

PG. 52 PR FIRMS RANKED
BY NET FEES

PG. 55 PR FIRMS RANKED
BY ANNUAL GROWTH

PG. 56 PR FIRMS RANKED
BY REGION

O'Dwyer's

Communications & New Media

May 2022 | Vol. 36 No. 3

RANKINGS ISSUE

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

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SLIDE IN FIRST QUARTER

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CHALLENGING FAKE NEWS

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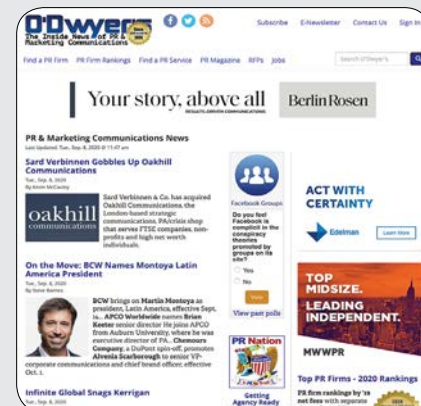
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May: PR Firm Rankings

July: Travel, Tourism & International

August: Financial, I.R. & Prof Services

October: Healthcare & Medical

November: Technology & Social Media

Elevate Your Communications



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Roe repeal will galvanize voters in November

The leaked draft opinion that showed the U.S. Supreme Court's conservative majority moving to overturn *Roe v. Wade* sent shockwaves through the country and reignited a longstanding debate on one of the most polarizing issues in our culture wars. While it will be several months until we know how this decision will play out in our highest court, one thing's for certain: this stunning development will fundamentally alter the country's short-term political trajectory.

The leaked 98-page draft document, first obtained by Politico, was written in February by Justice Samuel Alito and received supporting votes from the Court's conservative flank: Clarence Thomas, Neil M. Gorsuch, Brett M. Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett. It suggested the Court would repeal *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 decision that ruled women have a constitutional right to an abortion. In the document, Alito claims the Constitution makes no reference to abortion, and therefore confers no right to one, which means it's not an issue for the Court to decide and is a matter instead better placed in the hands of our elected representatives, leaving abortion's legality to be decided on a state-by-state basis.

It's an extraordinary development, even more so when you consider it's the first time in history a draft of a Supreme Court pending decision has been leaked. Granted, it's an early draft, leaked months before the Justices had reached an official decision. The Court's opinions typically often undergo a lot of deliberation, and votes and language can—and usually do—change before a final decision is made.

Still, if the Court repealed *Roe*, the ruling would disrupt longstanding legal precedent and effectively turn the country's abortion laws back a half-century, drastically curtailing reproductive rights for women living in the 26 states that plan to outlaw the practice in the advent that *Roe* is overturned. Particularly affected, of course, would be poor and working-class women living in those states who don't have the means to travel for a procedure. Perhaps most troubling: Because *Roe* was decided on the principle that an individual's private decisions belong to them and not the states, many see the potential repeal as a harbinger of things to come and worry about what other court-decided decisions could be overturned next. Marriage equality? Access to contraception? After all, those aren't mentioned in the Constitution either.

The development has lit a cultural fire. People are angry; they view the potential loss of women's reproductive rights as tantamount to a nation turning back the clock. Already, protests have broken out across the country (tellingly, within hours of the leak, police surrounded the Supreme Court Building with barricades). The draft opinion has also undermined our faith in the Court and has cast a pall of political discord over a supposedly non-partisan institution (keep in mind: the majority opinion goes against what Kavanaugh, Barrett and Gorsuch each said regarding *Roe* during their respective confirmation hearings).

Most interestingly, the news has set the stage for a seismic shift in our political landscape, has opened up a new political battlefield at a time when Trump-style politics remain the order of the day and during an election cycle that had all but guaranteed a GOP victory in the 2022 midterms (and arguably, the 2024 election). Our nation's elected officials have now been called to mobilize a response and protect women's fundamental right to choose, and an unintended consequence of all this is that the Democrats finally have a wedge issue to use at the ballot box. Arguably, this couldn't have come at a better time for Biden, who currently commands a laughable 42 percent approval rating, according to FiveThirtyEight, putting him neck and neck with Trump for being the most unpopular President in recent history.

Complacency got us here. None of this would've happened if Clinton had won in 2016 and if Trump's three appointed Justices had never made it to the bench. But an overwhelming majority of Americans support women's right to abortion access (80 percent, according to Gallup), and nothing riles up apathetic voters like a potential infringement of our civil rights. Many of us foresaw the Democrats facing a bloodbath in November. Now, I'm not so sure.

Roe's endangerment also signals a top issue that the private sector will inevitably be expected to take a stand on this year and beyond. Brands are all-too familiar with the polarized political environment in which they reside, and recognize that today's consumer audiences are more conscious of social, political, and environmental causes, which influences their buying decisions. As a result, brands will have to be more focused than ever on navigating this ideological minefield and on the practice of communicating with purpose, and companies that continue to approach pressing social topics with the same look-the-other-way approach could be in for a rude awakening. This development may also drive a wedge between U.S. corporations—which have traditionally been bulwarks for conservative causes—and Republican states, ala Disney's recent spat with Florida over the Sunshine State's law on discussing gender identity issues in schools. This is one issue on which the private sector won't be able to stay silent. ○

—Jon Gingerich

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Pitch response rates slide in 2022's first quarter

Response rates to pitches fell in the first quarter of 2022, according to a new study.

By Steve Barnes

Response rates to pitches fell in the first quarter of 2022, according to a new study from earned media management platform Propel, and one of the best ways to combat that trend is to keep things short and simple.

The Q2 2022 Propel Media Barometer found that journalists responded to 3.37 percent of the pitches they received in the first quarter, a slide from the average 3.53 percent response rate for 2021.

While the average open rate for pitches was 36 percent, Propel noted that the prevalence of email filtering technology (which can trigger an email "open" without any manual interaction from media contacts) most likely means that fewer journalists are actually responding.

How can communicators increase the chances that their pitch will get a response? From top to bottom, it pays to get right to the point.

The most engaging subject lines, the study found, were from one to five words long. Pitches that stayed to that length had a 5.59 percent response rate. That rate drops to

2.62 percent for subject lines with 10 to 15 words, and hits just 1.87 percent when the word count goes above 16.

Communicators, however, seem to be a little behind the curve on that. Nearly half (46.67 percent) of the pitches examined by Propel were between 10 and 15 words long.

The ideal length for pitch leads was between 50 and 79 words, which resulted in a 4.15 percent response rate. Pitch leads with 150 or more words did much more poorly (0.61 percent). PR pros did better here, with the highest number of pitch leads running

from 30 to 49 words long.

For the overall length of a pitch, those with 50 to 149 words did the best, with a 7.85 percent response rate.

Keeping things simple does not just apply to pitch length either. While adding emojis seemed to have little effect one way or the other, putting in too many embedded links was another story. Just 2.69 percent of pitches with four or more embedded links got a response, while keeping the number to two or three brought the response rate up to 3.55 percent.

However, those with no links at all actually did the worst, coming in at 1.5 percent.

Propel's study analyzed a sample of nearly 400,000 pitches sent during Q1 2022. ○

Many don't challenge fake news to avoid conflict

By Jon Gingerich

Social media users often refrain from calling out misinformation they encounter online because they want to avoid conflict, according to a report from the Everyday Misinformation Project, an initiative associated with Loughborough University in the U.K. that investigates how misleading information spreads online.

Researchers conducted interviews with

more than 100 people in the U.K. and asked respondents about their behaviors when using personal messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

The study determined that people widely exhibit conflict avoidance when communicating with family, friends and colleagues on these forums, often failing to speak up when encountering content such as COVID-19 vaccine misinformation, even if they disagree with it.

Respondents said they often decline to engage on the subject altogether, out of fear that if they try to correct what they perceive as false information they'll be seen as provoking conflict or undermining group cohesion.

Others expressed insecurity about their own command of the facts and their ability to adequately criticize that misinformation. This often leads some to instead direct their criticisms of vaccine misinformation only toward those who share their opinions or groups they perceive to be less risky.

Researchers posited that online personal messaging forums encourage what they called "hybrid public-interpersonal communication," where people draw different social boundaries between misinformation they encounter in the public sphere and misinformation they encounter in online messaging forums, where misinformation is often the norm.

Researchers commented on the implications for this dual set of norms, suggesting that, paradoxically, letting online misinformation go unchallenged sends a tacit approval to those who share it, which legitimizes their false claims and increases the likelihood of its continued spread. ○



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PR pros brace for continued activism challenges

A climate of political divisiveness has PR strategists more focused than ever on communicating with purpose, according to USC Annenberg Center for PR's latest Global Communications Report.

By Jon Gingerich

The latest USC Annenberg Global Communications Report found that PR strategists today are now more focused than ever on the practice of communicating with purpose.

An overwhelming majority of the communicators surveyed (93 percent) said they're currently spending more time navigating a growing list of contentious societal topics such as race, healthcare and climate change than ever before. Perhaps, as a result, 73 percent now predict their organization will increase its public engagement in dialogue around one or more controversial issues this year. Currently, nearly a third (30 percent) said they sometimes engage with activist groups when planning an initiative or creating a new policy for their company or clients, three times more than did so three years ago.

More than three-quarters (77 percent) of respondents see our current climate of polarization as a challenge for both their country as well as their organization's communications goals, 75 percent believe polarization makes it difficult to communicate

effectively on important issues and 73 percent think polarization increases the risk of alienating employees. More than a quarter (29 percent) see political instability as a potential risk to their organization's business in the coming year.

Respondents said that racial equity, gender equality, climate change and COVID vaccines are among the top issues with which they predict their organization or clients will see increased public engagement in the coming year.

On the other hand, more than half (57 percent) said they believe their company has enough information to make important decisions regarding how and when to engage in conversations about these complex societal issues. And 55 percent said they think their company's CEO is currently "very proactive" in speaking out about societal issues.


When it comes to the top five components communicators believe are the most important components of an effective purpose-driven campaign, authentic messaging took the top spot, followed by aligning with

the values of a brand, providing clear public statements of purpose, making a long-term commitment and being seen as relevant to consumers.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (85 percent) said they believe the private sector can play an effective leadership role in reducing the overall level of polarization in the U.S. That said, 60 percent admitted their company had faced resistance from clients regarding a recommendation to incorporate social issues into communication programs, and 45 percent said their team had faced similar resistance internally from management in response to such recommendations.

Communicators blame the lion's share of our current climate of political polarization on partisan media outlets, followed by politicians, social media platforms, political strategists, extremist organizations, social media influencers and activist groups.

USC Annenberg's 2022 Global Communication Report was compiled with data from three online surveys fielded by the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations. ○



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Creating a sustainable agency

Three factors that make agency sustainability possible.

By Paul Furiga

When I speak to college students studying public relations, among my favorite questions to ask is how old they were when they got their first social media account.

I've been doing this long enough that some of the social media platforms I ask about—you know, the less-cool ones, like Facebook—were born the same year as some of the students.

This is another way of saying that while the current tools we use as a public relations agency are certainly table stakes for success today, they are hardly what makes an agency sustainable over the long run. After all, where's the call for MySpace experts these days?

Sustainability, indeed, is a challenge. For example, I was a bit surprised in the last year to leaf through a survey of 6,000 marketing agencies by the agency Digital Third Coast. Using publicly available resources, the survey found that fewer than one-third of the marketing agencies reviewed had been in business for 20 years or more.

In other words, it's a minority of us who can remember what PR was like when there was no Facebook or Twitter and when there were actually more cities with a daily newspaper than without. What does it say about PR agencies that make it out of their teens and succeed in this digital-first world?

I can only write from personal experience. That experience covers four decades, though. It comes from multiple perspectives regarding the agency experience, first as a journalist, then in politics and government, later as a leader in a great multinational agency, and for 20 years this March, as the founder and chief storyteller of WordWrite.

With that background, I see three factors as the key to agency sustainability.

Embracing new tools

Sustainability means agencies must adapt. We have a saying at our firm, "it's about the content, not the pipes." To use an analogy, when drought-stricken communities around the world finally get fresh water, the conversation isn't all about the pipes that brought the water—their width, their color, etc. It's about the water!

So, as PR practitioners, we must remember that while the latest social or digital tools are cool—they are just tools. Just as the pipes bring fresh water to parched communities, our latest tools are just making communication possible, the tools should not be the main focus of our expertise. They are table stakes—and it's likely

that we'll be playing with new table stakes in the near future.

Practicing what you preach

If the "evolution" of traditional media has taught us anything, it's that the definition of PR has changed forever. Smart thinkers, including Gini Dietrich of Spin Sucks, have pioneered important concepts that add to the definition, such as PESO, which I prefer to call the 21st-century version of PR. As Gini and her team articulate it, today's PR professionals much be fluent in Paid digital content, as well as Earned or more traditional PR, plus organic Social and Owned content—everything from website content to whitepapers, op-eds and thought leadership that goes well beyond the norm.

On top of that fluency, we believe firms should put these principles in action.

At our firm, for example, we are one of more than 40 publishers in The 100 Companies network started by Chris Schroder, a former agency owner in Atlanta whose personal research on the drastic reduction in earned media outlets led him to start a company that now publishes geographically focused and industry-specific ezines around the country and the world. The Pittsburgh 100, our publication, has been going strong since 2017, has more than 40,000 subscribers, and also has a companion podcast.

So, when we recommend owned content strategies to our clients, they know we're coming from a place of intimate experience.

Knowing your story

Perhaps the most important factor for PR agency stability is having a strong point of view. Not surprisingly, given that WordWrite has employed many former journalists for more than 20 years, our point of view starts with the concept of story.

Personally, over two decades in journalism, I wrote more than 10,000 stories and edited another 10,000. That's a lot of beginnings, middles and ends. I was with people in their best times and in their worst. It taught me a great deal about the psychological and sociological foundations of storytelling that make our human brains hardwired for story.

Over the years, as the tools and the environment for PR have evolved, so has our storytelling focus. Today, post-COVID, it's stronger than it's ever been, with an emphasis on what we call the most important story of all for any organization: its Capital S Story.

In the old days, back when people still read those things called newspapers, a small

s story was the one you read today and used to line the birdcage the next day. In today's age, the small s story is one you saw in your social media feed yesterday or even 10 minutes ago and can't remember because it wasn't that big of a deal.

The Capital S Story stands above the rest because it answers these fundamental questions: Why should someone buy from you, work for you, invest in you or partner with you?

At our firm, we've trademarked a process around this concept that we call StoryCrafting and I've written a book about it. We've invested time, money and effort to develop this point of view as a means of making WordWrite sustainable. And according to at least one survey, our sustainability puts us in some select company.



Paul Furiga

Must every PR agency trademark a process, have its founder write a book or become a publisher to become sustainable? I doubt that's the only path.

I do know that focusing on what delivers results for clients—the content, not the pipes—adapting to the environment that the industry requires—such as models like PESO—and articulating a clear point of view are absolutely predictors of sustainability.

The bottom line

These three characteristics augment the core success measures that have only grown more important since the early days of PR: delivering results and nurturing relationships.

While I've met a few agency leaders who are a bit intimidated by data—raise your hand if you entered this industry because you love numbers—it's absolutely true that the availability of digital tracking tools and better data has helped to make the PR results we get for clients more visible (and more connected to business results).

And while digital tools, avatars, artificial reality, artificial intelligence and other recent developments have introduced new considerations into our work, PR in the end is still about people and creating conversations and relationships among people. Bottom line: It's a people business. And that's absolutely great news for all of us who enjoy this business because we thrive on connection.

Paul Furiga, who spent two decades as a journalist covering Congress and the White House, is President and Chief Storyteller at WordWrite. ○



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Times are changing. So should your agency's culture.

How agencies can update their culture in ways that engage and empower people with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.

By Peter V. Stanton

Many agencies and corporations operate in alignment with a culture laid out by the founder. Today, a broader perspective is required. The founder's vision is an important—perhaps even vital—guidepost, but people within the firm also need to feel enfranchised in what your culture says and means.

Having recently gone through a process of culture reassessment and refinement, here are a few recommendations for agency leaders to consider as they initiate their own culture update.

Invite the conversation

Professionals enter a firm and discover the company's culture memorialized on the website, in onboarding materials and perhaps even on wall signs. The impression is that the words are almost sacred and certainly unalterable. Leaders can stimulate considerable enthusiasm and engagement simply by inviting their teams to a conversation about the culture. Asking questions such as "Does this have meaning for you?" "Is it relevant to today?" "What are we missing?" can open a dialogue that can be enormously enlightening for leadership, but also empowering for the team.

The culture conversation doesn't need to be premised on the idea that what currently exists will be discarded. In fact, the discussion can have the effect of affirming the existing culture and enabling a clearer discussion of its meaning and daily implications. But we must recognize that society has changed, certainly over the 30 or more years since our firm was founded. Even over the last five years. For us, what seemed compelling at our origins proved not specifically transferable to today. If your people feel your culture doesn't speak for them, they are likely to opt-out and pursue other opportunities, especially at a time when younger generations seek meaningful purpose in their work far more than just a paycheck. Similarly, those who wish to know your culture before accepting a job offer may feel their views are out of alignment with the company's. Relevance is resonance. Invite the conversation.

Enable peer-to-peer dialogue

It's hard to confront the boss, especially if the boss happens also to be the founder who wrote the culture statement in the first place. A dialogue among peers can be far easier. Small working groups enable colleagues to share perspectives, discuss the

meaning of the company's culture statement and consider its real-world implications and possible interpretations.

Most cultural expressions delineate a sequence of values that are core to the company's ethos and operations. In our process, we gave several small working groups one of these values to consider. The remit was not to throw it out and start again necessarily but to raise questions, think about its importance and share ideas for change. Each team was also asked for their interpretation of what each value meant in terms of our daily behaviors. Thus, when a group looked at our value of "Clients First," they defined their interpretation of how this guides our thinking, our approach to client service and our responsibilities to exceed expectations, bring forward new ideas and always act in our clients' best interests.

But within the "safe space" of the small group and without the boss looking over their shoulder, the group was also able to bring forward a genuine concern: Does this value mean the people of the firm are less important? This proved to be an ah-ha moment for the boss but prompted a deeper discussion of how to broaden the value so it would not appear dismissive of those who are asked to live it every day.

Demonstrate openness to change

There can be an impulse to keep things the way they've always been. That kind of rigidity can make individuals feel their ideas and perspectives are not valued. At the outset of the process, be clear about your openness to change. Welcome new ideas but be equally clear that it's not enough to simply say "I don't like it." Any such sentiment must be coupled with a rationale and a recommendation.

