare, Degreed, Human, Hyperscience, Igloo, MediaMath, NTT Data, OneStream, Payoneer, Patients-LikeMe, Quanterix, Quorum Software, Radial, Rapid7, Smartly.io, Sailpoint, Software AG and UPS Capital, VEEAM and Waters.

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Peppercomm enables clients to both anticipate change and capitalize on it. Our unique approach combines powerful predictive analytics and the tenets of com-

edy to not only help our clients plan for the future—whatever it brings—but also build unbreakable relationships with stakeholders that inspire them to join you on your journey of change. Humor stimulates alpha brainwaves, empowering us and our clients to change old ways of thinking, behaving and innovating. This gives us the ability to pivot our clients to opportunities they never realized they had. Whether you're a challenger brand looking to break through or an industry leader seeking new growth, Peppercomm is your agent of change.

Some of our key clients include Dynata, MINI USA, Sharp, Travelers Insurance, trivago, Wilbur-Ellis, Wilmington Trust and Xero.

PROSEK PARTNERS

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Justin Perras, Managing Director
Joe Scannell, SVP & Head of Digital Communications

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 strategic corporate communications and marketing firm with a fully integrated, top-ranked special-situations and IR shop 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. Employees develop an "owner's mindset," delighting clients with top-quality service, fresh ideas and flawless execution.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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Amanda ReCupido, **Michael Queroz**, VPs

Public Communications Inc. is a communications, marketing and digital agency with a purpose—to make a positive difference for our clients, our community and our world. We build client programs on a foundation of innovative, strategic counsel, and have been doing so for clients nearly 60 years. PCI is a Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), a certified LGBT Business Enterprise (LGBTBE®) and a founding partner of the WORLD-COM Public Relations Group,

the world's leading partnership of independently owned public relations counseling firms.

We have a strong concentration of business in healthcare, conservation/environment, education, culture and destinations, municipalities and business clients from tech to non-profits, entrepreneurs to advocacy groups nationally, regionally and locally. Specialties include crisis and issues management counsel, strategic planning, and digital strategy and implementation.

As an inclusive workplace, we strive to reflect the diversity of our clients and community within PCI and bring a global and multicultural perspective to every program.

Select clients: AIDS Foundation of Chicago, American Association of Diabetes Educators, American Epilepsy Society, American Society of Anesthesiologists, Avita Pharmacy, Chicago Academy of Sciences/Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago's First Lady Cruises/Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, Chimp Haven, Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, Cradles to Crayons, Howard Brown Health Center, IFF, Georgia Aquarium, Giving USA, Lowry Park Zoological Society of Tampa, National Society of Genetic Counselors, Northwestern University Buffett Institute for Global Affairs, The Marine Mammal Center, and The Nature Conservancy.

REAL CHEMISTRY

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Jennifer Gottlieb, Global President
Richard Neave, Chief Financial Officer

Real Chemistry (previously W2O) is a global health innovation company with an alchemic mix of nearly 1,700 people and hundreds of clients and partners working from bench to bedside to make the world a healthier place for all. Purpose-built by Jim Weiss to address modern healthcare challenges, Real Chemistry is the culmination of 20 years of intentional, fiercely independent, sustained growth.

We are committed to improving health outcomes across today's ecosystem by partnering with companies who want to reimagine healthcare. We have built a home where the best health experts collaborate and innovate to deliver



Real Chemistry - Solving the world's most difficult healthcare problems with leaders, companies and communities who are ready to show up and shape the future.

commercial, clinical and corporate solutions that put patients at the core, through data, proprietary technology and powerful creativity.

With offices across the United States and Europe, Real Chemistry believes that the way to real, transformative change is through our

uncommon combination of talents, disciplines and technologies.

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Ruder Finn CEO Kathy Bloomgarden.

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Travis Murdock, Exec. VP, Technology;
Keith Bloomgarden, Head of Operations

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Alyson O'Mahoney, RLA Collective
James Koppenal, SPI Group
James Lawler, Osmosis Films
Sandra Stahl, jacobstahl
Jeremy Jacob, jacobstahl

As one of the world's largest public relations agencies, Ruder Finn combines the resources of a big agency with the creativity of a niche experiential boutique to engage clients across four core specialty areas: health & wellness, corporate reputation, technology & innovation and consumer connection.