Our teams understood and accepted that challenge. They explained their perspective on "Clients First" and thought collaboratively about how we might redefine the value without jettisoning the principle. When the small groups came together for an all-hands presentation of their work and thinking, each also brought forward options for change. Not every option was generally applauded, but every option was heard, discussed and openly considered, not just by the founder, but the entire team. The word "no" was never articulated. Instead, the word "why" was the more positive pathway to acceptance of any change. Our new expression of this value is "Relationships

First." That new expression has far deeper meaning than its predecessor.

All PR firms challenge their people every day to apply their intellect on behalf of clients. That same approach was modeled here as people came prepared to explain not argue, influence not irritate. In the end, everyone had the opportunity to weigh in and the boss had the opportunity to demonstrate acceptance of the probability that change would result.

Make it meaningful

As a new expression of culture emerges from this kind of process, so does a consensus that it needs to be understood and applied in very practical ways. Each of our small working groups not only brought forward a specific value concept but also defined their ideas for how we would "live" each value.


This dimension is often lost in favor of an up-to-date way of describing what a company believes and stands for. Companies can, for example, express their respect for individuality, but how is that demonstrated on a daily basis? Does the famous Dilbert cartoon about casual days going too far become the norm? Are people free to work in whatever way they choose? There must be clarity about the way each of the company's values is demonstrated through our collective actions. This "substance behind the statement" is almost of greater importance than the words themselves.

Share ownership

When the process is complete, the outcome is the shared work product of all participants. Culture is no longer the founder's alone. Willingness to share ownership across the team and recognize this new expression as a common belief is vital to its ultimate integrity and durability.

Memorializing the cultural expression on the company website, in orientation materials and even in new business presentations is the most effective means for everyone to feel they helped to create something meaningful and lasting. And as Mom always reminded me: "Never forget to tell them Thank You."

Throughout our process, people of various ages, cultural backgrounds and professional experiences put the founder's creation under the microscope and ultimately brought it into the 21st century. A deliberative and thoughtful process will help ensure success in this vitally important consideration.

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



Peter V. Stanton



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Managing search results is easier than you think

Why Google is the first and last stop for audiences seeking to learn about companies, brands, executives, products and services.

By Larry Moskowitz

As a PR professional or corporate communicator, your strategy must encompass all media, yet too often, the most powerful and trusted source of news and information is overlooked. If you think search results don't matter, this is your wake-up call. And if you think you can't influence Google, you're wrong. In fact, you can do it yourself.

Using tactics you may already be familiar with, you can improve the reputations and online profiles of your clients. This approach will help you add new layers of value to your existing services, prove the ROI of your digital PR campaigns and win business with new insights.

Today's consumer confronts so many streams of information that communicators—focused on individual channels, like social media or news—forget to monitor and manage the ocean that all streams flow into: Google.

Managing online reputations is nearly synonymous with managing search results; a Herculean task that blends the data-driven sciences of SEO and SEM with the creative arts of public relations and digital content creation.

Google search is today's most valuable source of news and information

Google has evolved dramatically over the last decade, from a simple indexing of websites to an information source of its own with rich results and content like news, images, events, social highlights, a knowledge panel and maps. Search results are far more influential than social media and traditional media, driving the majority of all web traffic, as searchers consider Google a trustworthy and reliable research source.

Embracing a search-centric strategy will help ensure your clients' audiences find your positive content and engage with it. Modern communication must be viewed through the lens of search – with data that matters and insightful analysis that identifies opportunities and potential threats as they arise.

Embrace search-centric PR and corporate communications

A search-centric approach requires you to consider Google's role in promoting every digital asset you or your client might produce. At 5.6 billion searches per day, Google is the gateway to every brand, business and organization. The journey your audience takes to reach your website, so-

cial media channels or news release, almost always begins with a search that rarely goes beyond page one of results.

Most agencies rely on clipping services and social media monitoring tools that simply do not track search results, while a few try to tackle search with more technical platforms such as SEMRush and Moz. But those SEO and SEM platforms are fire hoses of data, often overwhelming communication professionals, who simply want to extract key business intelligence and present it in a format that effectively communicates critical insights.

79%
believe page one
search results are
more powerful than
page one news.

New technologies, however, help make tackling these various challenges manageable by communication professionals, not search experts. Even digital specialists can more effectively deploy their expertise to develop higher-level strategies and sophisticated tactics, empowering junior staff to perform advanced online reputation management tactics like search results monitoring and optimization.

PR and corporate communications professionals most often are focused on strengthening online reputations or reducing the effects of negative or competitive news or changed search results rankings.

Today, new platforms, such as Lightbox Search, can help:

- Combat negative content: misinformation, news, reviews, or competitive results.
- Improve search rankings for branded or competitive search terms.
- Control search results and improve reputations for brands, products, or executives.
- Access and analyze localized results and data; hyper-target regional audiences.
- Prove ROI of digital content such as earned media, news releases, or websites.
- Automatically monitor and benchmark to track and analyze the impact of your digital efforts or new client mentions.
- Generate custom action plans to improve page one search results.

- Easily schedule daily, weekly or monthly reports for any search term—like a brand or executive—and access them on demand.

Recognize and leverage the power of Google search

You don't need to be an SEO expert or data analyst to provide new value to clients by taking advantage of the scope and influence of Google search. Every form of digital content creation has a search consideration that can improve the ROI of your efforts



Larry Moskowitz

or support the sale of new services. Techniques like creating strong, keyword-rich content or ensuring your clients have highly optimized networks of social media pages are now essential to controlling search results and driving search engine visibility.

There are dozens of approaches to strengthening search results but knowing, for instance, which newswire distribution services are ranked more highly than others can make a big difference. Claiming the Google "Knowledge Panel" is critical and easy. Even using Google Ads may be a technique that can ensure your organization or client appears first—or might drive down negative news or competitive content. We're now in a world that has truly merged owned, earned, paid and social media. But search is where it all shows up first—and often last.

Comprehensive search engine management leads to better reputations, stronger brand visibility, enhanced executive eminence and more audience engagement. Breathe new life into existing content, develop new content and build a digital fortress that can withstand negative news and achieve business objectives.

Whether it's winning new business or uncovering missed opportunities, it's more important than ever to put a sharp focus on Google search results. Understanding and managing those results will provide the critical solutions your clients need, show them how they fare against the competition and provide insights and analysis into their entire digital footprint.

Larry Moskowitz is Founder and CEO of Lightbox Search. He previously founded Mediawire and Medialink and also served as COO of PR Newswire. ●



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The second pandemic: poor communication

Scientists and the professionals who communicate on their behalf play a vital role in restoring an unforeseen casualty of the COVID-19 pandemic: the truth.

By Gil Bashe and John Bianchi

In a crisis, people hunger for direction. For the past two-plus years, they've gone hungry. COVID-19 is slowly becoming endemic, and now, though we all want to get "back to normal," it's doubtful that the way things used to be will come back into view anytime soon. Too much has changed, and one of those changes has been to the existence of objective truth.

Since early 2020, we've grappled with two pandemics: COVID-19 and poor communication. The public's confidence in elected officials and scientists has been shaken as conflicting messages, many delivered by those with the biggest social media megaphones, made it more challenging to fight this virus.

Even now, during what we all hope is the end of the pandemic, the chorus of talking heads spouting conflicting messages and half-truths continues to confuse millions rather than shed light.

The flood of misperceptions and misinformation—driven by political agenda, arrogant individualists and a disinformation campaign about vaccine safety, risks and side effects—is unfortunately here to stay. Those bending the facts to suit their personal and political agendas have benefitted from and are themselves the creation of social media, which doesn't exist to convey facts, but rather, opinions.

We've learned much about the truth in this era of social-media-fueled "neo-tribalism." We discovered what happens when science is sliced and diced by political perspective. We now know what happens when sports stars self-appoint as medical experts. We learned that truth per se doesn't matter to many people; what matters to them is following those in authority who parrot back pronouncements that match their already deeply held personal beliefs. What will happen due to Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter is unknown, but from what we know so far, we can't expect that platform to restore objectivity to the truth.

Scientists, government public health experts, pharma leaders and communicators continue to face an uphill climb in getting the facts across. Science may yet regain society's reverence and trust despite the damage sustained.

Scientists and those who communicate on their behalf must first face the reality

that they've lost command of the podium. To regain their authority, they must learn to work the platforms and personalities that consumers use to digest information. Scientists are recognized experts in assessing clinical and epidemiological data, but their doctorates and academic positions no longer hold sufficient weight to place them in the sole role of convenors for societal action.

While re-establishing respect and reverence for the truth is beyond anyone's ability at this moment, we can help to reestablish belief in science. The path forward is complex, but it's achievable.

Recognize you can't deliver the message alone. Dr. Fauci is that rare commodity: a plain-speaking scientist who scored well with the public in this era of bluster and bluff. But even Dr. Fauci didn't connect with every community and demographic. To reach communities that are skeptical or even downright hostile to the facts in their messages, scientists need allies within those communities.

Working with sports figures, musicians, leaders in different fields and pursuits, the clergy and members of the military or police, scientists can reach the communities around these figures who trust them and connect with them on a more visceral and personal level. These "new messengers" have been very willing to go to bat for science.

Facts don't win arguments—people must be invited to accept them. Imparting facts is different from communicating. A speaker needs to be adept at argument and persuasion to be a great communicator. A great communicator can take a set of facts and use them to rally support among those inclined to believe her and win unexpected allies among those initially inclined to doubt her. Being a great communicator may not be your strength as a scientist, but one of your strengths is marshaling facts that support a great communicator's arguments.

In this new communication era—often driven by soundbites or memorable social posts—scientists have a critical job in supplying the facts and data that provide proof points for communicator teammates who will run with them and take them over the goal line.

Use the platforms that your audiences

use. When public health officials and scientists talked to the public before COVID-19, they used traditional media and public service ad campaigns. That's no longer sufficient; to reach people, you have to go where they are, whether it's Twitter, Instagram or Reddit. Public health officers, epidemiologists and infectious disease experts need to recognize that only a fraction of the people they need to reach watch television or listen to the radio and can't be expected to look for their messages, however necessary. Diversify media choices to account for the fragmentation of the media landscape and audience. To reach grandma, go to a local newspaper. To reach her grandson, what's a newspaper? TikTok may be where you need to be.

Science has always mattered. Now, it matters more than ever. And yet, we have seen the voice of science drowned out by ever-more vocal and outrageous—and entertaining—speakers with agendas whose goals are to reach their devoted followers while overwhelming social media and the airwaves.

Scientists can regain societal trust; however, they must learn to work the platforms consumers use to source information, partner with new spokespeople and voices and recognize that now it's how you present the facts, not the facts you present, that win over hearts and minds. In a fast-moving crisis, when knowledge evolves, scientists must recognize that they need to hone their communication skills and be savvy in securing public trust.

While this will force many in science to step outside their comfort zone, it can and must happen. Scientists are known for creating miracles, and communications are part of the cure.

Gil Bashe is Chair, Global Health and Purpose, at FINN Partners. John Bianchi is Vice President, Health at FINN Partners. ○



Gil Bashe



John Bianchi

PR's best-kept secret: agency owner wealth

One lesser-known fact of the public relations industry that doesn't show up in agency financials or benchmarking studies: the enormous personal wealth of independent agency owners.

By Art Stevens

As someone who has worked closely with more than a hundred public relations agencies during the past ten years, I'm privy to one of the best-kept secrets in the industry. Most owners of independent public relations agencies, regardless of their size, are very wealthy.

This fact—and it is a fact—doesn't show up in PR agency benchmarking studies, which include the typical salaries of PR agency owners. These owners guard their best-kept secrets zealously and simply report what they consider to be industry-standard salaries. But the profits they take out in the form of distributions during the course of the year are kept strictly confidential.

So, if a benchmarking study reflects that the industry standard for an agency owner of a \$5 million agency is a salary of, say, \$300,000, you can be sure that this isn't the whole story. Most likely, that individual will be pulling out more than \$1 million a year.

The enormous sums of money taken by most PR agency owners lie buried in agency financials. They are buried under the headings of various other categories. It's not uncommon for a PR agency owner of a \$500,000 firm to take in at least \$250,000. Nor is it uncommon for a PR agency doing \$3 million in fees to generate almost \$1 million a year for its owner.

If a PR agency with fee billings of \$5 million does around a 30 percent profit, after other overhead including staff salaries that generates about \$1.5 million in profits. Guess who gets to keep most of that?

Consider this. A key number two senior manager in a \$5 million agency may earn a salary of around \$250,000. And I'm being on the generous side. This senior manager may manage many more professionals than the owner of a \$500,000 PR agency. Yet, the latter individual often takes in considerably more than \$250,000 a year. Is it any wonder that more and more PR agencies are being started than ever before?

I'm personally aware of one independent PR agency owner who earns more than \$5 million a year. And the agency isn't even among the top twenty in fee billings. This individual earns more than the CEOs of holding company PR agencies. Ah, the joys of growing your own business!

The various economic downturns of the

past fifteen years tended to sober up agency owners. Some lost their agencies because they couldn't handle the dire steps necessary to keep their businesses afloat.

Yet, there comes a point in the lifetime of a PR agency owner when he'd like to sell the agency. The question becomes: How does an agency owner capitalize on the enormous profits the agency has generated in order for him to become as wealthy as he is? Can a buyer find a way to reward the agency owner with a purchase price that's appealing and still recognizes the enormous hurdle that would have to be overcome to generate more dollars for the owner than he's already taking on his own?

During my travels through the world of PR agency mergers and acquisitions, I've come across a number of primary reasons a PR agency owner wants to sell:

He wants to cash out and retire.

He wants to cash out and get into another endeavor altogether.

He wants to jump-start his career by staying on and becoming part of a larger organization.

He wants to stay on but work less.

Taking as an example the owner of a \$5 million agency who takes out about \$1 million a year, how can an acquisition be structured that would accommodate the owner's present income base with a realistic marketplace value? Typical deals are usually based on fee income or bottom line, or both. Typical deals these days are one times net fee income and/or five times the bottom line. So, if an agency is doing \$5 million and it generates a profit of \$750,000 a year, then that agency could be worth around \$5 million.

But if that agency is generating a 30 percent profit and the owner takes \$1 million a year, then in five years that owner would personally take in \$5 million. If he's offered even \$7 million for his agency, then it's not economically worthwhile for the owner because he would net a mere \$2 million for his agency. It's worth a hell of a lot more than that, but buyers may be wary of throwing around big bucks for a potentially uncertain future.

The truth is, it's easier structuring a deal for an agency doing a 15 percent profit than for a 30 percent profit. So, given this interesting phenomenon in the PR agency business, how can deals be done for agen-

cies generating enormous profits and huge windfalls for their owners? Here are the criteria:

1. A buyer will bite the bullet and offer a generous amount of money upfront and a value of more than two times annual revenue.

2. A seller will determine how much more he can live with as a net purchase price after he deducts what he himself can generate by remaining independent. For example, if a seller can earn \$1 million a year as an independent and is managing a \$5 million agency, he will earn \$5 million on his own for the next five years. The seller and the buyer can reach a compromise by making the purchase price a minimum of \$8 million, thus netting the owner an additional \$3 million. The owner may be anxious to start another non-competing business and take leave as soon as possible.

3. A seller may want to abandon the headaches of back-office responsibility—administration, HR, accounting, repairs, capital improvements and the like—and become part of a larger organization. This seller may compromise on the value of his business in exchange for becoming an integral part of the acquiring organization's management team.

These are some of the ways in which compromises can be made to allow a seller and a buyer to close a transaction when the seller personally generates an enormous income. The seller must be willing to be flexible if the goal is to either exit or enter. Looking at it another way, the seller is already quite rich if he's run the business well. This doesn't mean that he wants to give the business away. What it does mean is that the seller may be so ready for the next major change in his life that he's willing to work with a desired buyer to make a deal happen.

Art Stevens is Managing Partner of The Stevens Group, a consulting firm that facilitates mergers and acquisitions in both the PR agency space as well as digital and interactive firms. He founded and headed the New York PR agency LobsenzStevens for more than twenty years. ○



Art Stevens

SaaS PR platforms will drive agency transparency

SaaS platforms now allow businesses to effectively manage and execute their own PR campaigns, putting pressure on agencies to demonstrate the value of the “traditional” PR model.

By Stephen Marcinuk

Traditional PR firms act like something of a black box: they sell access to their media relationships, which can result in press coverage for clients. But how they get these wins and the work that goes on behind the scenes is often a mystery.

While this traditional agency model has stood strong for decades, we’re undoubtedly on the cusp of massive changes in the industry. A major shift is taking place regarding how transparent client-agency relationships are, how those relationships are managed and how technology can facilitate the process.

One potentially disruptive entrant in PR tech is the self-serve Software-as-a-Service platforms, which have the potential to cut out agencies altogether. These services enable businesses to manage and execute their own PR campaigns with minimal time investment. The systems also allow companies to build and own direct relationships with journalists and communicate with them instantly. Users can even receive instantaneous feedback on what’s working and what isn’t.

While these developments are intriguing, they have also made the marketplace more bewildering for those who haven’t kept pace. The self-serve systems could have wide-ranging implications for traditional PR agencies, which now need to demonstrate added value to compete with these new offerings. They will also need to do some serious soul-searching about how much transparency they provide, as well as how well they manage information exchange.

Opening up the black box

These new SaaS PR platforms could catch many traditional PR firms off guard. The systems provide customers with a raft of data about potential coverage, as well as specific media outlets, even journalists, that users can approach. The analytics and insights these platforms can produce were unimaginable only a few years ago. This data is, of course, useless if a company doesn’t know how to understand or implement it, but it’s fairly easy for them to learn how—and quickly.

The SaaS systems provide quantifiable and precise measurements, from deep data analysis to a simple tally of Instagram likes. The systems not only enable better deci-

sion-making and relationship building, but they also provide clients with their own PR dashboards, as well as complete oversight of everything they’re paying for, something traditional PR firms have classically struggled to provide.

What’s more, this SaaS technology is a great match for its target customer, who are often digital marketers adept at analyzing data and using this to aid decision-making. For example, many digital marketers would find it impossible to do their day job without access to third-party search engine marketing tools and the insights they provide.

Agencies, on the other hand, are struggling to keep up, often using outdated reporting and measurements like “share of voice.” Such metrics provide little actionable insights that can help teams to optimize their campaigns. This is akin to a paid-ads platform telling you only how many users saw an ad. Without further metrics, it would be impossible to judge the success of the ad or ways to optimize it.

Time to rethink PR relationships?

The central paradigm of traditional PR is that clients are paying to gain access to the agency’s media relationships. As soon as a client leaves an agency, those relationships are lost. These media relationships are a large part of what gives an agency its value in the marketplace. Agencies often build these relationships over years of carefully cultivated interactions, with plenty of face-to-face networking.