Headquartered in New York City, our teams bring diverse, global thinking, while our independence prioritizes invention over productivity, inspiration over process. Our heritage makes us an agency for the moment. Our "What's Next" culture—driven today by our TechLab and RFI Studios, RF's global digital content studio—makes us a data-driven digital-first agency that agilely embraces new technologies and thinking, while listening in real-time across voices and ideologies. Our foundational commitment to people and stakeholder capitalism, combined with new AI-driven tools, makes us effective community builders in a world lacking community. And lastly, our purpose-driven model, built on a longstanding commitment to transparency and trust, helps us stay true to our fierce ethical compass.

Client list includes: 3M, Amazon, AstraZeneca, Biogen, Carlsberg, Diageo, Elastic, Emirates, Harley Davidson, Henkel, Huawei, Kite, Kohler, L'Oreal, Lowes, Mercedes Benz, Merck, MetLife, NEOM, OPPO, Paypal, Pfizer, Sanofi, Tencent, UCB, Visa, VIVO, Volkswagen and Xiaomi.

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Singer Associates Public Relations Agency in San Francisco is one of the leading corporate communications and crisis communications firms in the nation.

The firm was founded in 2000 and was ranked by *Forbes* Maga-

zine in 2021 as one of the best in the United States.

Singer Associates represents clients in real estate, environmental issues, regulatory affairs, litigation, labor, transportation, politics, healthcare, hospitality, recycling, major infrastructure and critical issues.

Singer represents some of the world's largest and most respected corporations, government agencies, prominent individuals, trade associations and political interests.

We mount and manage winning communications campaigns at the local, regional, state and national levels.

The firm brings a mixture of news media, politics, government, community relations, advertising, social media and digital skills that very few, if any, agencies possess.

The agency has won honors from *PRWeek*, *PR News*, The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), *The Holmes Report*, and many more.

Clients include: Anchor Brewing Co., Blue Shield of California, Bohannon Development Co., California Hotel & Lodging Assn., Chevron Corp., City of Santa Clara, County of San Mateo, Denver Broncos, Draper Fisher Jurvetson, Goodwill Industries, Hong Kong Economic Trade Office, Jay Paul Co., Kaiser Permanente, KB Home, Kenwood Investments, Lehigh Hanson, Long Beach Hospitality Alliance, Ocho Candy, Outside Lands Music Festival, Prana Investments, San Jose Water Co., Sand Hill Property Co., Santa Clara Stadium Authority, Santa Clara University, Save Mart, Lucky Grocery Stores, Sequoia Healthcare District, Signature Properties, Stanford University and Hospitals, Tetra Tech, Washington Hospital, Webcor Obayashi Construction and Wood Partners.

SPECTRUM SCIENCE

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Jonathan Wilson, Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Gross, President

Spectrum Science is an integrated marketing, communications and media agency hyper-focused on science. With fearless scientific spirit and capabilities cultivated to

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SPECTRUM SCIENCE

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meet the specific needs of health and science clients at every stage, we not only dream beyond the realm of the possible—we do it.

Seek out Spectrum for high-caliber, high-science communications and the elusive efficiencies of integrated solutions—advertising/marketing, PR, med comms and everything between. Fueled by our proprietary methodology, the Spectrumtastic MethodSM, Spectrum is focused on offering the right solutions for each client's goals. Our interwoven model integrates specialists across client services, strategy, creative and innovation to put clients at the center. This shift from traditional to strategic agency yields the indispensable ingredients to conquer any business challenge come hell or high science.

Not limited by geography, Spectrum works seamlessly across offices in DC, New York, Chicago and Atlanta, with global reach through GLOBALHealthPR, the largest independent network of health and science agencies worldwide.

SPM COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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Suzanne Parsonage Miller,
President & Founder

SPM is the creative, no-jerks, above-and-beyond PR, social, influencer and crisis management agency where people come first, and great work wins the day. This commitment to culture and results has landed SPM as a PR industry "Best Places to Work" and in *Forbes'* prestigious new "America's Best PR Agencies 2021."

For more than 20 years, SPM has told the stories of food, restaurant, retail, apparel, franchise and lifestyle brands in a rapidly changing media and social landscape. SPM's proactive approach includes critical thinking about clients' business and finding solutions to make a measurable impact on their bottom line.

Leaning into our deep roots in crisis and issues management, we developed new media relations tactics and creative strategies in

2020 to build brands during the pandemic and beyond. We also helped preserve brands' equity and reputation through severe business disruptions to emerge stronger post-crisis.

Our media protocol is currently deployed in more than a thousand restaurant and retail locations across the nation to help companies quickly address inquiries for positive and negative stories so they can get back to business.