But SaaS PR platforms are starting to turn this paradigm on its head. With these new platforms, businesses can build their own media relationships and—crucially—hold onto them. Clients are understandably beginning to question why they should pay PR companies to do what they can now do from their laptops.

This poses an almost existential question. As SaaS PR platforms start to take market share and businesses get used to building their own media relationship, can the agency model of keeping a tight grip on their relationships and effectively “leasing” these to clients continue?

The good news for traditional PR agencies is that many clients, especially larger companies, won’t want to take the PR process on themselves and will be happy to

continue to pay agencies for their services.

But on the other hand, it’s foreseeable that other companies may start expecting PR agencies to open up their black box and be more forthcoming in sharing access to their relationships, lest they switch from an agency to a SaaS PR platform.

A further interesting trend to keep a close eye on is how startups use SaaS PR platforms. The low cost and high scalability offered by these platforms are well suited to the bootstrapped model of your typical pre-revenue startup.

If in-house marketers have been successful in winning impactful media coverage using these platforms, will these businesses be incentivized to keep using this model, once they secure significant funding, instead of contracting the services of a traditional agency?

Of course, there’s an argument to be made for the intangible benefits of human interaction and personalized relationships that the traditional PR model can provide. Just as a growing demand for artisanal crafts and specialty foods continues to transform the marketplace, PR clients may demand a more customized and synergistic experience from their client-agency relationships.

Moving forward

The traditional agency model and client relationship management are clearly at a crossroads, brought about by the advent of the self-serve SaaS PR model, among other tech-enabled innovations. Traditional firms clearly need to decide how they will respond to the challenge, including pulling back the curtain on their black box and responding to the expectations of today’s clients.

Stephen Marcinuk is co-Founder and Head of Operations at Intelligent Relations, a PR platform that uses artificial intelligence and GPT-powered text generation to augment and improve a variety of PR functions that have traditionally been done by agency professionals. Its proprietary technology analyses millions of online news articles and automatically generates contextually relevant media pitches on behalf of clients. ○



Stephen Marcinuk

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Why DEI should live within your brand narrative

Businesses should consider these three things when integrating DEI into their brand story.

By Brandon Thomas

We're in a moment where companies are considering and re-considering their approaches to diversity, equity and inclusion. While research has shown that a commitment to DEI can make businesses more productive and profitable, there are still some who question the investment that it takes to progress these efforts in a meaningful way. Yes, DEI is multifaceted and yes, it does require thoughtful considerations and intentional work. But business leaders have been creating and problem-solving for as long as business has existed, and DEI deserves the focus and attention that is given to so many other top-of-mind priorities.

When I spoke recently with a leading DEI expert, they shared that "It will become fundamentally important that DEI sit within the core of what a company or brand stands for." That sentiment resonated with me because when you think about it, DEI touches all elements and aspects of a business, from the people to the partners, the clients, the vendors and so on. It's not a matter of "if" but rather "how" DEI can and should play a role in a company's brand story. The key is that the integration is intentional and feels genuine to what the brand is and where it strives to be in the long term.

When assessing why it's important to have DEI as a part of your brand story, here are a few things to consider:

DEI is important to brand reputation

DEI isn't a one-size-fits-all model. Companies and brands are all different in their own unique ways, and no two similar companies are ever the exact same. While there may be similarities in strategy, how a brand approaches DEI storytelling should feel authentic to that brand. While the options are endless for what a brand can say, ensuring that the message feels true to what people know about the company is critical to both internal employees and external stakeholders.

In January, I had the opportunity to moderate a PAN Communications-hosted roundtable discussion among industry experts to examine a question that plagues businesses of all varieties: How can you show meaningful progress on your DEI journey? As a part of that conversation, we talked a lot about the challenges that companies are facing in meeting some of

the new expectations of their audiences. One panelist shared data from a recent study, explaining that "Consumers and the general public are expecting to see diversity in public communications from [corporations] ... but 60 percent of the brand executives polled were worried that an inauthentic execution would lead to a larger backlash than no inclusion at all."

It can feel intimidating to articulate the DEI message, especially with many companies in the early stages of their journey, but that shouldn't deter a company from exploring where DEI sits within its brand story. Additionally, if no meaningful narrative exists, pushing to ask the questions and have the tough conversations to identify what barriers or challenges currently prohibit progress becomes the immediate next step.

DEI improves company culture

No matter the makeup or background of your employee base, there will always be individuals within your company who expect the leadership to clearly articulate the company's values as they relate to DEI. Long gone are the days when employees are indifferent about where a business fundamentally stands on the issues that impact their daily lives.

Amplifying the culture that exists within a company can help tell a brand story that matters. It's easy for leaders to fall into the trap of becoming hyper-focused on the ROI or data associated with DEI and forget that people can be the greatest advocates. While tracking progress is important, highlighting the lived experience of the people who make a business what it is can and should be a key component of that narrative.

DEI can support the bottom line

Diversity of thought will continue to be a factor when companies think about who they partner and work with. If everyone in the room looks the same and comes from similar backgrounds, it's not unlikely that they think the same too.

A 2020 study from McKinsey found that businesses with more ethnic and cultural diversity were as much as 36 percent more profitable than less diverse ones. When examining gender alone, the gap widened—the most diverse businesses were 48 percent more profitable than the least diverse ones. Simply put: DEI is good for business. Creating spaces that provide access and oppor-

tunities for diverse talent to grow within a company or organization and finding the appropriate way to message that effort can help engage new business audiences and attract new talent.

Most importantly, it's the right thing to do. For many companies, DEI has felt like a new frontier—one filled with uncertainty and presenting new questions around knowing the right thing to say, when to say it, and to whom. Shifting brand narrative doesn't happen overnight. The integration of DEI into that story should be a thoughtful process. It's a long-term journey that takes time and continued work to demonstrate that the message is connecting and then resonating with the intended audience.

Brandon Thomas is Vice President and General Manager, New York and Head of DEI at PAN Communications. ○



Brandon Thomas

Media brief

Ruder Finn acquires Peppercomm

Ruder Finn has acquired Peppercomm, a firm that reported \$9.2 million in 2021 fee income for the 58th slot on *O'Dwyer's* rankings of PR firms.

Peppercomm's 29 employees in New York, San Francisco and London handle accounts such as Dole Sunshine Co, MINI Cooper, Xero and Trivago.

The firm, which is led by Steve Cody, is noted for its "Change Agent" humor-led training programs.

Kathy Bloomgarden, CEO of Ruder Finn, told *O'Dwyer's* the deal came about after she had a conversation with Cody on a different matter. "We started talking and it became clear that our firms shared common goals and culture," she said. "Ruder Finn and Peppercomm are a good fit."

She says Peppercomm's Change Agent humor-led training program is well-suited in these uncertain and stressful times as the nation struggles to emerge from the pandemic.

She sees strong synergies between the Change Agent approach and Ruder Finn's "what's next vision" concept. "Their combination of powerful emotional mindset and sentiment analytics, combined with breakthrough creative, expands on and deepens our core capabilities, while their unique understanding of how to leverage humor in business gives us a new competitive edge in our ability to break down communications barriers, stimulate thinking and drive change," said Bloomgarden.

Cody will continue to lead Peppercomm and report to Bloomgarden, who expects no redundancies or layoffs following the deal.

Ruder Finn, which has 860 employees, is No. 8 in *O'Dwyer's* rankings, with fees of \$112.2 million during the past year.

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Effective ways to prepare for a cyberattack

How PR firms can better protect themselves and their clients from cyberattacks.

By David Duncan

News outlets around the United States echo an eerie warning: Russia is preparing cyberattacks against various companies. In late March, President Biden warned of Russian cyberattacks against the U.S. based on new intelligence collected from the Putin regime. “The magnitude of Russia’s cyber capacity is fairly consequential, and it’s coming,” Biden warned. Russian cyber operations could provide a means for retaliating against the U.S. and other NATO countries for their support of Ukraine without crossing the threshold for more significant conflict. Small and medium-sized businesses are the most vulnerable to the expected wave of Russian-backed ransomware operations. Most SMBs are the perfect target for ransomware gangs due to the lack of security controls and dedicated cyber security professionals. Why are SMBs a lucrative target? It’s simple, SMBs have fewer resources and staffing to prepare for, defend against, and recover from a ransomware attack. As a result, attacks against SMBs have increased by 150 percent over the past two years.

The Public Relations industry is not immune to cyberattacks, and a cybercriminal might find a PR firm to be the perfect target. PR firms generally handle multiple clients, retain confidential client data, and regularly communicate with their clients. Furthermore, PR companies tend to access client-sensitive data, the agency’s financial data, employee information, and journalist contact details. Moreover, PR firms generally fall into the SMB market and have fewer resources to support a robust cybersecurity program. Additionally, many PR agencies have shifted to remote work, implemented Bring Your Own Device, hybrid cloud and on-premises infrastructure approach. This shift in how PR firms work has left them open to numerous vulnerabilities that cybercriminals look to exploit.

It’s important for your company to prepare for a cyberattack before it’s too late. Find below tips to help protect your small and medium-sized businesses from unwarranted cyberattacks and communication methods to mitigate the negative effects if your company faces a cyberattack or data breach.

Five tips to help protect your SMB from a cyberattack

Multi-Factor Authentication: Multi-factor authentication is one of—if not the—

most crucial cybersecurity defenses in existence. According to the U.S. National Cyber Security Chief, using MFA is one of the best ways to stop 80 percent to 90 percent of all cyberattacks. MFA is a security method that requires two or more authentication factors to verify a user’s identity.

Strong password policy: Using secure passwords is essential to prevent network intrusions. The more secure your passwords are, the harder it is for a hacker to invade your system.



Upgrade legacy systems and patching: Legacy systems are vulnerable to attacks, failures, and other unexpected operational interruptions, so why have they not been replaced? Organizations either fail to understand the risk or have not replaced legacy systems because of budget constraints, IT priorities, or the complexity of replacing an indispensable component of their enterprise. Consequently, these vulnerabilities cost businesses time and money and could result in complete system failure.

Reduce the active directory attack surface: Within Active Directory, a default set of privileged accounts and groups called “protected” accounts and groups are secured differently than other objects in the directory. Any account with direct or transitive membership in any protected group—regardless of whether the membership is derived from security or distribution groups—inherits this restricted security.

Regular pen test: The main reason penetration tests are crucial to an organization’s security is that they help personnel learn how to handle any break-in from a malicious entity. Pen tests examine whether an organization’s security policies are genuinely effective.

Communication methods to mitigate the negative effects of a cyberattack

Understand the difference between a cyberattack and a data breach. A cyber-

attack is an unauthorized attempt to access a computer network or a malicious attack against an organization’s network, like a distributed denial-of-service attack. A data breach is a security violation in which sensitive, protected, or confidential data is copied, transmitted, viewed, stolen, or used by an unauthorized individual. Data breaches are generally more damaging to an organization’s reputation and have stronger laws surrounding how an organization responds to a data breach.

Respond quickly and sincerely. A best practice is to have statements prepared well before a cyberattack. Generally, you should have a statement prepared for internal use and one for external use. Moreover, it would be best to have statements for the different types of breaches to ensure all your bases are covered. Lastly, don’t issue notifications without consulting external counsel specializing in cyberattacks/data breaches.

Maintain a line of communication with all parties affected. Once again, don’t act unless directed by your cyber counsel. Explain to your employees and customers how you are handling the cyber security incident. Clear and concise messaging is essential during this chaotic time. Explain that you’re working to repair vulnerabilities, secure the network and protect information. Lastly, you must explain that you are taking steps to ensure this does not occur again.

Lastly, offer help to your employees and clients. They’re victims like you and are unsure what to do next; they’ll seek guidance from the organization. Work with your organization and your cybersecurity counsel to determine what you are legally obligated to do and anything extra that you can extend to your employees and clients. Credit monitoring or identity protection is an excellent option for all parties affected by a cyber incident.

As the war on cyber continues to disrupt business operations, it’s important to identify ways your company can minimize risk and best prepare for potential cyberattacks. The United States has been forewarned to be aware of the digital war that is to come, and it’s in the best interests of companies to heed these warnings and put the steps in place to protect their businesses from potential costly breaches and attacks.

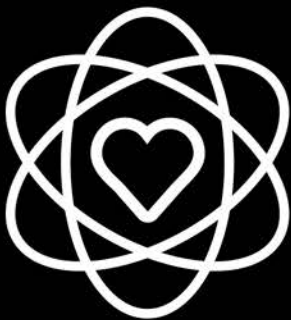
David Duncan is Cybersecurity Technical Director at Anchin / Redpoint. ○



David Duncan



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Technology firms registered 'hyper growth' in '21

PR firms representing the tech sector saw revenues jump last year as retainers and budgets grew among new and existing clients.

By Steve Barnes

CR Inc. was the big gainer among the top 10 tech PR firms in O'Dwyer's 2022 rankings, racking up a 209.1 percent increase that took their 2021 net fees to \$57 million, making it #2 on the list.

The top spot went to Edelman, which was up 12.2 percent to \$281.2 million. Hotwire (up 15.1 percent to \$48.2 million) took the #3 spot. Other big gainers included #4 Finn Partners (up 53.6 percent to \$46.2 million), #5 Zeno Group (up 44.7 percent to \$30.2 million), #7 Walker Sands (up 40.2 percent to \$28.5 million) and #9 The Hoffman Agency (up 33.4 percent to \$20.2 million).

Highwire PR's 21 percent jump to \$29.2 million brought it in at #6. PAN Communications, whose net fees held steady at \$19.9 million, was #10.

Ruder Finn, which did not break out its tech numbers last year, came in #8 with \$21.3 million, and APCO Worldwide, which also didn't list in the tech section in 2021, was #11 with \$16.1 million in net fees.

Tech, healthcare join forces at Highwire

In 2021, "Highwire saw tremendous growth across all our core sectors including enterprise technology, cybersecurity, commerce and especially in digital health," said Principal Carol Carrubba.



Carol Carrubba

"As the reality of the permanently hybrid world became apparent, both the complexities and the new opportunities necessitated strong communications strategies for all stakeholders," Carrubba said.

She noted that "capital markets were ripe again for public offerings," and that Highwire supported companies including GitLab, Qualtrics and Digital Ocean before, during and after IPOs.

Following Highwire's 2020 acquisition of Wonderscript, which accelerated the firm's ability to deliver full digital programs, its digital team expanded tremendously in 2021, and now leads strategic programs for more than half of Highwire clients.

Carrubba sees the growing connection between healthcare and technology as a prime mover for growth in the coming year. "We are energized by the unstoppable technology transformation in healthcare that is creating new models for care and ultimately

better outcomes for patients," she said.

She also anticipates "a heightened focus on cybersecurity driven by geo-political issues and fresh attention from the White House," as well as a shift toward "companies doubling down on data and new technology in the enterprise, from accelerating AI projects to staking a claim in the metaverse."

Strong organic growth at Walker Sands

New clients such as commercetools, Outseer (formerly RSA Fraud & Risk Intelligence) and SambaNova Systems contributed to a healthy jump of more than 40 percent (as well as a move from the #29 spot to #7 on O'Dwyer's tech list) for Walker Sands last year, according to Executive Vice President, Services Andrew Cross.

"We continue to see strong organic growth through new client wins, particularly in HR technology, logistics, cybersecurity, AI and healthcare," Cross said.

He noted that client budgets showed strength in the second half of 2021 and into 2022.

The agency acquired March Communications in 2021, giving it a presence in Boston and Atlanta.

Walker Sands also worked to deepen its capabilities in such areas as branding, marketing strategy, and multichannel creative production and execution.

"Looking ahead to the rest of 2022," Cross said, "I expect sectors like cybersecurity, energy and supply chain to continue growth in terms of mindshare and investment dollars."

"We were extremely pleased to see our business continue to grow over the past year as we added strong talent and experience to our teams across the globe and expanded our client roster of innovative tech brands."



Andrew Cross

Hotwire looks toward the future

Hotwire Global CEO Heather Kernahan said "a spike in demand for lead generation, account-based marketing, and sales activity" were key elements in the agency's move up the O'Dwyer's tech list from #9 to #3.

"Tech CMOs were under pressure to deliver immediate results today and continue building their brands for the future," Kernahan said. To respond to the shift, Hotwire acquired McDonald Butler and "added extensive account-based marketing and channel marketing experience."

The additions "gave us expanded capabilities designed to address tech CMOs challenges and help them build brand reputation, strengthen stakeholder relationships and ultimately deliver revenue growth."

Kernahan said Hotwire "saw more innovation and tech headquarters going into key European cities and an unprecedented level of VC investment." Because of that, the agency named Ute Hildebrandt as managing director of a newly created Continental European organization.

Hotwire also launched key programs to further the agency's goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Hotwire Ignite Possibility Program was started up last summer as a way to direct more of the firm's resources "towards people and organizations creating sustainable change in the world through technology innovation." The agency also committed \$1 million globally in services to tech and tech-enabled organizations led by or supporting people of color.

PAN rides the start-up wave

"A significant move from start-up (emerging growth) to mid and later-stage brands" characterized the tech sector in 2021, according to PAN Communications Chief Marketing Officer Mark Nardone.

"We definitely exceeded expectations for new business following the previous years' unsettling environment around the pandemic, and saw clients sign on with PAN specifically during their companies' critical growth stages," Nardone said.

PAN rose from #25 on last year's list to #10 this year, which Nardone said was "mainly due to how we reacted in order to better accommodate the shifting market."

New clients at the firm included IPOs Weave and Braze, along with Booz Allen



Heather Kernahan



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

Continued on page 60



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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN TECHNOLOGY

Firm	2021 Net Fees	Firm	2021 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$281,151,000	39. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	1,700,000
2. ICR, New York, NY	57,010,094	40. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,608,789
3. Hotwire, New York, NY	48,223,657	41. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	1,200,585
4. Finn Partners, New York, NY	46,150,000	42. Rally Point Public Relations, New York, NY	1,163,490
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	30,205,038	43. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	1,137,328
6. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	29,248,298	44. Firecracker PR, Brea, CA	1,113,000
7. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	28,486,242	45. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	1,107,848
8. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	21,270,000	46. 360PR+, Boston, MA	986,467
9. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	20,158,000	47. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	939,970
10. PAN Communications, Boston, MA	19,918,991	48. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	709,684
11. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	18,365,600	49. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	667,187
12. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	16,065,029	50. Berk Communications, New York, NY	630,000
13. Clarity, New York, NY	14,428,176	51. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	544,588
14. Wachsmann, New York, NY	13,958,572	52. Novitas Communications, Denver, CO	516,000
15. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	12,800,000	53. Virgo PR, New York, NY	500,000
16. MWW, New York, NY	12,439,795	54. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	405,844
17. Matter Communications, Boston, MA	11,706,000	55. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	369,200
18. Bospar, San Francisco, CA	11,310,344	56. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	359,456
19. Hunter, New York, NY	10,400,000	57. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	354,652
20. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER), Columbus, OH	9,752,848	58. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	314,639
21. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	8,619,763	59. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	312,948
22. SourceCode Communications, New York, NY	8,588,700	60. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	305,283
23. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	8,200,000	61. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	270,000
24. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	7,491,000	62. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	266,866
25. Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	6,432,200	63. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	261,673
26. Touchdown PR, Austin, TX	6,227,591	64. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	227,193
27. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	5,744,091	65. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	196,491
28. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	4,828,887	66. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	169,825
29. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	4,229,964	67. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	132,595
30. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms, Seattle, WA	4,197,973	68. WordWrite Comms LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	121,650
31. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,761,922	69. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	97,105
32. Crenshaw Communications, New York, NY	3,687,430	70. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	57,000
33. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	3,292,710	71. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	55,750
34. Lansons, New York, NY	2,684,847	72. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	37,409
35. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	2,600,000	73. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	27,000
36. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	2,450,000	74. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	16,573
37. Peppercomm, New York, NY	1,851,788		
38. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	\$1,794,392		



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Financial firms rebounded in 2021

O'Dwyer's interviewed executives at some of the top-ranked PR agencies representing the financial services sector to find out if the economic slump caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is over and what the future holds as a possible market correction looms on the horizon.

By Jon Gingerich

The top-10 firms specializing in financial PR and investor relations accounted for a total of \$291 million in net fees in 2021, according to *O'Dwyer's* 2022 ranking of financial PR firms, a \$25 million gain from 2020's \$267 million.

The numbers make it clear: the financial communications sector fared better than most others during PR's post-pandemic rebound. We asked executives at some of the top-ranked financial PR firms what they attribute to their success last year and what trends and changes they predict for the future, as rumors of a coming market correction loom on the horizon.

ICR climbs to new heights

New York-based investor relations firm ICR claimed the number-two spot in *O'Dwyer's* 2022 financial rankings, accounting for \$97.8 million in finance-related fees last year, a 61 percent leap from 2020's \$60 million.

ICR co-Founder and CEO Tom Ryan told *O'Dwyer's* that the agency's growth in 2021 was driven by new client retainer wins and the firm's ability to smartly advise on transactions, notably IPOs and SPACs.

"Having navigated through multiple business cycles over the past 25 years, both good and bad, we've developed the ability to adapt and pull multiple levers to create value and continue providing the best in client service through all points in the cycle," Ryan said.

Ryan noted that the agency didn't experience a COVID-related slowdown, as its revenues grew 20 percent in 2020. In fact, financial markets remained healthy and even experienced increased activity in many areas such as SPACs and IPOs. In addition, Ryan said uncertainty and overall market volatility increased the demand for expert financial communications support.

"Ultimately, the more complicated the landscape, the more public and private companies must work to communicate their story and ICR is uniquely positioned to support clients in that capacity," Ryan told *O'Dwyer's*.

Ryan said the long-term acceptance of the SPAC structure, continued demand by institutional investors for ESG progress, new and disruptive technologies raising capital from the public markets and an increasing-

ly complex and contentious communications environment for companies that will require expert advice and communications strategies are trends he predicts in the future.

"The expectation in 2022 was for the capital markets to cool down somewhat and the geopolitical climate has certainly accelerated that slowdown. But markets always pause and regroup and we've seen this happen many times over the last 25 years. As volatility subsides, corporate transactions will return and ICR will be a major beneficiary given our record backlog," Ryan said.

Prosek seizes on the 'market of marketing'

Prosek Partners had a strong year in 2021, and this was especially evident in its finance/IR earnings: Prosek climbed to \$70 million in finance-related fees in 2021 to claim the number-three spot, revealing 30 percent growth from \$53.9 million the year prior.

Founder and CEO Jennifer Prosek attributed several factors to her agency's success last year, including the SPAC boom, IPOs and IR as well as a busier-than-usual special situations business.

She also said private markets clients—PE, hedge funds and asset managers—are investing in communications, marketing, digital, ESG and prioritizing brand building and reputation management in ways they never have before. Prosek said her firm placed a big bet on the private markets becoming a major sector for the firm, which she referred to as the "Emerging Market of Marketing."

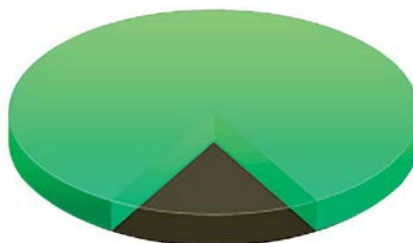
Prosek thinks private markets will continue to be a hot growth sector for financial firms this year, and with that will come new spending in communications, marketing, IR and digital.



Jennifer Prosek



Tom Ryan



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

"ESG will also continue to be a major focus for our financial clients this year, driving consulting and communications revenue," Prosek said. "Brand, creative and digital—as an integrated solution—will also grow as financial firms seek players who can combine deep financial knowledge/acumen with world-class creative services."

Vested benefits from value proposition

Financial services specialists Vested accounted for \$17.5 million in finance-related fees last year to hold the number-five spot in *O'Dwyer's* financial rankings, an impressive leap from 2020's \$12.4 million.

Co-Founder and President Binna Kim believes Vested's exponential growth is a reflection of the agency's powerful value proposition, which combines deep financial expertise, robust integrated marcomm capabilities and a non-traditional approach to agency growth.

"Financial services brands—more than ever—are striving to brand, market and communicate themselves in more engaging and authentic ways. This demands pragmatic creativity—the kind that can only come from an agency that deeply understands the business of finance but can also apply strategic creative thinking and execution," Kim told *O'Dwyer's*.

Looking forward, Kim believes finance brands are going to continue investing in highly intentional and values-driven marketing and communications. Finance brands are also looking for tech-empowered marcomm campaigns, which explains Qwoted's rapid growth.

"Across the board, we see brands investing in brand examination, and refining their brand propositions to reflect a post-COVID world where everyone is seeking more humanity in the brands they partner with," Kim said.



Binna Kim

Lambert looks to investor community

IR/PR firm Lambert climbed to \$7.4 million in finance-related fees last year from \$6.2 million in 2020 to claim the number-11 spot on *O'Dwyer's* financial rankings.

Founder and Chairman Jeff Lambert attributed the firm's success last year to its business-outcomes mindset for driving

— Continued on page 60



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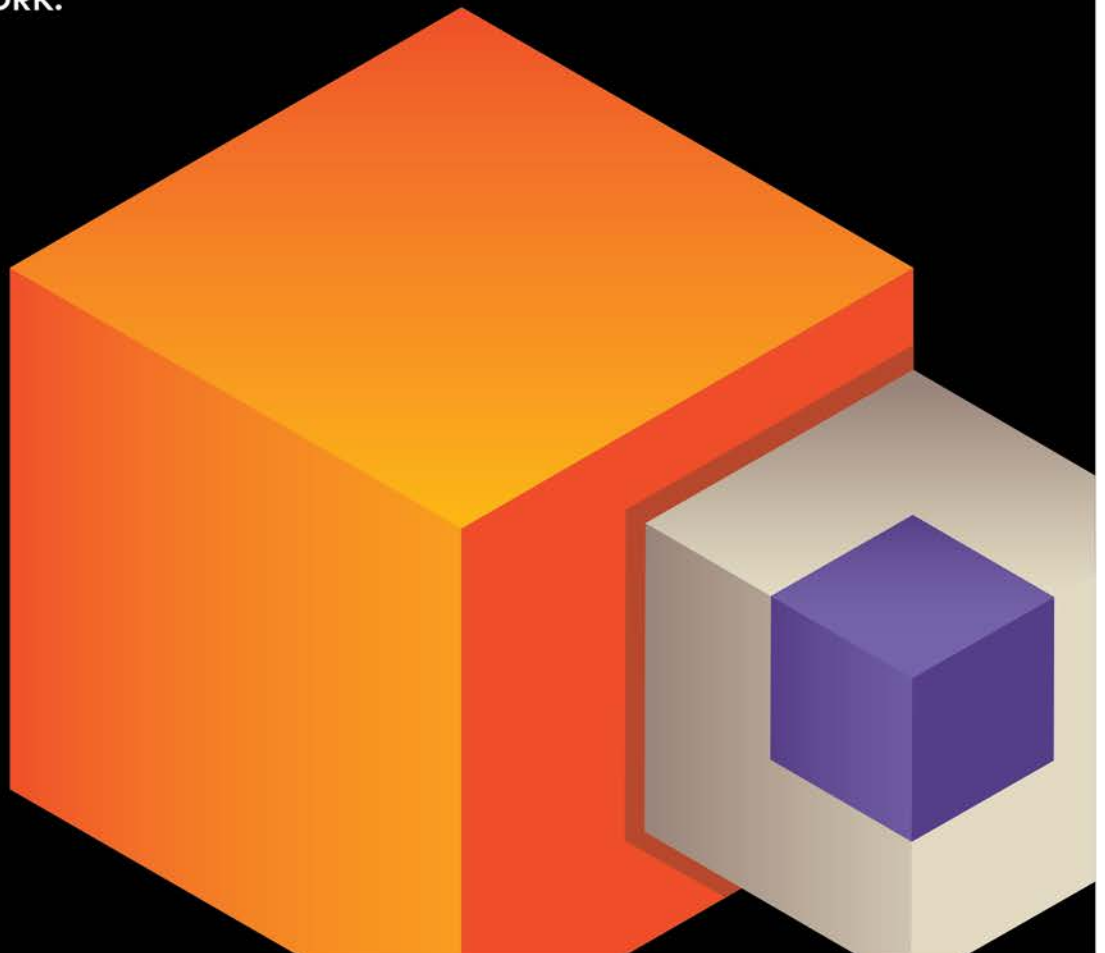
Firm	2021 Net Fees	Firm	2021 Net Fees
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$100,793,000	28. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	\$1,020,800
2. ICR , New York, NY	97,711,846	29. Montieth & Company , New York, NY	767,412
3. Prosek Partners , New York, NY	70,050,000	30. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	738,565
4. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	17,930,000	31. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	720,966
5. Vested , New York, NY	17,543,000	32. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	638,050
6. Taylor , New York, NY	12,257,000	33. Rally Point Public Relations , New York, NY	498,639
7. Finn Partners , New York, NY	11,750,000	34. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	431,987
8. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	8,800,000	35. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	400,000
9. Dukas Linden Public Relations , New York, NY	8,510,029	36. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	354,652
10. Stanton , New York, NY	8,492,565	37. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	316,000
11. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	7,434,000	38. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	260,207
12. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	7,014,478	39. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	190,764
13. MWW , New York, NY	6,397,217	40. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	174,728
14. Zeno Group , New York, NY	6,042,815	41. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	151,535
15. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	5,213,555	42. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	149,000
16. BackBay Communications , Boston, MA	4,472,387	43. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	142,400
17. Caliber Corporate Advisers , New York, NY	4,226,115	44. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	136,613
18. Hewes Communications , New York, NY	2,764,285	45. Berk Communications , New York, NY	135,000
19. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	2,409,414	46. Akrete , Evanston, IL	119,827
20. Lansons , New York, NY	2,282,151	47. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	82,270
21. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	2,236,800	48. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	70,930
22. Peppercomm , New York, NY	2,035,506	49. Novitas Communications , Denver, CO	64,500
23. Tier One Partners , Boston, MA	1,817,856	50. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	61,035
24. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	1,498,435	51. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	16,671
25. Lowe Group , Wauwatosa, WI	1,359,684	52. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	9,850
26. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,200,000	53. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	7,500
27. Buttonwood Comms. Group , New York, NY	1,109,019	54. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	1,201

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Healthcare PR firms enjoy 47% growth in '21

The firms ranked by *O'Dwyer's* for healthcare PR posted big gains last year as healthcare continues to become leading a practice for many agencies.

By Kevin McCauley

Healthcare PR enjoyed robust growth in 2021 as the 80 firms ranked by *O'Dwyer's* posted a 46.6 percent gain in total revenue to \$1.3 billion, counseling clients on how to deal with the global COVID-19 crisis.

Real Chemistry (\$475 million) Edelman (\$208.9 million) and Evoke Group (\$181M) took the top three slots in the rankings. Michael Kempner's Mike-WorldWide (+116.3 percent to \$7.5 million), Tom Ryan's ICR Inc. (+67.6 to \$38.5 million) and Scott Signore's Matter Communications (+51.6 percent to \$7.6 million) posted the biggest gains of the top 25 firms.

Healthcare now Edelman's top practice

Edelman Health in 2021 emerged as the largest practice at the firm for the first time in its 70-year history.

The unit posted a 23.8 percent jump in revenues to \$208.9 million.

Courtney Gray Haupt, U.S. Health Chair, said every region grew due to reprioritizing collaboration and building teams based on need, not geography.

There was a 14 percent jump in new business wins, which includes a 49 percent increase in organic wins compared to 2020.

The robust performance came as Edelman collaborated with clients to build trust across health communities, while combating misinformation about their businesses, products, science and research, according to Gray Haupt.

Edelman Health forged new partnerships to deliver inclusive programming to multicultural communities and helped clients further their ESG policies to support and strengthen human and planetary health.

The healthcare operation also protected and promoted corporate and brand reputations by meeting and exceeding the growing demands of

internal and external stakeholders.

Gray Haupt noted progress on Edelman Health's DEI commitments, including a 27 percent increase in female managers and a 10 percent jump in diverse leadership.

It also solidified and scaled healthcare specialty teams in strategic planning, digital, creative and data/analytics.

"It isn't just our approach to the work

that has changed, but also how we engage together," said Gray Haupt. "We have prioritized culture and continued to become more inclusive and specialized, guided more by expertise than geography in how we counsel our clients."

She said Edelman Health is more united than ever around a shared purpose: to help clients act boldly to earn and keep trust.

APCO empowers clients

APCO Worldwide, which showed a 12.4 percent revenue increase to \$36.7 million, "helped clients deal with complex public and policy discussions, empowering them to deliver on their missions to promote health and advance health care equity globally," said Evan Kraus, President of the Washington-based shop.

APCO's insight and health teams supported Pfizer's corporate affairs and global security staff to raise public awareness of the risk of counterfeit medicines.

The firm also helped Pfizer create a global, unified effort to emphasize the company's year-round dedication to patients, called Patients in Focus.

Kraus said the program included 60 global and local events hosted by 25 countries, with participation by more than 340 patients and advocates, 1.15+ million social media impressions and more than 38,000 participating Pfizer colleagues.

APCO also advised Roche in creating FutureProofing Healthcare, an interactive tool showcasing insights and data on health care systems across Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

On the people front, APCO appointed health and public affairs expert Mathew Shearman to lead APCO's North America health team.

JPA expands across biopharma sector

JPA Health, which has offices in Washington, Boston, New York and London, registered a 14 percent boost in revenues to \$16.9 million.

"Following a year like no other, we further expanded our work across the biopharma industry, winning major new accounts to drive awareness of new approaches to cancer treatment, educate on the need for innovation in the rare disease space, and introduce exciting new treatments to the market," said Carrie Jones, Principal.

JPA Health's medtech unit bloomed, picking up clients focused on robotic-assisted surgery, artificial intelligence in drug discovery and new technologies for patient engagement.

Jones said the firm dealt with some of society's most pressing issues, which included spotlighting the mental health crisis among healthcare workers and supporting COVID-19 vaccination confidence in medically underserved communities.

"The firm's life sciences and public health practices incorporated health equity principles from project planning to completion to create inclusive, culturally competent communications campaigns," said Jones.

Finn guides clients through fragmented ecosystem

Finn Partners pounded out a 28.6 percent rise in 2021 healthcare revenues to the \$44.2 million mark.

"Enabling clients to navigate the fragmented health ecosystem continues to be a winning recipe for success," said Gil Bashe, Chair of Global Health and Purpose.

The healthcare unit has more than 200 clients throughout the patient advocacy, product marketing, policy communications and payer and provider sectors.

It added new services in clinical trial recruitment, health IT marketing and digital health and omnichannel communications during the past year.

The Medika Life and Pharmacy Podcast Network acquisitions "have given Finn's clients an inside track to connect with other health thought leaders and the influential



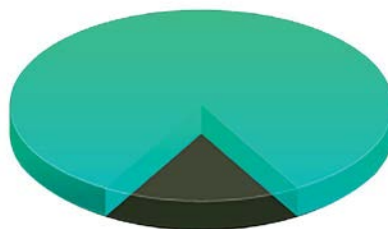
Carrie Jones



Evan Kraus



Courtney Gray Haupt



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

— Continued on page 34

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Healthcare roundup

— Continued from page 32

pharmacy community,” said Bashe.

Finn bolstered its healthcare unit with the appointment of Fern Lazar, Managing Partner, Global Health Practice lead. Bashe said his partnership with Lazar and the rest of the leadership team positions the health unit for robust growth during the current year.



Gil Bashe

The firm added Senior Partners Richard Hatzfeld, Global Public Health; Bob Martineau, Environment and Sustainability; Ritesh Patel, Global Digital Health; and Julian Tyndale-Biscoe and Beth Friedman through the acquisition of InHealth Communications and Agency Ten22.

Bashe called Finn the “the go-to agency in health information—the glue that enables physicians, patients, pharma companies and payers to align around care and product access urgencies.”

He also noted that Finn has strong connections to advocacy and professional groups. Its leaders advise the Galien Foundation, Let’s Win for Pancreatic Cancer, the Marfan Foundation, No More, Hip Hop Public Health, and the International Well Building Institute.

Matter benefits from emerging verticals

Matter Communications ranked among the fastest growing healthcare firms in the

top 25 group, driven by “a rapidly expanding client base and demand from emerging industry verticals,” according to Scott Signore, Principal and CEO.

He said the firm more than doubled client roster and staff numbers over the past calendar year.

“While last year we were laser-focused on helping our clients pivot strategies to fight the pandemic, we’re now guiding them through this intense period of demand and growth happening across the healthcare continuum,” he said.

As Matter and its clients emerge from the pandemic and face evolving economic and global events, Signore said: “We’re helping to share the important messages of innovators making real differences in healthcare, ranging from technology to therapeutics, mental health and more.”

In supporting new growth verticals, Signore reports “a notable uptick in demand for PR and marketing services from biopharma and life sciences organizations.”