We live our values to go above and beyond in all we do.

- We put our people first.
- We do what's right.
- We foster mutual respect.
- We build and protect our clients' brands.
- We listen intently and deliver results that matter.

Current clients: BigShots Golf, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Dallas (pro bono), Camp Bow Wow, Chuck E. Cheese, Community Coffee, Fajita Pete's, Gold's Gym, Kirkland's, Manpuku, Marugame Udon, Mi Cocina, Miller's Ale House, Newk's Eatery, Norma's Cafe, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Pollo Campero, RW Garcia, Shipley Do-Nuts, Veggies Made Great, Velvet Taco.

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Stanton is a strategic communications partner to global firms, mid-size leaders and entrepreneurial enterprises in sectors including financial services/insurance, healthcare, professional services and technology. We are best known for our work in financial and corporate communications where our combination of smart strategy, innovative thinking and first-class execution produces business-changing results.

Stanton is defined by a practitioner model where our senior professionals spend the majority of their time on client work. Flexibility, collaboration, responsiveness, and bureaucracy-free service are the hallmarks of our relationships.

With offices in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area, Stanton supports clients through media relations, content development and

marketing, executive visibility, thought leadership, crisis management, analyst relations, social media management and more.

Clients include: 3i, Albright Capital Management, Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty, AM Best, Aryaka, AvantBio, Bain Capital, Brevet Capital, Carl Marks Advisors, Conning Asset Management, CSAA, CVC Capital Partners, DealCloud, First Eagle Alternative Credit, FFL Partners, HGGC, Hudl, Intapp, Lincolnshire Management, Makena Capital, Marin Health, MD7, Mobilitas, Mosser, One Equity Partners, One Inc., Rackspace Technology, SaverLife, Summit Health, Sun Capital Partners, T1D Fund, Toorak Capital Partners, Vertical Bridge and Winston & Strawn.

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Peter V. Stanton, CEO
Lori Russo, President
Emily Wenstrom, VP

Stanton Communications, Inc., is a strategic public relations firm providing counsel and program implementation to clients across the globe. We are fully independent and wholly dedicated to advancing our clients' business goals through creative communication.

For more than 30 years, the firm has enjoyed a reputation for combining serious strategic thinking with service excellence, and for blending thoughtfulness and strategy with tremendous agility. We build our teams with a balance of talent so clients benefit from the best we have to offer.

Among our clients are some of the world's most successful organizations in multiple industry sectors including energy, technology, tourism and lifestyle, professional societies and industry associations. We provide a range of services from issue communication and public affairs to strategic communication planning, reputation enhancement, marketing communication, cri-

sis mitigation and spokesperson preparation.

On behalf of our clients, Stanton Communications has won more than 50 industry awards including multiple Silver Anvils, the public relations profession's highest honor. We were named among the Agency Elite Top 100 in *PR News'* inaugural listing and have been named the Best Small Agency in America by *The Holmes Report*, in addition to multiple citations as one of the Best Places to Work by the *Washington Business Journal*.

Clients, among others, include: American Statistical Assn., International Coaching Federation, International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis/World Thrombosis Day, Live! Casino & Hotel, Quad, and W. L. Gore & Associates.

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Principal, 404/214-0722 X105

2020 presented us with an opportunity to rethink our services, positioning and purpose. Out of it came a simple idea of being a Purpose-Driven Firm. For us, purpose drives us to step up and fill a role with our community and our clients. In 2020, we rallied behind several initiatives with purpose. GeorgiaALIVE, of which we are a founding partner, was a statewide public education initiative around COVID-19. Voice4Change Project, launched by T/K, serves as a platform of public awareness around social inequality in the US. And Remember The Octanes is a public remembrance effort in support of those small businesses lost to the pandemic.

These initiatives transitioned well into two large scale client engagements. Invest Atlanta, a small business initiative with federal backing in collaboration with the City of Atlanta, resulted in the firm being identified as its sole marketing resource. As a result, we supported more than 50 small businesses in four months. The Georgia Department of Public Health brought in T/K for a statewide vaccination public awareness program, giving the agency further

purpose in the fight of our lives.