Crosby handled pandemic ups and downs

Crosby, which chalked up \$28.5 million in healthcare revenues, “continued to be on the forefront of helping healthcare organizations navigate and communicate throughout the ups and downs of the pandemic, engaging all stakeholders from providers, payors, policymakers, patients and

the public,” according to CEO Raymond Crosby.

In 2021, the firm landed new assignments from Kaiser Permanente, Shriners Hospitals for Children, Refuah Health and expanded work for the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

“Our campaign to drive increased use of the new Telehealth.HHS.gov website exceeded the goal by 273 percent,” said Crosby. “And through our work on behalf of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, we helped launch more than 25 new, evidenced-based clinical preventive guidelines to improve the health of people nationwide.”

On the nonprofit front, Crosby’s PSA campaign for DAV (Disabled American Veterans) generated \$98 million in donated broadcast, print and out-of-home media, and strong national news coverage.

Crosby said “it’s an honor to help more of America’s veterans get the health and disability benefits they’ve earned and deserve.”

The firm enhanced its digital, UX and analytics capabilities, and invested in people and DEI initiatives to build its team.

“It’s still hard to know what the new normal is, but 2022 is already shaping up to be another strong year of growth and success for Crosby and our health practice,” said Crosby. ●



Raymond Crosby



Scott Signore

CNN+ shuttered weeks after debut

Owing to a lukewarm reception, CNN’s streaming platform CNN+ shut down less than a month after its launch.

By Jon Gingerich

Just three weeks after its rollout, CNN’s heavily publicized streaming platform CNN+ announced it was shutting down.

“While today’s decision is incredibly difficult, it is the right one for the long-term success of CNN,” incoming CNN President Chris Licht wrote in an April 21 memo.

The service ceased programming on April 30, about a month after its March 29 launch. CNN+ subscribers would “receive prorated refunds of subscription fees,” the company said in a statement.

The announcement comes after news began circulating that the streaming service was struggling to lure in subscribers. Two weeks after its debut, a report by competitor CNBC found that CNN+ was attracting fewer than 10,000 viewers a day.

More than a year in the making, CNN’s foray into the streaming game was heralded as a historic development for the network and one meant to usher the broadcaster into the digital age. It invested hundreds of millions into the platform and conducted a months-long marketing blitz touting the service, hired hundreds of new employees and tapped top talent to host programs, including “Fox News Sunday” anchor Chris Wallace, NBC’s Kasie Hunt and former NPR co-host Audie Cornish.

The service was intended to complement CNN’s TV broadcast, featuring live daily programming from CNN staples such as Kate Bolduan, Sara Sidner, Brian Stelter and Wolf Blitzer, along with access to CNN’s library of original content. CNN+ did not feature CNN’s regular live programming,

due to the current deals it has with cable distributors.

Announcing its launch last year, CNN chief digital officer Andrew Morse had referred to CNN+ as an “interactive community” intended to give subscribers the ability “to engage directly with our talent and experts about the issues that matter most to them.” Morse, who was in charge of the streaming platform, will now leave the company after a transition period, according to CNN.

The news also comes less than a month after CNN’s former parent company, WarnerMedia, officially merged with Discovery to form new parent company, Warner Bros. Discovery.

Perhaps another sign of oversaturation in an already-crowded streaming market, Netflix, the world’s largest streaming service, reported on April 20 that it lost subscribers for the first time in more than a decade, causing its stock to fall by 35 percent. ●



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RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN HEALTHCARE

Firm	2021 Net Fees	Firm	2021 Net Fees
1. Real Chemistry , San Francisco, CA	\$475,000,000	41. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	\$1,547,749
2. Edelman , New York, NY	208,904,000	42. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	1,287,730
3. Evoke , Philadelphia, PA	181,000,000	43. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	1,286,759
4. Spectrum , Washington, DC	48,850,000	44. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	1,123,440
5. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	45,040,000	45. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	1,092,910
6. Finn Partners , New York, NY	44,150,000	46. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	936,979
7. ICR , New York, NY	38,450,548	47. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	790,446
8. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	36,713,000	48. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	713,102
9. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	34,822,000	49. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	682,000
10. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	28,463,929	50. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	674,158
11. JPA Health , Washington, DC	16,900,782	51. Bellmont Partners , Minneapolis, MN	636,604
12. M Booth Health , New York, NY	16,290,421	52. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	610,345
13. Zeno Group , New York, NY	13,128,981	53. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	574,303
14. Canale Communications , San Diego, CA	12,402,707	54. Singer Associates PR, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	520,450
15. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	12,400,000	55. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	472,869
16. Sam Brown Inc. , Wayne, PA	9,741,816	56. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	386,000
17. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	8,452,864	57. Rosica Communications , Fair Lawn, NJ	370,228
18. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	8,406,415	58. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	369,283
19. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	7,586,000	59. Tier One Partners , Boston, MA	345,715
20. MWW , New York, NY	7,531,998	60. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	333,542
21. McCabe Message Partners , Washington, DC	7,143,239	61. Franco , Detroit, MI	304,583
22. LaVoie Health Science , Boston, MA	5,726,799	62. Lansons , New York, NY	281,541
23. Hunter , New York, NY	5,500,000	63. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	271,055
24. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	5,316,400	64. Standing Partnership , St. Louis, MO	186,394
25. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	5,200,000	65. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	167,680
26. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	4,459,562	66. Marketing Maven PR , Camarillo, CA	166,638
27. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	4,316,157	67. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	164,000
28. MCS Healthcare PR , Bedminster, NJ	3,585,681	68. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	154,000
29. Lovell Communications , Nashville, TN	3,490,674	69. Milk & Honey PR , New York, NY	144,760
30. BRG Communications , Alexandria, VA	3,376,473	70. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	140,267
31. MP&F Strategic Comms. , Nashville, TN	3,291,970	71. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	116,500
32. 720 Strategies , Washington, DC	3,261,027	72. WordWrite Communications LLC , Pittsburgh, PA	102,600
33. Gold PR & Social Media , Irvine, CA	3,197,630	73. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC , Annapolis, MD	84,530
34. Public Communications Inc. , Chicago, IL	2,488,590	74. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	39,000
35. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	2,365,432	75. Wordhampton PR, Inc. , East Hampton, NY	28,400
36. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	2,020,865	76. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	25,878
37. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms. , Seattle, WA	2,016,093	77. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	23,753
38. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	2,000,000	78. Peppercomm , New York, NY	16,225
39. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,732,000	79. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	10,250
40. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	1,592,643	80. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	6,000

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See you later, annual planning, nice knowing you

Why it's time to say goodbye to traditional planning models.

By Tina Charpentier

If there's anything we've learned from the last few years, it's that even the best-laid plans can become completely irrelevant in the blink of an eye. How many trips, conferences, campaigns and launches were delayed or canceled altogether as people waited out wave after wave of COVID? And who's lost track of how many times we set and subsequently had to bump our planned "return-to-office" dates?

As we move toward something that resembles life before COVID, we're starting to hear more clients declare, "Ok. Let's get back to our annual planning."

While we all can appreciate the enthusiasm of wanting a return to places and things familiar, the idea of trying to nail down where the world is headed and how you and your clients fit into it over the next 12 months—or the next six months, for that matter—seems like misspent energy.

Has the annual plan reached the end of its useful life?

Bobbing and weaving

Don't get me wrong: I'm a big fan of a good plan and all the smart thinking that goes into building one. There's never a wrong time to take a step back, survey the landscape and think about how to get from where you are now to where you want to be. Even better, envision the steps and milestones, how you're going to measure progress and plot it all against a timeline.

But in today's era of change that comes at us faster than the produce in a game of Fruit Ninja, is the tried-and-true annual plan the best approach?

As I think about the discipline of developing plans and where it's headed in the future, ironically, it's a decades-old quote that sums it up well. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was a five-star general for the Army during World War II, said, "In preparing for battle, I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."

The battle of COVID proved that so many of our plans did, in fact, become useless. At the same time, planning proved to be invaluable as we all chased constantly moving milestones, bobbing and weaving along the way.

From plans to planning

To be clear, I'm not specifically talking about "account planning" as an agency function or department—although the kind of work account planners do is invaluable to the process. Rather, I'm talking about planning as an action, or even a philosophy—a commitment to continually assess, adjust and move forward.

We've seen some of our most conservative clients shifting away from traditional planning cycles and toward approaches such as quarterly plans and rolling planning cycles. In fact, just recently one of our largest clients instructed its global communications team to resist producing an annual plan and focus instead on the first quarter, with a loose framework—without tactics—laid out for the remainder of the year.

Sure, most everyone is still beholden to the annual budgeting process, where communications departments are given a bud-

get and are expected to show leadership how they will spend it for the year.

We've worked to help clients shift the expectations of leadership toward a different planning model—one where we focus more energy on the near-term while demonstrating that the work and plans are nestled into a longer-term vision that is regularly reviewed and revised.

Even as we consider how we run our own agency's business, we've learned to be much lighter on our feet.

While we ask our sector and practice groups for their best forecasts around where we'll land for revenues and budgets for the year, we've taken the focus off of asking them to assemble 12 months-worth of staffing, marketing and business development plans. Instead, we've been taking more of a quarter-by-quarter approach—with weekly and monthly measurements and check-ins built into the process—making sure our hopes and dreams match the realities of whatever is happening at the moment.

As we all move toward a more agile way of working, it certainly hasn't come without some growing pains. But I think we can all agree that we've come through this in a better place, where we can all be less entrenched in what's supposed to happen, and more focused on finding ways to squeeze the most out of the now, while we navigate toward what's next.

Tina Charpentier is Executive Vice President, Client Experience, at Padilla. ○



Tina Charpentier

Midweek mornings best times to post on social media

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings are the best times to engage with people on social media platforms, according to a Sprout Social report.

By Jon Gingerich

Most marketers realize the day and time you post on social media influences the potential reach and interaction you have with audiences. However, few in the industry seem to agree on exactly when that optimal date/time is.

Findings by social media analytics company Sprout Social, which looked at engagement patterns across different social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter), discovered that the consistently best times to post on social media were Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays be-

tween 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. (ET).

When it comes to Facebook, which remains the largest social site and the platform used most by marketers, Tuesdays through Fridays are the best days to post. Given Facebook's global reach, very early mornings—around 4 a.m. (ET)—is the optimal time, as are Tuesdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. (ET).

On Instagram, the best days to post are Tuesdays and Wednesdays and the best time is mid-mornings (11 a.m.) to 1 p.m. (ET).

Tuesdays and Wednesdays yield the best

results for Twitter, especially before 10 a.m. ET.

Wednesdays and Thursdays are the best days for posting to LinkedIn, typically between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. (ET).

The Sprout report also found that the optimal times for posting to social media have changed in recent years, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Very early mornings have overtaken mid-morning as the best times to post to Facebook, according to the report, midday engagement during the weekdays has become denser on Instagram and Twitter's peak times for engagement have become far more concentrated during mid-mornings and middays throughout the week. ○



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2. Edelman, New York, NY	7,478,000
3. Peppercomm, New York, NY	3,007,438
4. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	2,703,400
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	2,441,120
6. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	2,071,046
7. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	1,623,005
8. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	1,087,229
9. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	721,665
10. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	645,047
11. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	500,400
12. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	355,706
13. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	297,939
14. Akrete, Evanston, IL	42,600
15. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	29,675
16. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	23,643
17. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	16,491

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
TRAVEL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$44,640,000
2. Finn Partners, New York, NY	20,650,000
3. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	15,000,000
4. J Public Relations, New York, NY	11,673,000
5. Turner, a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	10,126,609
6. MMGY NJF, New York, NY	8,993,878
7. Lou Hammond Group, New York, NY	8,558,240
8. Zeno Group, New York, NY	6,220,971
9. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	5,900,000
10. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	5,198,071
11. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	2,802,859
12. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	2,174,451
13. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	2,000,000
14. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,766,620
15. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	1,569,855
16. Lansons, New York, NY	1,059,438
17. Hemsworth Comms., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,004,800
18. Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	987,945
19. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	666,213
20. 360PR+, Boston, MA	436,603
21. Berk Communications, New York, NY	374,333
22. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	366,051
23. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	366,000
24. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	301,665
25. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	273,800

Travel & Economic Development cont.

26. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	252,654
27. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	\$213,420
28. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	200,000
29. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	133,660
30. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	125,096
31. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	118,375
32. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	100,473
33. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	75,237
34. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
35. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	66,962
36. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	66,479
37. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	37,800
38. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	35,000
39. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	31,500
40. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	13,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **ENTERTAINMENT**

1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$14,178,000
2. Finn Partners, New York, NY	8,500,000
3. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	5,990,050
4. MWW, New York, NY	3,858,185
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	3,674,580
6. Taylor, New York, NY	1,600,000
7. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	1,522,000
8. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	1,302,295
9. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	834,000
10. 360PR+, Boston, MA	786,194
11. Berk Communications, New York, NY	639,250
12. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	405,471
13. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	271,163
14. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	202,296
15. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	153,180
16. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	126,065
17. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	110,300
18. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	102,900
19. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	89,100
20. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
21. Peppercomm, New York, NY	58,315
22. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	53,705
23. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	46,274
24. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	43,934
25. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	28,406
26. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	21,500
27. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	20,250
28. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	17,274

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

1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$95,962,000
2. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	13,330,000
3. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	8,500,000
4. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	8,465,235
5. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	3,600,000
6. Turner , a Fahlgren Mortine company, New York, NY	3,270,796
7. Hunter , New York, NY	2,800,000
8. Zeno Group , New York, NY	2,531,898
9. Taylor , New York, NY	2,000,000
10. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	1,800,000
11. AMP3 Public Relations , New York, NY	1,606,553
12. Berk Communications , New York, NY	1,119,750
13. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	735,637
14. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	633,100
15. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	459,973
16. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	450,000
17. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	445,658
18. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	373,000
19. J Public Relations , New York, NY	335,000
20. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	273,212
21. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	259,945
22. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	242,328
23. Franco , Detroit, MI	204,800
24. Marketing Maven PR , Camarillo, CA	180,018
25. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	120,809
26. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	109,261
27. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	98,955
28. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	93,950
29. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	86,687
30. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	75,419
31. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
32. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	56,000
33. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	25,813
34. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	20,060
35. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	10,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
HOME FURNISHINGS

1. Zeno Group , New York, NY	\$10,127,590
2. Edelman , New York, NY	9,516,000
3. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	4,592,325
4. Hunter , New York, NY	3,900,000
5. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	3,460,020
6. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	2,886,881
7. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	2,300,000

Home Furnishings cont.

8. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	\$2,000,000
9. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	1,846,413
10. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	226,900
11. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	221,355
12. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	201,030
13. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	158,200
14. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	151,775
15. Marketing Maven PR , Camarillo, CA	117,055
16. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	88,625
17. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	23,643
18. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	5,000

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN
REAL ESTATE/FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	\$2,933,870
2. Singer Associates PR, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	1,944,803
3. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	1,573,617
4. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	1,543,671
5. Akrete , Evanston, IL	1,471,899
6. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	1,020,000
7. Hoyt Organization Inc., The , Torrance, CA	800,000
8. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	765,000
9. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	578,419
10. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	519,350
11. Lansons , New York, NY	491,900
12. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	437,750
13. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	388,348
14. Lavidge , Phoenix, AZ	360,000
15. Novitas Communications , Denver, CO	322,500
16. Franco , Detroit, MI	319,575
17. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	261,164
18. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	241,358
19. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	237,163
20. Zeno Group , New York, NY	146,757
21. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	124,962
22. J Public Relations , New York, NY	110,000
23. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	105,863
24. Inspire PR Group , Westerville, OH	81,002
25. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
26. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC , Annapolis, MD	65,746
27. Violet PR , Montclair, NJ	53,417
28. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	48,500
29. Wordhampton PR, Inc. , East Hampton, NY	33,754
30. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	31,000
31. Bianchi Public Relations , Troy, MI	15,211

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

1. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	\$4,009,211
2. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	2,495,614
3. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	887,958
4. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	699,997
5. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	550,937
6. Franco, Detroit, MI	535,140
7. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	516,996
8. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	450,000
9. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	369,008
10. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	345,000
11. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	289,059
12. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	263,547
13. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	246,366
14. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	228,811
15. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	213,641
16. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	208,341
17. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	206,000
18. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	168,829
19. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	166,480
20. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	128,000
21. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	127,750
22. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	100,000
23. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	100,000
24. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	93,774
25. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	83,719
26. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	82,400
27. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
28. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	67,371
29. Novitas Communications, Denver, CO	64,500
30. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	38,319
31. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	36,263
32. Wordhampton Public Relations, Inc., East Hampton, NY	24,958
33. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	15,226
34. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	12,716

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **ENERGY**

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$12,240,300
2. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	8,531,074
3. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	4,241,746
4. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	1,873,324
5. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	1,007,069
6. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	960,135
7. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	822,300
8. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	712,661
9. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	597,783
10. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	531,140
11. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	466,593
12. Franco, Detroit, MI	273,600
13. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	198,242
14. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	134,552
15. Novitas Communications, Denver, CO	129,000
16. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	112,122
17. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
18. Zeno Group, New York, NY	10,867

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN **EDUCATION**

1. Finn Partners, New York, NY	\$7,750,000
2. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	7,695,400
3. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	4,305,129
4. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	3,207,000
5. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	1,542,721
6. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	1,196,279
7. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	883,356
8. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	775,819
9. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	672,799
10. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	580,000
11. Zeno Group, New York, NY	578,899
12. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	498,000
13. 360PR+, Boston, MA	484,266
14. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	483,491
15. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	400,000
16. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	370,704
17. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	320,790
18. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	250,000
19. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	242,358
20. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	177,829
21. Franco, Detroit, MI	165,100
22. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	154,000
23. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	147,713
24. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	119,396
25. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	102,361
26. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	53,325
27. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	47,983
28. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	47,286
29. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	45,932
30. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	44,971
31. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	38,250
32. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	30,517
33. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	16,500
34. Peppercomm, New York, NY	13,500
35. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	2,975
36. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	1,000

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

1. Finn Partners, New York, NY	\$9,250,000
2. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	6,105,000
3. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	3,430,000
4. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	2,901,591
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	2,010,000
6. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,067,310
7. Taylor, New York, NY	1,000,000
8. Berk Communications, New York, NY	328,000
9. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	232,246
10. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	150,078
11. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	55,000
12. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	48,357
13. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	47,749
14. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	30,084
15. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	23,643
16. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	15,028

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

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$49,667,600
2. Edelman, New York, NY	15,861,000
3. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,250,000
4. Finn Partners, New York, NY	7,500,000
5. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	3,869,361
6. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	2,316,350
7. Perry Communications Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	2,123,518
8. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	1,700,000
9. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	1,558,651
10. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	1,414,567
11. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,401,134
12. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	967,107
13. Lansons, New York, NY	949,773
14. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	821,642
15. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	628,998
16. Zeno Group, New York, NY	550,000
17. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	409,542
18. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	387,300
19. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	265,206
20. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	246,890
21. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	150,000
22. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	148,194
23. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	146,260
24. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	136,000
25. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	94,127
26. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	71,500
27. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	57,453
28. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	48,000
29. 360PR+, Boston, MA	30,000
30. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	23,643

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

1. APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	\$11,668,500
2. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	5,010,000
3. Zeno Group, New York, NY	4,411,743
4. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	3,163,500
5. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	2,700,000
6. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	1,675,500
7. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	1,239,827
8. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	1,231,941
9. Franco, Detroit, MI	847,000
10. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	801,154
11. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	735,174
12. 360PR+, Boston, MA	593,675
13. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	440,000
14. Peppercomm, New York, NY	396,271
15. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	350,000
16. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	244,173
17. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	173,489
18. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	117,000
19. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	91,483
20. Inkhous, Waltham, MA	84,087
21. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN INDUSTRIAL

1. Zeno Group, New York, NY	10,972,206
2. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	3,831,224
3. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	2,010,000
4. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	2,000,000
5. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	935,000
6. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	886,278
7. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	504,311
8. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	488,178
9. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	468,513
10. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	370,524
11. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	308,823
12. Lansons, New York, NY	291,877
13. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	213,821
14. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	212,000
15. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	184,750
16. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	156,336
17. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	137,257
18. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	117,501
19. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	100,000
20. Novitas Communications, Denver, CO	64,500
21. Franco, Detroit, MI	51,775
22. Peppercomm, New York, NY	49,080
23. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	47,286
24. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	38,000
25. 360PR+, Boston, MA	17,000
26. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	15,351
27. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	15,000
28. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	14,300

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN SPORTS & LEISURE

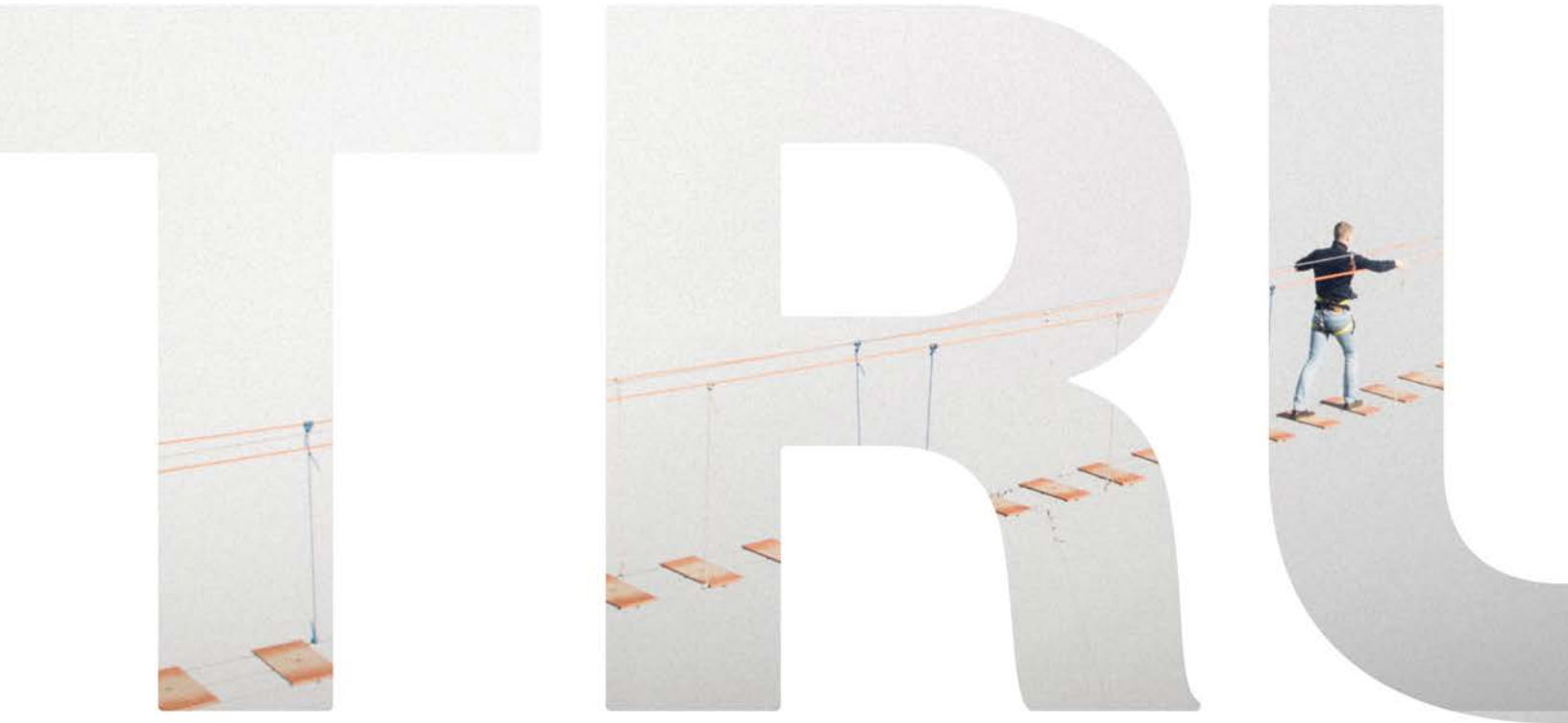
1. MWW, New York, NY	\$49,992,946
2. Taylor, New York, NY	9,000,000
3. Berk Communications, New York, NY	3,231,437
4. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,535,046
5. Edelman, New York, NY	938,000
6. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	639,753
7. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	472,800
8. 360PR+, Boston, MA	394,714
9. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	250,000
10. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	204,891
11. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	150,981
12. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	91,602
13. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
14. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	70,535
15. Zeno Group, New York, NY	50,000
16. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	41,228
17. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	27,822
18. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	18,603
19. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	14,250
20. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	13,317
21. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	9,000

RANKINGS OF FIRMS SPECIALIZING IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Firm	2021 Net Fees	Firm	2021 Net Fees
1. Edelman, New York, NY	\$79,437,000	29. Berk Communications, New York, NY	\$494,500
2. Ruder Finn Inc., New York, NY	11,490,000	30. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	483,500
3. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	10,000,000	31. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	450,590
4. Zeno Group, New York, NY	9,426,768	32. Lansons, New York, NY	440,353
5. Infinite Global, New York, NY	7,325,323	33. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	427,242
6. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	7,128,500	34. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	426,391
7. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	6,986,966	35. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	415,083
8. Bliss Group, The, New York, NY	6,738,677	36. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	362,955
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	5,700,000	37. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	354,652
10. Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	5,610,790	38. Belmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	304,163
11. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	3,145,292	39. MP&F Strategic Communications, Nashville, TN	286,469
12. Finn Partners, New York, NY	2,500,000	40. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	220,217
13. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	2,170,881	41. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	189,800
14. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc., New York, NY	2,000,000	42. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	133,500
15. G&S Business Communications, New York, NY	1,934,326	43. Franco, Detroit, MI	124,625
16. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,913,000	44. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	117,895
17. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	1,794,304	45. Gold PR & Social Media, Irvine, CA	105,625
18. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	1,172,817	46. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	94,019
19. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	1,169,728	47. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	85,650
20. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	1,130,831	48. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	77,980
21. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	969,556	49. Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	44,000
22. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	934,244	50. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	39,000
23. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	812,422	51. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	30,657
24. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	736,631	52. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	23,087
25. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	645,740	53. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	15,100
26. Peppercomm, New York, NY	557,093	54. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	8,000
27. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	526,795	55. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	4,696
28. Virgo PR, New York, NY	500,000	56. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	3,331

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

Firm	2021 Net Fees	Firm	2021 Net Fees
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$126,061,000	27. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	\$667,000
2. Hunter , New York, NY	19,700,000	28. Wordhampton PR, Inc. , East Hampton, NY	543,848
3. Zeno Group , New York, NY	16,113,700	29. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	500,000
4. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	14,319,438	30. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	334,800
5. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	12,012,600	31. Buchanan Public Relations , Bryn Mawr, PA	315,712
6. MWW , New York, NY	10,170,275	32. BizCom Associates , Plano, TX	255,050
7. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	7,520,000	33. O'Malley Hansen Communications , Chicago, IL	226,861
8. Taylor , New York, NY	7,200,000	34. L.C. Williams & Associates , Chicago, IL	213,800
9. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	6,591,676	35. Franco , Detroit, MI	131,500
10. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	6,300,000	36. Zapwater Communications, Inc. , Chicago, IL	130,953
11. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	5,000,000	37. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	120,469
12. Champion Management Group , Dallas, TX	4,077,189	38. Lawlor Media Group , New York, NY	109,250
13. Finn Partners , New York, NY	4,000,000	39. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	105,000
14. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	3,822,175	40. Ehrhardt Group, The , New Orleans, LA	91,550
15. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	3,167,286	41. Rasky Partners, Inc. , Boston, MA	83,706
16. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	2,866,000	42. Hemsworth Communications , Ft. Lauderdale, FL	75,788
17. SPM Communications , Dallas, TX	2,372,846	43. Otter PR , St. Petersburg, FL	70,930
18. Fish Consulting , Fort Lauderdale, FL	1,867,000	44. FrazierHeiby , Columbus, OH	65,525
19. Berk Communications , New York, NY	1,535,237	45. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	64,897
19. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	1,200,000	46. Novitas Communications , Denver, CO	64,500
21. Peppercomm , New York, NY	1,178,402	47. Brownstein Group , Philadelphia, PA	53,190
22. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	1,122,868	48. TruePoint Communications , Dallas, TX	50,562
23. IW Group, Inc. , West Hollywood, CA	1,080,567	49. Marketing Maven Public Relations , Camarillo, CA	38,804
24. Tunheim , Minneapolis, MN	924,581	50. Singer Associates PR, Inc. , San Francisco, CA	29,458
25. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	824,629	51. Beehive Strategic Communication , St. Paul, MN	15,000
26. Stuntman PR , New York, NY	807,161	52. Rosica Communications , Fair Lawn, NJ	3,750





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.

PR firms report robust 29.7% growth in '21

The top independent PR firms participating in *O'Dwyer's* annual rankings posted big gains last year as they rebounded from the COVID-19 pandemic.

By Kevin McCauley

Independent PR firms enjoyed robust growth in 2021 as fee income surged 29.7 percent to a combined \$3.9 billion as they rebounded from the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic year, according to the 2022 *O'Dwyer's* rankings. Employment jumped 28.1 percent to 20,372 people.

Fifty-nine of the 141 firms on the list registered growth of at least 20 percent in 2021, while only 17 shops posted declines. The top-ten firms reported a 35.0 percent gain in total fees to \$2.5 billion.

ICR Inc. set the pace as it posted an 83.4 percent rise in revenues to \$194.9 million. Finn Partners (+48.9 percent to \$162.2 million), Zeno Group (+39.9 percent to \$118.6 million) and Real Chemistry (+36.0 percent to \$475 million) ranked next.

No. 1 firm Edelman grew 17.2 percent to \$984.9 million as it closed in on becoming the first billion-dollar PR firm. Headcount jumped 16.8 percent to 6,004 people.

"We had our best growth since 2011," said CEO Richard Edelman.

Among the top 50 firms, Bospar (No. 47) chalked up the biggest increase in fees as it advanced 83.2 percent to \$12.4 million.

No. 43 Clarity (+59.7 percent to \$14.4 million) Gregory FCA (+51.0 percent to \$16.3 million) and No. 11 Spectrum (+48.5 percent to \$48.9 million) followed.

ICR moves to number-three slot

ICR Inc. chief Tom Ryan called 2021 an "incredible year" as his firm posted an 83.4 percent spurt in fee income to \$194.9 million.

That performance moved the financial PR-oriented shop up two notches in the rankings to the No. 3 slot.

While *O'Dwyer's* rankings focus on revenue, Ryan said he is more proud of ICR's growth, both professionally and in absolute numbers, and what that represents to clients.

ICR's "Category of One" platform enables professionals "to start, grow and/or finish their careers" at the firm, according to Ryan.

The firm added more than 180 staffers during the past year, which drove new opportunities across key service offerings including investor relations, PR, crises, transactions, ESG and digital.

ICR's IR and PR teams booked more than

250 assignments in the technology, health-care, real estate, energy/sustainability, mobility, consumer, healthy living, digital entertainment and fintech sectors.

Ryan said ICR's transaction team "demonstrated market leadership by acting as an advisor on more transactions than any other firm, including over 30 percent of all go-public transactions (IPOs, SPACs and Direct Listings) in North America."

Major client wins in 2021 included On Running, Dutch Bros, QuantumScape, Agilent, Solid Power, Orion Office REIT and Affirm.

Zeno shoots for higher purpose

Zeno Group scored a 39.9 percent surge in 2021 revenues to \$118.9 million as it captured 85 major new business wins and its Top Ten clients hiked spending about 40 percent.

"Never more so than over the last year, when global forces required businesses to think and act differently, Zeno fully demonstrated what's known to be true—companies that embody a higher purpose are stronger and more impactful, inside and out," said CEO Barby Siegel.

Beyond growing its revenues base, Zeno wants to be measured for making a positive impact on people's lives.

"The firm used pandemic 2021 to realize more deeply who Zeno is, why it exists and the firm's desired impact," said Siegel.

The goal is to "champion the courageous to achieve something better for humankind."

Zeno entered into an exclusive partnership with and made a strategic investment in EGAMI Group, the New York-based, pioneering multicultural communications agency.



Barby Siegel



Peter Finn

The collaboration gives EGAMI access to new capital resources and mentorship to scale its business while continuing to be an independent, minority-owned enterprise.

Siegel noted the collaboration would also work to attract, elevate and advance diverse talent, opening up career-building and leadership opportunities.

She said Zeno continues to double down on data and analytics to help clients unlock new areas of opportunity, achieve more effective decision-making, and drive action, internally and externally.

Finn Partners' diversification pays off

Finn Partners chalked up a 48.9 percent jump in revenues to \$162.2 million as its business soared beyond its pre-pandemic levels.

Peter Finn attributes his firm's robust performance to a variety of factors.

"When I founded Finn Partners, I intentionally built a diversified agency of practice areas representing a wide cross-section of business sectors," he said. "This set us up well to deal with the economic downturn of 2020 and fueled our explosive growth in 2021."

A surge of client wins and organic momentum powered the firm.

"Our independent, purpose-built model proved to be the go-to solution for clients seeking a trusted partner with strategic consulting services, specialized sector expertise, and a full suite of integrated marketing capabilities, at a fraction of the cost of the large consulting firms," said Finn.

He said existing clients expanded relationships with the firm, while new ones embraced its full-service offering, spanning research, strategy, creative and media services, plus data and analytics to augment traditional PR and communications support.

The number of clients spending more than \$1 million annually has grown from five in 2015 to 29 in 2021. Integrated work comprises 25 percent of revenues and is growing, with seven of Finn Partners' top 10 clients using its integrated services.

Finn said his firm acquired 10 new companies to strengthen existing practices, build market share, expand into new mar-



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



Tom Ryan

kets, and launch a new practice focused on internal communications & employee engagement.

Stanton overcomes challenges

Stanton, a New York-based firm primarily focused on B2B organizations, recorded a 12.2 percent jump in fee income to \$8.5 million as the firm supported clients in what Alex Stanton labeled a challenging but productive year.



Alex Stanton

“We were active in media relations across both private and public markets, in mergers and acquisitions, in funding and investment announcements, in executive change communications, digital/social media, content development and crisis management,” he said.

The firm added to its client list among technology businesses supporting the financial services sector, including companies in the insurtech, fintech, security and payments processing spaces.

Real Chemistry puts new team in place

Real Chemistry posted a 36 percent in revenues to \$475 million under the final year of a management team led by Founder/CEO Jim Weiss.

Shankar Narayanan, a veteran of Cognizant and McKinsey & Co., took over for Weiss on Jan. 3, 2022.

The San Francisco-based firm added Brian Gibbons as chief people officer, Michael Otner as chief legal counsel and Andy Johnson as Chief Information Officer early this year.



Shankar Narayanan

Those additions follow the 2021 appointments of Craig Abolt as chief financial officer and Mary Stutts as chief global inclusion and health equity officer.

Real Chemistry launched a new mentoring program early this year to underscore its focus on continued growth and development for its people.

“We are privileged to have some of the smartest minds in health technology, data analytics, commercial and clinical strategy, advertising, communications, medical education and activation—all of whom are helping to solve the greatest health challenges facing society,” said Narayanan in releasing Real Chemistry’s 2021 financial results.

Ruder Finn gauges ‘what’s next’

Ruder Finn CEO Kathy Bloomgarden said 2021 was a “breakout year” for her firm as revenues rose 27.8 percent to \$112.2



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

million.

She credits that robust growth to RF’s “What’s Next” digital approach, including new predictive analytics tools, expanded employee engagement and change management teams, heightened focus on video streaming and customer experience.

RF also has compiled a future-focused client portfolio of companies across health and wellness, technology and innovation, connected commerce and purpose-driven leadership categories, according to Bloomgarden.

In 2021, RF launched its “FutureThink Index,” a quarterly tracking study on the impact of three game-changing forces on future lives: career, healthcare, and technology.

Bloomgarden said the results draw key insights into the current state of the American dream, urban collapse, and the great resignation, and demonstrates how a new style of leadership can be a significant driver of both positive outlook and behaviors.

RF acquired UK-based technology firm Mantis in the fall of 2021 as part of its drive to fuel strong organic growth with transformative future-focused acquisitions.

Bospar moves up the rankings

Powered by an 83.2 percent surge in fee income, high-tech shop Bospar moved up 15 notches in the 2022 rankings to the No. 47 slot.

“The growth has allowed us to expand our teams into two sectors: one devoted to enterprise and developer technology; the other focused on consumer-facing tech,” said Curtis Sparrer, Principal at the firm.

Rather than operate as a typical virtual agency, Bospar’s teams are freed from geographics and are organized by skills and experience, giving clients the focus of a small PR firm with the footprint of a large agency.

It serves clients in Canada, China, Finland, India, Israel, Latvia, the Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and Vietnam.

Sparrer said his firm’s strong performance



Kathy Bloomgarden

in 2021 makes him confident for the future. “That sounds like hyperbole but consider this: Bospar was the first agency to take a stand for women’s reproductive freedom. We offered our Texas staff a relocation package. While Salesforce and Citi followed, we had the most to lose.