While these unprecedented initiatives were taking place, the agency was growing its pre-COVID business and adding staff in each of its three service pillars—public relations, integrated marketing and creative services. With the addition of 25% more staff since the start of the pandemic, the agency is experiencing record growth in 2021, following a 2020 growth year. Its technology, healthcare and government practices lead the way with consistent activity in franchising, financial services, food & beverage and lifestyle. The firm continues to be a leader in the entrepreneurial community with support for Atlanta Tech Village, Atlanta Tech Angels, Tech AlphaBeta, Keiretsu Forum, Launch-PadFX, Women in Technology and Raise Forum. Client work features a mix of publicly traded, middle market and emerging companies, including Belgard, Carvana, Interface, Sita, SOC Telemed and Nathan's Famous.

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Vested is a global and integrated communications firm focused exclusively on the financial services industry. One of the world's largest financial services agencies with offices in the US, the UK and Canada, Vested creates and delivers award-winning integrated programs for financial brands both big and small, including AON,



Montclair, N.J. based boutique PR firm, Violet PR, works with economic development, CRE and AEC clients across the U.S.

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April Mason, President
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Montclair, N.J. based boutique PR firm, Violet PR, works with economic development, CRE and AEC clients across the U.S.

Whether it's rebranding a city, drawing attention to a revitalized neighborhood, or promoting a new sustainable development, Violet PR helps clients make a difference. Through a combination of news stories, social media, and compelling content, our NJ-based boutique public relations firm helps clients attract more dollars and supporters.

We serve clients in industries including economic development, real estate, architecture, engineering, professional services, aviation and more.

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WordWrite is a member of PR Boutiques International, a worldwide collaborative network of boutique PR firms, as well as a HubSpot Certified Partner Agency and the publisher of both The Pittsburgh 100 ezine and P100 podcast.

Clients include Butler Technologies Inc., Cranston IT, Filterbuy Inc., Koppers Inc., McClintock & Associates, Meyer, Unkovic & Scott, New Pig Corp., Pfizer, Three Wire Systems/My Advisor/Vet Advisor and Waldron Private Wealth. ○

To speak out or not to speak out? That's the question

By Fraser Seitel

Let's say you're the chief communications officer—aka public relations director—of Atlanta, GA-headquartered Home Depot. Your CEO calls, apoplectic.



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*.

"Delta, Coca-Cola and Major League Baseball, for God's sakes, have just come out condemning the new Georgia voting law. We've got to say something. What should we say?"

So, what do you suggest Home Depot say?

Your answer—mine is at the bottom—should transcend the current knee-jerk consensus view abroad

in both the land and the public relations community that "companies have a fundamental responsibility to speak out on social issues." To which I respectfully reply, "bull feathers."

What your company says about a particular social issue—or even whether it chooses to get involved with said issue at all—depends on a number of factors, importantly including—forgive me—what's best for its own self-interest, profitability and preservation.

Every time a corporation—or for that matter, any organization—is asked to take a stand on a social issue, be it voting legislation, gun control, Black Lives Matter or whatever, it must first answer these three key questions.

First, should we respond to social issues?

This is an easy one: the answer is "yes."

Companies have every right to and should speak out on issues that concern them, particularly those related directly to their businesses; banks, for example, addressing financial policy, or pharmaceutical companies addressing drug pricing legislation.

What anti-business zealots like Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez overlook is that corporations are composed of thousands of individuals, all members of diverse and concerned communities. So, the companies they work for should feel free—even obligated—publicly to discuss and debate the

issues of the day.

In the old days, pioneering CEOs like Chase's David Rockefeller, Citibank's Walter Wriston, General Electric's Reg Jones and Jack Welch, Dupont's Irving Shapiro, Chrysler's Lee Iacocca and several notable others regularly made their voices heard on policy and social issues. In more recent times, Starbucks' Howard Schultz, Apple's Tim Cook, Salesforce's Marc Benioff and Chase's Jamie Dimon have continued that tradition.

So, there's no question that it is, indeed, the province of companies to speak out. The harder question is ...

What specific issues should we confront or avoid?

The answer to this question depends on a company's primary objectives and most important publics.

As noted, if an issue has a direct bearing on a company's business or the immediate environment in which it operates, it's justified in choosing to confront it. But if by taking a stand, the organization risks alienating a key constituency on whom it depends for support (employees) or income (customers), then it should think twice before sticking its neck out. Biting the hand that feeds you never makes sense.

That's what Starbucks' Schultz found out when he tried to solve the nation's racial divide by mandating baristas to write "Race Together" on cups to spark discussions of racial inequality. The backlash to Starbucks' embarrassing campaign was withering and instantaneous. Chick-fil-A suffered the same fate when CEO Dan Cathy publicly decried gay marriage. The outrage was so pervasive that the mayor of Boston threatened to outlaw the chicken sandwich!