“What’s remarkable is that the tech and health tech industry continued to reward us with their business—and we returned the favor with fantastic results. I’m hoping our example encourages other agencies to speak out for women, minorities, and LGBTQIA rights.” The firm bolstered its media capabilities by hiring CNBC’s Eric Chemi as Senior VP in its new broadcast strategies department. “Chemi will share his experience as an on-air reporter for both CNBC and Bloomberg to provide critical behind-the-scenes counsel to clients wanting to elevate their message and on-air appearance for the nation’s top-tier broadcast outlets,” said Sparrer.

FWV rises above social unrest

French|West|Vaughan achieved 10.8 percent growth in 2021 to \$36.7 million as the firm successfully navigated through the aftermath of social unrest, as well as the ongoing challenges of a global pandemic.

CEO Rick French said FWV was deeply impacted by social unrest in Raleigh over the past 18 months. Its historic downtown Raleigh headquarters building was damaged during violent protests and vandalized a second time as November 2020 election results unfolded.

The firm made the decision to lean into the diversity and inclusion conversation, encouraging colleagues to post messages of hope, love and unity on its boarded-up windows, he added.

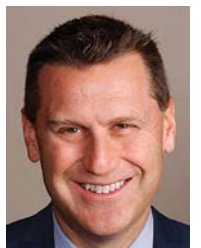
The shop spent 2021 enhancing its DE&I efforts to identify unconscious biases and promote an inclusive agency environment. It also worked diligently to help its roster of more than 175 clients pivot to new ways in which to conduct business.

In pivoting to what became a new normal in 2021, FWV conducted deskside media briefings via Zoom with longtime client Wrangler’s merchandise managers and designers.

For global energy giant ABB, it helped in-



Curtis Sparrer



Rick French

Continued on page 50

O'Dwyer's rankings

— Continued from page 49

introduce the world's fastest electric car charger via online press events.

The agency helped Volvo Trucks North America introduce its VNR Electric heavy-duty truck virtually and for music finance company Sound Royalties, it delivered opportunities at virtual events such as the Association of Independent Music Publishers webinar series, the Cutting-Edge Entertainment Law Seminar and the virtual version of SXSW 2021.

SourceCode retainers rise 25 percent

SourceCode registered a 66.2 percent surge in revenues to \$8.6 million, a performance that was due to 22 new clients at an average retainer that was 25 percent higher on a year-to-year basis.

Greg Mondschein, Managing Partner, said his firm launched WeRaise PR, a startup agency focused on bringing women back into the workforce through low overhead, flexible working arrangements and benefits that matter.



Greg Mondschein

During the fourth quarter, SourceCode acquired Strike 2, a digital marketing agency based in Chicago, to round out its service offering and provide more impactful creative strategy and digital programming to clients.

The firm bolstered its senior management with key HR, operations and account leadership hires and launched SourceCode Strong—an employee wellness initiative designed to support mental wellness.

In October, SourceCode unveiled its second TrendSights Report to explore the industry shift from a traditional focus on financial performance for key performance indicators to environmental, societal and governance issues.

Coyne comes off 'record-setting' year

Coyne PR chalked up 28.6 percent growth to \$36 million in what Tom Coyne termed a "record-setting year."

Since the pandemic, Coyne PR has not furloughed or laid off a single employee.

Instead, the shop's staff expanded by 23 percent to 176 people and led the industry with an average retention rate that exceeds 87 percent.

Coyne PR has made diversity a strategic imperative that is core to its business and culture.

"Through a multi-pronged effort, we've made industry-leading advancements such as improving the diversity of our workforce to over 25 percent—well above the industry

benchmark," said Coyne. "Our new hires over that same period were better than 45 percent diverse and we are using a recruiting method to target diverse passive candidates to make sure that our pipeline continues to be diverse."



Tom Coyne

Additionally, the firm's intern program, which feeds entry-level positions, continues to be at least 50 percent diverse.

Coyne said to ensure an inclusive and welcoming culture, "we completely reimaged our DE&I Committee to help set policy, establish training programs and create agency-wide events that celebrate individual differences and cultures."

Healthcare was a key driver of Coyne PR's business in 2021, as the segment saw a 36 percent increase in revenue.

The shop added clients such as Orange-theory Fitness, Firestone Building Products, Kobrand Wine & Spirits, Highlights for Children, Redken, FELD Entertainment and Benefiber.

It also saw significant growth from existing clients, including Hilton Hotels and Shell Oil.

Imre seeks to be 'champion of change'

Imre enjoyed 22.5 percent growth to \$45.1 million as it positioned itself as a "champion of change."

"We're creating new partnerships and revolutionizing our ways of working with each other and our clients to bring new ideas to the table, faster. 2021 was all about new ways to keep people and new thinking at the center of the action," said CEO Dave Imre.

Fifty-four new employees joined the agency in 2021, and Imre credits this increase to great client work along with increased flexibility in where that work gets done.

With its "Work From Anywhere" model in 30 FTEs in the US, the firm plans to pilot the "Imre Summer Jet Set" program whereby all employees can work from anywhere around the world.

Imre believes his firm's "unrelenting willingness to change" has bolstered talent in growing service areas, particularly omnichannel marketing, earned media, brand strategy, media planning, technology, data and analytics.

MWW enjoys stream of client wins

MWW posted a 16.8 percent jump in fee

income to \$45.4 million in 2021, which was a strong year for client wins.

It added Heineken, Spotify, Pinterest and Edelman Financial Engines to Marco's Pizza and Opendorse.

CEO Michael Kempner's shop refreshed operations and expanded its people-first culture with modern policies to support employees and attract new talent.

"MWW continues to demonstrate a positive and caring culture through its commitment to inclusivity and excellence by offering progressive benefits inspired and designed by listening to the needs of its employees," said Kempner.

The shop unveiled expanded mental health days and paid leave and rolled out an industry-first Pre-PTO for new employees and a "work where you work best" philosophy.

MWW also completed the integration of its strategic acquisition of London-based agency Chameleon, adding top tech talent, including Tom Buttle, who now serves as President of MWW London.

In the U.S., it added Executive VP and Technology Practice Leader Maria Brown from Matter Communications; veteran business, media and political advisor Shari Yost Gold; Chief Creative Officer Carl Sorvino from Golin; and Senior VPs Brittany Hershkowitz in sports and entertainment from BCW and Megan Hueter to the digital practice from Endeavor.

Kivvit attracts new talent

Kivvit, which ranks 15 on O'Dwyer's list, showed a 12.9 percent gain in revenues to \$39.8 million.

Zach Silber, Chief Strategy Officer, said growth was fueled by "a culture that provides our team a platform to do their best work and constantly grow professionally."

Kivvit is "singularly focused on attracting and retaining great professionals and added a dedicated talent team to build internal infrastructure, processes, and programming."

Heading into 2022, the shop made a series of transformative hires, including a cohort of four managing directors that represent the largest expansion of our senior leadership team in the firm's 20-year history."

In 2021, Kivvit shaped public opinion and created policy and legislative outcomes, including helping pass a law in New Jersey that expanded access to critically needed harm reduction services and achieving historic support for New York's Intellectual and Developmental Disability sector in the state budget.



Michael Kempner



Dave Imre

The firm also promoted a landmark study of QAnon by the Public Religion Research Institute that drove national coverage and sparked a feverish conversation that became the most engaging story on Reddit's/r/Politics front page, according to Silber.



Zach Silber

The report was also cited by Members of Congress and DC influencers as part of a national conversation on QAnon's rise.

McCabe Message Partners pivots

McCabe Message Partners registered an 11.5 percent jump in growth to \$11.5 million.

Since the DC-based shop is focused exclusively on health, it has for the past two years been helping clients communicate about the effects of COVID and measures to protect public health.

Patrick McCabe said the firm is currently pivoting to counsel clients about what must be done now, as the virus is largely controlled for vaccinated individuals.

He said: "Account leaders are therefore helping clients persuade people to resume life-saving preventive care. They're developing campaigns to recruit much-needed

healthcare workers. They're explaining the need for clinical trial volunteers to a public that learned a lot about drug and vaccine development over the past two years. And they're helping to rethink the nation's emergency response systems in ways that prioritize public health.

McCabe said the focus is on increasing health equity. "It involves a lot more than reducing racial disparities in access to medical treatments, although that remains a vexing challenge," he said.



Patrick McCabe

McCabe Message Partners is helping clients communicate about the myriad other issues that undermine equality in health—from access to fresh food, to safe housing, to reliable transportation.

The firm is working to identify new roles that the healthcare ecosystem can play to support healthy communities beyond providing medical interventions.

It is also consulting on what aging in America looks like after two years of hard-learned lessons from COVID-19. This work underscores the importance of providing safe care where people live, continuing models like telehealth that support care at

home, and rethinking what nursing homes might look like in the future, according to McCabe.

Bird flies coop at M Booth Health

M Booth Health charted a 12.9 percent advance in fee income to \$16.3 million in 2021, which marked the final year of Tim Bird's leadership at the New York firm.

Stacey Bernstein, who was Weber Shandwick's Boston general manager and Executive VP/Global Director of Digital Health, succeeded Bird in January 2022.

Bird took on the Chairman slot.

Next 15 Communications, owner of M Booth Health, acquired Health Unlimited's U.S. business, which was headed by Bird, in 2019,



Tim Bird

Following Bernstein's arrival, M Booth Health recruited Peter Matheson Gay as chief impact officer and Tayla Mahmud for the Executive VP-Health Equity and Multicultural Strategy post.

Matheson Gay was Chief Creative Officer at IPG DXTRA's Health Integrated Solutions. Mahmud joined M Booth Health from Havas Health & You, where she was Associate Managing Director. ○

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

Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2020
1. Edelman , New York, NY	\$984,921,000	6,004	17.2
2. Real Chemistry , San Francisco, CA	475,000,000	1,848	36
3. ICR , New York, NY	194,890,669	378	83.4
4. Evoke , Philadelphia, PA	181,000,000	850	9
5. APCO Worldwide , Washington, DC	172,398,000	926	20.6
6. Finn Partners , New York, NY	162,200,000	1,032	48.9
7. Zeno Group , New York, NY	118,643,933	709	39.9
8. Ruder Finn Inc. , New York, NY	112,200,000	860	27.8
9. Prosek Partners , New York, NY	80,050,000	299	29.2
10. 5W Public Relations , New York, NY	49,977,947	245	31.2
11. Spectrum , Washington, DC	48,850,000	181	48.5
12. Hotwire , New York, NY	48,223,657	293	15.5
13. MWW , New York, NY	45,390,416	198	16.8
14. imre, LLC , Baltimore, MD	45,052,000	239	22.5
15. Hunter , New York, NY	42,300,000	210	33.4
16. Kivvit , Chicago, IL	39,788,291	134	12.9
17. French West Vaughan , Raleigh, NC	36,727,448	123	10.8
18. Padilla , Minneapolis, MN	36,198,229	179	1
19. Coyne PR , Parsippany, NJ	36,000,000	169	28.6
20. Matter Communications , Boston, MA	30,116,000	254	33.6
21. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER) , Columbus, OH	30,039,544	178	20.2
22. Crosby , Annapolis, MD	29,421,739	107	1.1
23. Highwire PR , San Francisco, CA	29,248,298	116	21.1
24. Citizen Relations , Los Angeles, CA	29,123,190	185	24.4
25. Walker Sands , Chicago, IL	28,486,242	180	41.2
26. Havas Formula , New York, NY	26,718,617	152	17.8
27. PAN Communications , Boston, MA	26,683,000	168	14.2
28. G&S Business Communications , New York, NY	24,802,633	153	-1.2
29. Inkhouse , Waltham, MA	24,782,746	125	29.2
30. Jackson Spalding , Atlanta, GA	24,045,390	118	15
31. Taylor , New York, NY	22,057,000	92	12
32. Hoffman Agency, The , San Jose, CA	20,158,000	39	33.4
33. Regan Communications Group , Boston, MA	19,143,913	118	5.4
34. LaunchSquad , San Francisco, CA	18,328,796	114	13.1
35. Vested , New York, NY	17,543,000	98	41.4
36. Lansons Intermarket , New York, NY	17,408,394	95	21.8
37. Bliss Group, The , New York, NY	17,100,000	77	20.4
38. JPA Health , Washington, DC	16,900,782	80	14
39. Lambert , Grand Rapids, MI	16,671,000	86	22.1
40. M Booth Health , New York, NY	16,290,421	51	12.9
41. Gregory FCA , Ardmore, PA	16,287,822	118	51
42. Zimmerman Agency , Tallahassee, FL	16,200,000	44	5.2
43. Clarity , New York, NY	14,428,176	93	59.7
44. Marathon Strategies , New York, NY	14,005,144	48	3.7
45. Wachsman , New York, NY	13,958,572	102	N/A
46. rbb Communications , Miami, FL	13,948,231	82	6.5
47. Bospar , San Francisco, CA	12,403,254	82	83.2
48. Canale Communications , San Diego, CA	12,402,707	49	42.6
49. JeffreyGroup , Miami, FL	12,210,949	301	0
50. J Public Relations , New York, NY	12,118,000	79	32.9
51. Davies , Santa Barbara, CA	11,250,000	33	-4.3
52. MP&F Strategic Communications , Nashville, TN	11,047,862	70	11.2
53. Moore, Inc. , Tallahassee, FL	10,638,221	41	12.5
54. Racepoint Global , Boston, MA	10,406,000	56	-12.6
55. 360PR+ , Boston, MA	10,056,301	58	17.3
56. Sam Brown Inc. , Wayne, PA	9,741,816	53	21.8
57. Merritt Group , McLean, VA	9,410,209	44	24.8
58. Peppercomm , New York, NY	9,163,618	29	10.2
59. Greentarget Global LLC , Chicago, IL	9,124,225	48	11.5
60. MMGY NJE , New York, NY	8,993,878	46	9.6
61. SourceCode Communications , New York, NY	8,588,700	41	66.2
62. Lou Hammond Group , New York, NY	8,558,240	40	16.4
63. Dukas Linden Public Relations , New York, NY	8,510,029	30	33.4
64. Stanton , New York, NY	8,492,565	32	12.2
65. Berk Communications , New York, NY	8,487,507	28	48.7
66. Pierpont Communications , Houston, TX	7,385,651	31	8.6
67. Infinite Global , New York, NY	7,325,323	34	30.6
68. McCabe Message Partners , Washington, DC	7,143,239	28	11.5
69. Trevelino/Keller , Atlanta, GA	7,110,207	38	40.1
70. Lumina Communications , San Jose, CA	6,432,200	34	23.6
71. Touchdown PR , Austin, TX	6,227,591	12	11.2

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

Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2020
72. Raffetto Herman Strategic Communications, Seattle, WA	\$6,214,066	37	21.4
73. LaVoie Health Science, Boston, MA	5,726,799	18	18.3
74. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	5,244,718	28	40.8
75. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	5,041,502	23	45.2
76. 720 Strategies, Washington, DC	4,819,678	15	-8.8
77. Singer Associates Public Relations, Inc., San Francisco, CA	4,771,127	17	-16
78. Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	4,768,403	20	-19.2
79. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	4,689,324	33	27
80. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	4,674,060	34	-2.7
81. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,610,799	21	9.6
82. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	4,602,723	19	-11
83. BackBay Communications, Boston, MA	4,472,387	26	9.4
84. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	4,423,142	19	12.9
85. Caliber Corporate Advisors, New York, NY	4,226,115	23	34.8
86. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	3,975,640	10	33.2
87. CashmanKatz, Glastonbury, CT	3,885,000	25	16.8
88. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,761,922	25	5.3
89. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	3,700,000	12	44.6
90. Crenshaw Communications, New York, NY	3,687,430	18	20.5
91. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	3,626,301	20	40.9
92. MCS Healthcare Public Relations, Bedminster, NJ	3,585,681	18	-18.6
93. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	3,490,674	18	13.8
94. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	3,400,000	18	0
95. BRG Communications, Alexandria, VA	3,376,473	16	47.6
96. Gold PR & Social Media, Irvine, CA	3,303,255	7	11.7
97. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	3,292,710	24	9
98. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	3,281,000	17	21.4
99. Franco, Detroit, MI	3,272,855	28	16.1
100. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	3,259,567	13	38.3
101. Zapwater Communications, Inc., Chicago, IL	3,206,649	26	10.2
102. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	3,084,405	17	-10.4
103. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	3,051,725	18	8.7
104. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	3,036,654	17	19.7
105. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	3,002,200	11	34.4
106. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,988,001	25	33.6
107. Hewes Communications, New York, NY	2,764,285	7	2.2
108. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	2,700,885	21	51.8
109. Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	2,450,000	22	45.8
110. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	2,364,347	43	238.8
111. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	2,292,411	16	10.7
112. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	2,250,144	66	4.9
113. Perry Communications Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	2,123,518	9	21.1
114. Stanton Communications, Washington, DC	2,049,482	9	3.6
115. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc., New York, NY	2,000,000	7	0
116. O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	1,811,117	7	-6.4
117. Rally Point Public Relations, New York, NY	1,662,129	8	118.1
118. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,634,326	6	44.2
119. AMP3 Public Relations, New York, NY	1,606,553	8	11.4
120. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,601,000	8	-23.8
121. Firecracker PR, Brea, CA	1,484,000	7	39.6
122. Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	1,359,730	10	11.6
123. Lowe Group, Wauwatosa, WI	1,359,684	8	26.9
124. Novitas Communications, Denver, CO	1,290,000	6	146
125. WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	1,289,292	8	3.4
126. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	1,273,813	17	64.9
127. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	1,216,536	8	-23.3
128. Buttonwood Communications Group, New York, NY	1,109,019	8	-14.1
129. Hemsworth Communications, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,080,588	18	-5.9
130. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	1,062,000	8	9
131. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	1,040,139	5	46.3
132. Virgo PR, New York, NY	1,000,000	8	N/A
133. Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	987,945	12	-9.3
134. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	939,970	8	4.7
135. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	925,000	7	14.2
136. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	816,365	6	3.7
137. Stuntman PR, New York, NY	807,161	6	31
138. Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	709,684	3	22.5
139. Lawlor Media Group, New York, NY	694,957	7	9.7
140. Wordhampton Public Relations, Inc., East Hampton, NY	630,960	5	14.5
141. Press Record Communications, New York, NY	535,911	1	115.2
142. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	469,611	3	-5.1
143. Milk & Honey PR, New York, NY	420,000	4	2.4

Good PR starts at home

Why generating tasteful self-promotion is a great first step when starting out in the public relations industry.

By Curtis Sparrer

I recently took part in an interview and student Q&A session with USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism. The purpose of the talk was to share my experiences and offer some career guidance for those just starting out in PR.