Which brings us to the new Georgia voting law. In point of fact, the new law, pushed and passed by Georgia Republicans, contains both good and bad parts. The "good" parts validly tighten both voter ID and absentee ballot criteria, which were eased in the Presidential election due to COVID-19. The "bad" parts unnecessarily expand power of a Republican-controlled State Election Board to intervene in county elections.

But in no way is the new law anything close to the "Jim Crow in the 21st century" label that President Biden erroneously pinned on it.

So why, then, would the CEO of Atlanta's Delta Airlines reverse course on the voting law and issue a statement "to make it crystal clear that the final bill is unacceptable?" And why would the CEO of Atlanta's Co-

ca-Cola, a few minutes later, take to TV to say—in language neither particularly original nor creative—"Let me be crystal clear and unequivocal, this legislation is unacceptable?"

Even worse, why would MLB, after 12 consecutive years of declining revenues and attendance, decide suddenly to pull its All Star Game from Atlanta, thus costing the city, the state, the taxpayers and most important, hundreds of local hard-working waiters, ticket takers, concession stand operators, taxi drivers and hotel employees, among many others, millions of dollars of lost revenue and earnings?

The answer lies in examining the third key question ...

What major pressures do we face in confronting this issue?

In today's hyper-partisan political climate, where companies are increasingly—and wrongly—urged to stick their beak into every conceivable area of social commentary, the pressure on them to "get involved" is unavoidable. Like it or not, they have to say something.

The Georgia voting law typifies today's cycle of public relations pressure. Immediately after the controversial bill was passed, politicians, activists, talking heads, the *New York Times* and social media users all demanded that companies speak out in opposition.

The pressure was so intense that two days after Delta issued a statement supporting the new voting law bill, the company abruptly—and mortifyingly—changed direction after "#BoycottDelta" began to trend on social media. Then, when the *Times* prominently reported that dozens of Black business leaders were exhorting companies to oppose the Georgia law, Coke and MLB quickly joined the rush to the exits.

The downside, of course, in succumbing to such pressure is you dig yourself into a corner from which there's no escape. Major League Baseball discovered this the hard way when its "principled stand" was openly criticized by one of the very people who urged it to take the stand in the first place. Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, a leading opponent of the bill, on the one hand, commended MLB players, owners and commissioner for speaking out and on the other, expressed "disappointment" that the money-making All Star Game was being moved out of Atlanta. Abrams, you see, is a politician.

So, what then does a company say, in light

— Continued on next page

The challenges of remote working

By Dennis Spring

The ongoing dilemmas surrounding hybrid and remote-working scenarios, full-time versus flex-time, has escalated as PR firms and corporate communications departments now wrestle with designing the best plan for both their employees and businesses in our post-pandemic economy. As always, efficiency and profitability remain the utmost concerns among employers, along with a significant new emphasis on cleanliness and safety in the work environment. Employers are grappling with this new normal and



Dennis Spring is President of Spring Associates, Inc., founded in 1980. In addition to executive search services, the company also handles communications audits, mergers and acquisitions, client/agency reviews and PR agency selection searches.

seeking ways to address it all while keeping their employees happy, safe and motivated.

Clients have been reporting that having remote employees presents real challenges in managing and motivating employees who, understandably, are dealing with a host of distractions in their homes they didn't have when everyone was in the same office. Interruptions from children, pets and spouses, to name a few, tend to direct employees' focus elsewhere and not on the problems at hand.

Employers are feeling that the momentum and teamwork around an important project or assignment loses the spirit of an effort when groups of people are called upon at the same time. In an office setting, that energy and camaraderie can become infectious. It's hard to recreate that same kind of enthusiasm over a Zoom screen.

Then there's the ever-present question of trust. If management can't be physically there to oversee and supervise employees, it leaves room for even the most honest employees to possibly skip some business priorities and take unapproved personal time during working hours, rather than tending to the task of serving clients and/or management.

To a manager's dismay, looking for a job has also been made easier. No more hiding "interview clothes" in the office or in a suitcase and pretending you're spending the

weekend at your mother's house or sneaking off to Starbucks to have an interview. Whether in-house or remote, people will always look for ways to interview. It's a fact of business life. It's unfortunate that there's no better or honest way to go on an interview. Most often, an interview can be scheduled only during normal working hours.

Lately, quality of life for employees has become a big issue. As the convenience—or stress, depending on your point of view—of working from home has altered both family and work dynamics, the new road map to career success raises a plethora of questions. Like it or not, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many professionals to work from home, a culture shock for many—likely most—who never imagined they would find themselves in a work-from-home situation. Pre-pandemic, working from home was the norm for independent consultants and freelancers, certainly not a full-time PR pro! Now that reality has been placed on its head, the remote working situation has been made just as legitimate as working full time in a company's office. This is evidenced in current conversations with our candidates, who are now requiring their next job to be of a flexible nature, thus allowing them to explore opportunities based in geographic areas other than their own. Working from home virtually opens the job hunt to any location.

As executive recruiters and consultants to the PR industry, we have a long history of talking to both sides of the equation, and never has the industry been faced with so many new considerations regarding Human Resources, workplace environment and dynamics. We're often asked by our clients if we think remote employment is a trend that will take hold and become a new paradigm, or, if it is merely a temporary response to a crisis, and will go away once the crisis is behind us. My response continues to be: "It's too soon to predict right now, however I believe that some of the changes will become a new normal. We'll know for sure once we've gotten past this pandemic, and in the interim, we recommend being flexible to new ideas."

One key element of workplace dynamics that seems to have been in limbo since the start of COVID and WFH is the issue of office politics. Does it still exist if employees are working from home? How has it changed in this new environment? What implications remain for both the employee and employer?

Over the years, we've recruited or tracked the movement of many PR professionals.

When scouring the landscape for experienced, quality individuals to fill executive positions, we've always done so with the understanding that no candidate will succeed in a new role without fitting into our client's culture. During our vetting process for our clients, we explored candidates' soft skills and the likely cultural fit with the organization(s) to which we were presenting them. We determined whether both parties have compatible work styles, and whether the candidate would fit into the workplace culture and dynamic. The organization's office politics was a part of this mix, and could easily make or break a career.

For many candidates, office politics conjures up unpleasant thoughts of overzealous, egotistical or just plain unqualified individuals who can wreak havoc on employees or a company. For others, recognizing and knowing how to navigate a highly charged political atmosphere fits their wheelhouse perfectly. So, without an in-person or office workplace in which everyone is situated, what happens to politics? Good or bad, office politics has many purposes.

The workplace environment keeps evolving, expanding and contracting, just like the COVID-19 pandemic. Every day some issue pops up, demanding our attention and, usually, a response. Office dynamics will continue to change as business dictates and employees and employers alike try to keep up with what's next.

In the meantime, the public relations industry moves forward and adjusts accordingly, as always.

Until next time ○

To speak out or not to speak out

—Continued from page 82

of enormous pressure to speak out, if it's not as—ahem—"committed" as Delta, Coke or MLB, but desires to respond credibly without alienating half its constituency by taking an extreme position?

Well, if you're Home Depot, the world's largest home improvement retailer with 400,000-plus employees, you take a step back, recognize there's nothing you can say to please everyone, consider each of the unattractive alternatives and state:

"We believe that all elections should be accessible, fair and secure and support broad-based voter participation. We'll continue to work to ensure our associates, both in Georgia and across the country, have the information and resources to vote." Period.

Which is exactly the right thing to say. ○

FTI blasts off with Virgin Galactic

FTI Government Affairs is riding with Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic.

The FTI Consulting unit represents Virgin Galactic on federal funding and policies in support of suborbital science research and advanced aeronautics projects including hypersonic flight.

Virgin Galactic rolled out its VSS Imagine, its first Spaceship III class vehicle, on March 30.

After ground testing, it is slated for test glides this summer at Spaceport America, the commercial facility 20 miles from Truth or Consequences, New Mexico.

The company views the Spaceship III class as the linchpin in its goal of 400 flights a year from Spaceport America.

Virgin Galactic is listed on the New York Stock Exchange. It trades at 21.19 and has ranged from \$14.21 to \$62.80 during the past 52 weeks. ○

Naomi Campbell calls Ballard

Naomi Campbell, the British model and actor, has hired Ballard Partners for guidance regarding the US visa process.

The 50-year-old has faced problems obtaining work visas in the U.S. due to a history of violence against associates, staffers and others from 1998 to 2009.

She pleaded guilty in New York for heaving a BlackBerry at a housekeeper, which resulted in Campbell being sentenced to pay for medical services, attend an anger management class and perform five days of community service with the Dept. of Sanitation. She also was sentenced in the UK and Italy for assault.

Brian Ballard, a top fundraiser for former President Trump, is advising Campbell. ○



Naomi Campbell

Whirlpool's Bovim to Albertsons

Sarah Bovim has signed on at Albertsons Cos. as Senior VP-Government Affairs and Public Policy.

She joins the Boise-based supermarket chain giant after a 15-year spin at Whirlpool, where she exited as VP-Government Relations and International Trade Policy.

Earlier, Bovim worked in the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative as Deputy Assistant for Industry and Market Access.

Albertsons chalked up \$54 billion in revenues and \$994.4 million in net income during its most recent nine-month fiscal period. Its brands include Albertsons, Safeway, Vons, Shaw's, Tom Thumb, Lucky and Jewel Osco.

Albertsons on April 21 unveiled its "science-based targets initiative" designed to meet emissions goals established by the United Nations' Paris Agreement. ○

Smith takes Sen. Bennet COS post

Jess Smith, who was Managing Director of Operations in Burson-Marsteller's public affairs and crisis group, is now Chief of Staff for Colorado Senator Michael Bennet.

Most recently, Smith was Chief Operating Officer at J Street,



where she managed a staff of more than 70 people dedicated to finding a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Earlier, Smith worked in the Obama administration as Director of External Affairs at the Federal Emergency Management Agency during Superstorm Sandy, and Senior Spokesperson at the Justice Dept. She also was Communications Director for Virginia Senator Jim Webb. ○



Jess Smith

FGH reps Gates' social project

Finsbury Glover Hering has picked up Pivotal Ventures, the investment and incubation company launched by Melinda Gates to advance social progress in the U.S.

The WPP unit will focus on issues related to caregiving, paid family and medical leave.

Kirkland, WA-based Pivotal in March announced ten finalists in its "Equity Can't Wait Challenge," a competition designed to expand the power and influence of women in the U.S. by 2030. The Challenge, which received more than 550 proposals, this summer will award \$10 million each to the three top projects and distribute \$10 million among the other seven finalists.

Pivotal, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies and MacKenzie Scott, novelist and former wife of Amazon's Jeff Bezos, fund the Challenge. ○

Prime Policy pushes PR econdev

Primé Policy Group represents Puerto Rico's Senate as it pushes for a broad range of economic development issues in Washington.

COVID-19 walloped the U.S. Commonwealth's economy in 2020 as it contracted by 4.4 percent, according to a report by Estudios Tecnicos, a consulting firm.

The island's GDP is expected to slip 0.9 percent this year and grow by 1.5 percent in 2022 and 2 percent in 2023.

Estudios Tecnicos projects Puerto Rico's modest economic growth prospects will spur an exodus from the island, reducing its population from 3.2 million to 3 million by 2025.

Prime Policy Group's Chairman Charlie Black, who has worked in the presidential campaigns of Presidents Reagan, Bush I and Bush II, spearheads his firm's Puerto Rico's lobbying team, which includes Managing Director Paul Weiss, who was Chief of Staff to PR's non-voting member of the US Congress and Governor Anibal Acevedo-Vilao.

Prime Policy Group is part of BCW, a unit of WPP. ○

APCO 'greens' Abu Dhabi oil co.

APCO Worldwide has agreed to supply strategic communications and media relations services to the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.


The independent firm will work with the United Arab Emirates' climate envoy in interactions with the U.S. on climate change.

Inked ahead of the White House's summit on climate change (April 22-23), APCO's contract runs through June.

The UAE's Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan is among the 40 world leaders that President Joe Biden invited to take part in the summit that was live-streamed to the public.

ADNOC produces 3.5 million barrels of oil daily and employs more than 50,000 people in the UAE and beyond.

A self-proclaimed leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability, ADNOC has established a goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent and increase carbon capture, utilization and storage capacity 500 percent by 2030.

APCO Founder/Executive Chairman Margery Kraus heads APCO's ADNOC team, which includes her Chief of Staff, Prateek Alapur as well as consultant Suzanne Smalley. 

Rational 360 cements Kenya ties

Rational 360 has signed a \$600,000 pact to provide strategic communications services to Kenya.

The one-year agreement calls for Rational 360 to handle "relationship building" with US government and non-government officials, plus communications counsel and management for the African state.

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.

APCO Worldwide LLC, Washington, DC, **registered March 30, 2021 for Consulate General of Japan** in New York, New York, NY, regarding providing strategic communications, media relations, and stakeholder engagement services within the United States.

Sanitas International, Washington, DC, **registered March 15, 2021 for Alliance PNE**, Washington, DC, regarding advising H.E. Rogatien Biaou and the Alliance PNE and working with international media to draw attention to democratic backsliding in Benin and build support for free and fair elections in the country.

West Wing Writers LLC, Washington, DC, **registered March 24, 2021 for Gangwon Province**, Gangwon-do, Republic of Korea, regarding assisting in drafting an op-ed on peace in the Korean Peninsula.

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.


Electrify America, LLC, Reston, VA, **registered April 23, 2021 for itself**, regarding activities relating to alternative fuel vehicle refueling property credits.

FGH Holdings, LLC (Formerly known as The Glover Park Group LLC), Washington, DC, **registered April 23, 2021 for News Corp.**, Washington, DC, regarding issues impacting newspaper and book publishing.

The Charles Group, LLC, Washington, DC, **registered April 8, 2021 for Paragon Space Development Corp.**, Tucson, AZ, regarding U.S. Navy advanced power generation technology for naval ships and NASA human space flight programs.

The Madison Group, Washington, DC, **registered April 20, 2021 for Google Client Services**, Mountain View, CA, regarding issues pertaining to online privacy and copyright.

Kenya, which has a population of 55 million people, has been battling the Shabab terror group, an Al Qaeda east African affiliate. A Shabab attack on a Kenyan military base in January 2020 killed three Americans. Defense secretary Lloyd Austin last month ordered an investigation into the attack and potential security shortfalls.

Rational 360 Managing Partner Patrick Dorton, who was Arthur Andersen's Chief Spokesperson during its implosion and a member of Bill Clinton's communications shop, heads the Kenyan team. He's assisted by Joe Lockhart, who was Clinton's Press Secretary, Facebook's VP-Global Communications and the NFL's Executive VP-Corporate Communications; and Nicolas Fitzgerald, a veteran of Target and Gibraltar Associates. 


Mercury stands up for Uganda

Mercury Public Affairs is providing strategic consulting services to the Republic of Uganda as its security forces unleash the worst wave of repression in the east African country in decades, according to the *Guardian*.

Hundreds of people, suspected of supporting political opposition to 76-year-old President Yoweri Museveni, have been rounded up, tortured and held in secret prisons. Museveni, who has been in power for more than 35 years and is a key ally to the U.S., has denied that Uganda's military forces have abused and detained civilians.

The *Guardian* reports that the US and UK have expressed concern about the crackdown in Uganda via diplomatic channels.

Mercury, which began repping Uganda on April 22, is working as subcontractor to Mercury International UK Ltd. in London.

Uganda Senior Presidential Advisor Procovia Nalweyiso oversees the PR push. 

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Employees: 56. Founded: 2005.

Agency Statement:

A global communications agency with a specialization in public relations, social media, content creation and digital marketing. With 55+ team members across four U.S. offices including New York City, San Diego, Los Angeles and Nashville, two international offices in London and Toronto, plus a presence in Denver and Arizona, JPR is a trusted leader in integrated media relations, social media and brand strategy, trend forecasting, guest programming, brand partnerships, experiential activations, influencer engagement and crisis communications.

Established in 2005, JPR has consistently risen as a leader in the travel and hospitality spaces. Today, the agency's growing portfolio spans many markets outside of travel and hospitality, with clients in lifestyle, culinary, real estate, and wellness. JPR's global roster includes more than 120+ hotels in the U.S., U.K. and throughout Europe, Mexico, Caribbean, Africa and more. JPR represents destinations such as North Carolina and Utah as well as flagship hospitality brands including Hilton Luxury Brands, Virgin Limited Edition, Relais & Châteaux, Vail Hospitality and Iconic Luxury Hotels.

JPR is continuously listed on the Observer's annual "PR Power 50" as one of the country's most powerful PR firms and Crain's "Best Places to Work in New York City." The agency also garnered "Top Places to Work" by PR News and received a Five Star rating in Forbes inaugural list of "America's Best PR Agencies," in addition to multiple trade and consumer awards for company culture and brand success. An industry innovator, JPR became the first travel PR agency to launch a podcast in 2018, Priority Status.

Jamie Sigler O'Grady, Sarah Evans, partners

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Clients Include:

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Africa Adventure Consultants
Andronis Exclusive (multiple properties) - Santorini, Greece
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Condado Vanderbilt - San Juan, PR



Jamie Sigler O'Grady,
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