The biggest takeaway that I wanted to leave is that "good PR starts at home." If one is serious about a career in communications, good PR starts with generating PR for yourself—and I think this was the most important concept I passed along to those students on that day. Tasteful self-promotion can integrate a number of elements that can be broadly applied to any number of areas in one's career. I'd like to share here some key concepts and approaches around being proactive and effective at personal PR.

Become an author

A good first step in doing one's own PR is to become an author. Whether you're writing blogs for the company or agency that employs you, placing op-eds or posting on platforms like LinkedIn or Medium, original writing gets you noticed. A well-written piece on almost any topic will illustrate your skills and expertise to clients and potential colleagues, demonstrating that you have the chops to get the job done. And it has the potential to get you media attention.

For example, I wrote a piece on crisis management and some years later ended up being interviewed as a crisis management expert by the *LA Times*. Creating this blog post was rewarded with long-term ROI, and my quote in that newspaper not only positioned me favorably with clients, but it also positioned me favorably within the PR industry. What's more, being a prolific writer means that you'll appear more often in search results. That favorable online visibility is nearly indefinite because your writing will remain on the Internet long after you've first published.

Be proactive

Another key element of good PR for yourself is being proactive. Often, I think about the notion of "always be pitching." That applies to looking for a job, and I pay the most attention to candidates who find a way to say, "Hey, I'd really like to work for you." They usually cite something like an interesting blog post or byline or other fabulous content from my company's website. This shows that they have been paying attention to me and my company's work.

After you're hired, it pays to remain pro-

active. My greatest confidence in an employee is when they are regularly alerting the senior team and me to potential issues at the start of the day. This could be something like a pending news story, a possible client relations issue or an internal problem, to which I need to be aware. Because that person is demonstrating presence and awareness, they're showing me that they have some "fire in the belly" and possess career ambition. Someone who's plugged in, has news alerts on their phone and remains proactive are the ones who have initiative and ultimately become star employees.

Talk your client's talk

Being proactive doesn't just apply to your own internal job; it also works very effectively as a client relations tool. In addition to working with PR and communications teams, one of the most important things in PR is being able to talk to your client's sales organization, as well as being able to talk effectively with the CEO and other executives. This means framing campaign ideas and tactics around having a sales-centric CTA or "call to action." Building a story or a narrative that draws people to a website and/or gets them to download a marketing or sales asset helps to drive sales. This speaks directly to ROI around communications programs—a key management concern—and demonstrates to your client that you have the client's best interests in mind.

Boost those online meeting skills

As a leader in remote work, my firm has deep experience in what it takes to be effective virtually. I've developed some techniques to make my online meetings more

interesting and engaging, and I like to think of doing so as another form of self-promotion and "personal PR."

Zoom fatigue is a real thing, and with online meetings, one can easily imagine that your audience is bored. Because we're working in a 2D and not a 3D world, there are many more opportunities for them to be distracted. After all, you're just a window on their screen—and as such, you need to be interesting, you need to be compelling and you need to discover that overdramatic kid inside of you—the one who will break through the online clutter.

Doing so requires a proactive effort to be memorable, engaging and perhaps sometimes even outrageous. Using techniques like a rotating host/presenter, quizzes or asking people to share anecdotes or personal interests are good starters. In one case my firm employed drag queens to host a bingo game for meeting participants! It was outrageous, it was fun and it worked. By getting people to engage, you're helping to ensure that you grab and keep their attention, establishing a better position from which to connect. This is another sort of self-PR that helps to get your message across—and clients and peers remember the online meetings I host!

One of the most compelling aspects of the PR profession is the idea that we're all constantly trying to improve ourselves. And the idea of "good PR starts at home" fits in with a larger strategy of savvy career development and becoming a better professional.

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



Curtis Sparrer

Digital ad spends soar 35%

U.S. digital advertising experienced record-breaking growth in 2021, according to an Interactive Advertising Bureau and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP study.

Overall, digital ad revenue in the U.S. climbed 35 percent year-over-year to account for more than \$189 billion in 2021, according to the report. That record-setting growth is nearly three times the modest 12 percent gains the industry saw in pandemic 2020 and accounts for the largest gains in digital ad spends in the U.S. in 16 years, when digital advertising grew \$17

billion in 2006.

Ad revenues were consistently strong throughout the year, according to the report, with much of this digital media windfall driven by gains made in digital video, which was up 51 percent, accounting for total revenues of \$40 billion. Other top-growing ad channels included digital audio—which includes podcasts, streamed music and radio—which grew 58 percent to \$4.9 billion, as well as social media (up 39 percent to \$57.7 billion), mobile (up 37 percent to \$135 billion) and search (up 33 percent to \$78.3 billion). ○

LEADING GAINERS AMONG PR FIRMS

Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Employees	% Change from 2020
Firms in the top 25 (representing fees from \$28.4M to \$984.9M)			
1. ICR, New York, NY	\$194,890,669	378	+83.4
2. Finn Partners, New York, NY	162,200,000	1,032	+48.9
3. Spectrum, Washington, DC	48,850,000	181	+48.5
4. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	28,486,242	180	+41.2
5. Zeno Group, New York, NY	118,643,933	709	+39.9
6. Real Chemistry, San Francisco, CA	475,000,000	1,848	+36
7. Matter Communications, Boston, MA	30,116,000	254	+33.6
8. Hunter, New York, NY	42,300,000	210	+33.4
9. 5W Public Relations, New York, NY	49,977,947	245	+31.2
10. Prosek Partners, New York, NY	80,050,000	299	+29.2
Firms ranked 26 through 50 (representing fees from \$12.1M to \$26.7M)			
1. Bospar, San Francisco, CA	\$12,403,254	82	+83.2
2. Clarity, New York, NY	14,428,176	93	+59.7
3. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	16,287,822	118	+51
4. Canale Communications, San Diego, CA	12,402,707	49	+42.6
5. Vested, New York, NY	17,543,000	98	+41.4
6. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	20,158,000	39	+33.4
7. J Public Relations, New York, NY	12,118,000	79	+32.9
8. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	24,782,746	125	+29.2
9. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	16,671,000	86	+22.1
10. Lansons, New York, NY	17,408,394	95	+21.8
Firms ranked 51 through 100 (representing fees from \$3.2M to \$11.3M)			
1. SourceCode Communications, New York, NY	\$8,588,700	41	+66.2
2. Berk Communications, New York, NY	8,487,507	28	+48.7
3. BRG Communications, Alexandria, VA	3,376,473	16	+47.6
4. Fish Consulting, Fort Lauderdale, FL	5,041,502	23	+45.2
5. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	3,700,000	12	+44.6
6. Tier One Partners, Boston, MA	3,626,301	20	+40.9
7. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	5,244,718	28	+40.8
8. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	7,110,207	38	+40.1
9. Montieth & Company, New York, NY	3,259,567	13	+38.3
10. Caliber Corporate Advisers, New York, NY	4,226,115	23	+34.8
Firms ranked 101 through 141 (representing fees from \$420K to \$3.2M)			
1. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	\$2,364,347	43	+238.8
2. Rally Point Public Relations, New York, NY	1,662,129	8	+118.1
3. Press Record Communications, New York, NY	535,911	1	+115.2
4. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	1,273,813	17	+64.9
5. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	2,700,885	21	+51.8
6. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	1,040,139	5	+46.3
7. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,634,326	6	+44.2
8. Firecracker PR, Brea, CA	1,484,000	7	+39.6
9. Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	3,002,200	11	+34.4
10. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,988,001	25	+33.6

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY.

Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Empl.	Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Empl.
ATLANTA			NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY		
1. Jackson Spalding	\$24,045,390	118	10. ICR, Baltimore, MD	\$6,862,314	16
2. Edelman	19,000,000	91	11. Marathon Strategies	5,128,515	18
3. Trevelino/Keller	7,110,207	38	12. Kivvit	4,979,097	23
4. ARPR	3,292,710	24	13. 720 Strategies	4,819,678	15
5. Finn Partners	1,396,000	3	14. MWW	3,405,714	13
CONNECTICUT			15. BRG Communications, Alexandria, VA	3,376,473	16
1. ICR, Norwalk, CT	\$40,331,866	72	16. Hodges Partnership, The, Richmond, VA	3,036,654	17
2. CashmanKatz, Glastonbury, CT	3,885,000	25	17. Stanton Communications	2,049,482	9
CHICAGO			18. Pugh & Tiller PR, LLC, Annapolis, MD	469,611	3
1. Edelman	\$95,943,000	559	19. Infinite Global	215,451	1
2. Walker Sands	28,486,242	180	NEW YORK & NEW JERSEY		
3. Finn Partners (includes Detroit)	14,897,000	88	1. Edelman (includes Rochester)	\$251,880,000	1,119
4. MWW	13,804,575	7	2. Prosek Partners	80,050,000	299
5. Kivvit	10,562,281	40	3. ICR	76,437,932	151
6. Greentarget Global LLC	9,124,225	48	4. Finn Partners	53,900,000	275
7. APCO Worldwide	7,305,000	24	5. 5W Public Relations	49,977,947	245
8. Highwire PR	4,833,979	14	6. Hunter	42,300,000	210
9. Public Communications Inc.	4,674,060	34	7. Coyne PR, Parsippany, NJ	36,000,000	169
10. L.C. Williams & Associates	4,610,799	21	8. Kivvit	23,317,139	64
11. G&S Business Communications	4,533,302	26	9. MWW	19,534,807	104
12. Zapwater Communications, Inc.	3,206,649	26	10. Vested	17,543,000	98
13. O'Malley Hansen Communications	1,811,117	7	11. Bliss Group, The	17,100,000	77
14. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,634,326	6	12. M Booth Health	16,290,421	51
15. Tier One Partners	1,109,736	10	13. APCO Worldwide	15,296,000	80
16. Inkhouse	372,279	3	14. Taylor	14,000,000	67
17. Infinite Global	215,451	1	15. J Public Relations	12,118,000	79
FLORIDA			16. Highwire PR	9,205,033	28
1. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	\$16,200,000	44	17. MMGY NJF	8,993,878	46
2. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	13,948,231	82	18. Marathon Strategies	8,878,629	26
3. JeffreyGroup, Miami, FL	13,886,967	301	19. SourceCode Communications	8,588,700	41
4. Moore, Inc., Tallahassee, FL	10,638,221	41	20. Lou Hammond Group	8,558,240	40
5. Fish Consulting, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	5,041,502	23	21. G&S Business Communications	8,514,745	41
6. Edelman, Orlando, FL	3,407,000	15	22. Dukas Linden Public Relations	8,510,029	30
7. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	3,400,000	18	23. Stanton	8,492,565	32
8. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	2,364,347	43	24. Berk Communications	8,487,507	28
9. Hemsworth Comms., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,080,588	18	25. Peppercomm	7,747,481	26
10. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	939,970	8	26. Wachsman	6,861,596	56
11. Kivvit, Miami, FL	740,683	5	27. Infinite Global	4,524,464	21
BOSTON			28. Caliber Corporate Advisers	4,226,115	23
1. PAN Communications	\$26,683,000	168	29. MWW, E. Rutherford, NJ	3,977,858	26
2. Matter Communications	25,321,000	186	30. Crenshaw Communications	3,687,430	18
3. Regan Communications Group	19,143,913	118	31. MCS Healthcare PR, Bedminster, NJ	3,585,681	18
4. Inkhouse, Waltham, MA	12,958,817	66	32. Montith & Company	3,259,567	13
5. Racepoint Global	10,406,000	56	33. Hewes Communications	2,764,285	7
6. 360PR+	7,884,644	46	34. 360PR+	2,171,656	12
7. Finn Partners	6,315,000	29	35. Clarity	2,130,281	9
8. LaVoie Health Science	5,726,799	18	36. Lumina Communications	2,122,626	13
9. Rasky Partners, Inc.	4,768,403	20	37. Ripp Media/Public Relations, Inc.	2,000,000	7
10. BackBay Communications	4,472,387	26	38. Rally Point Public Relations	1,662,129	8
11. Highwire PR	4,434,044	14	39. AMP3 Public Relations	1,606,553	8
12. Tier One Partners	2,516,565	10	40. Buttonwood Communications Group	1,109,019	8
13. Infinite Global	215,451	1	41. Rosica Communications, Fair Lawn, NJ	1,062,000	8
14. Kivvit	189,091	2	42. Violet PR, Montclair, NJ	1,040,139	5
WASHINGTON, D.C.			43. Virgo PR	1,000,000	8
1. Edelman	\$85,672,000	352	44. Inkhouse	885,280	15
2. Spectrum	48,850,000	181	45. Stuntman PR	807,161	6
3. APCO Worldwide	47,039,000	197	46. Feintuch Communications	709,684	3
4. imre, LLC, Baltimore, MD	45,052,000	239	47. Lawlor Media Group	694,957	7
5. Crosby, Annapolis, MD	29,421,739	107	48. Wordhampton PR, Inc., East Hampton, NY	630,960	5
6. JPA Health	16,900,782	80	49. Press Record Communications	535,911	1
7. Finn Partners	10,526,000	51	50. Milk & Honey PR	420,000	4
8. Merritt Group, McLean, VA	9,410,209	44	PENNSYLVANIA		
9. McCabe Message Partners	\$7,143,239	28	1. Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	\$16,287,822	118
			2. Sam Brown Inc., Wayne, PA	9,741,816	53
			3. Brownstein Group, Philadelphia, PA	3,084,405	17
			4. WordWrite Comms. LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	1,289,292	8
			5. Buchanan Public Relations, Bryn Mawr, PA	1,216,536	8

RANKINGS OF PR FIRMS BY CITY/GEOGRAPHY

Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Empl.	Firm	2021 Net Fees	FT Empl.
MIDWEST CITIES					
1. Edelman, Chicago, IL	\$95,943,000	559	4. Finn Partners	\$3,714,000	42
2. Fahlgren Mortine (includes TURNER), Columbus, OH	30,039,544	178	5. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	3,700,000	12
3. Walker Sands, Chicago, IL	28,486,242	180	6. Gold PR & Social Media, Irvine, CA	3,303,255	7
4. Lambert, Grand Rapids, MI	16,671,000	86	7. Firecracker, Brea, CA	1,484,000	7
5. Finn Partners (includes Detroit), Chicago, IL	14,897,000	88	8. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	1,359,730	10
6. MWW, Chicago, IL	13,804,575	7	9. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	925,000	7
7. Kivvit, Chicago, IL	10,562,281	40	10. Clarity	755,191	3
8. APCO Worldwide, Chicago, IL	7,305,000	24	11. MWW	751,532	18
9. Highwire PR, Chicago, IL	4,833,979	14	12. Taylor	500,000	5
10. Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	4,674,060	34	SAN FRANCISCO & NORTH CALIFORNIA		
11. L.C. Williams & Associates, Chicago, IL	4,610,799	21	1. Edelman (includes Silicon Valley)	\$44,702,000	184
12. Tunheim, Minneapolis, MN	4,602,723	19	2. Highwire PR	29,248,298	116
13. Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	4,533,302	26	3. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	20,158,000	39
14. G&S Business Comms., Chicago, IL	4,533,302	26	4. LaunchSquad	18,328,796	114
15. Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	4,423,142	19	5. Bospar	12,403,254	82
16. Inspire PR Group, Westerville, OH	3,281,000	17	6. Inkhouse	9,435,137	41
17. Franco, Detroit, MI	3,272,855	28	7. Finn Partners	6,381,000	18
18. Zapwater Comms., Inc., Chicago, IL	3,206,649	26	8. Singer Associates Public Relations, Inc.	4,771,127	17
19. Beehive Strategic Comm., St. Paul, MN	3,002,200	11	9. Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	4,309,574	21
20. FrazierHeiby, Columbus, OH	2,700,885	21	10. Edelman, Sacramento, CA	4,175,000	16
21. Bellmont Partners, Minneapolis, MN	2,292,411	16	11. Clarity	3,244,239	14
22. O'Malley Hansen Comms., Chicago, IL	1,811,117	7	12. Infinite Global	2,154,507	10
23. Akrete, Evanston, IL	1,634,326	6	13. Perry Comms. Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	2,123,518	9
24. Lowe Group, Wauwatosa, WI	1,359,684	8	14. Landis Communications	1,601,000	8
25. Bianchi Public Relations, Troy, MI	816,365	6	15. Peppercomm	1,416,137	3
26. Inkhouse, Chicago, IL	372,279	3	WESTERN CITIES		
27. Infinite Global, Chicago, IL	215,451	11	1. APCO Worldwide, Seattle, WA	85,010,000	364
TEXAS			(includes employee presence from CA to CO)		
1. Edelman (includes Dallas & Houston), Austin, TX	\$23,187,000	118	2. Edelman (includes Silicon Valley), San Francisco, CA	44,702,000	184
2. Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	7,385,651	31	3. Edelman (includes Beverly Hills), Los Angeles, CA	40,790,000	201
3. Touchdown PR, Austin, TX	6,227,591	12	4. Edelman, Seattle, WA	35,622,000	182
4. TruePoint Communications, Dallas, TX	5,244,718	28	5. Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	20,158,000	39
5. Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	4,689,324	33	6. LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	18,328,796	114
6. Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	3,761,922	25	7. Bospar, San Francisco, CA	12,403,254	82
7. SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	2,988,001	25	8. Canale Communications, San Diego, CA	12,402,707	49
8. BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	1,273,813	17	9. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,250,000	33
9. Inkhouse, Houston, TX	1,131,233	2	10. Inkhouse, San Francisco, CA	9,435,137	41
SOUTHEAST			11. Edelman, Portland, OR	8,785,000	45
1. French West Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	\$36,727,448	123	12. Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	7,334,439	44
2. Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	24,045,390	118	13. Finn Partners, San Francisco, CA	6,381,000	18
3. Finn Partners (includes Florida), Nashville, TN	20,195,000	132	14. Raffetto Herman Strategic Comms., Seattle, WA	6,214,066	37
4. Edelman, Atlanta, GA	19,000,000	91	15. Singer Associates PR, Inc., San Francisco, CA	4,771,127	17
5. Zimmerman Agency, Tallahassee, FL	16,200,000	44	16. Finn Partners, Portland, OR	4,342,000	20
6. rbb Communications, Miami, FL	13,948,231	82	17. Lumina Communications, San Jose, CA	4,309,574	21
7. JeffreyGroup, Miami, FL	12,210,949	301	18. Edelman, Sacramento, CA	4,175,000	16
8. G&S Business Comms., Raleigh, NC	11,754,586	86	19. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	3,975,640	10
9. MP&F Strategic Comms., Nashville, TN	11,047,862	70	20. Finn Partners, Los Angeles, CA	3,714,000	42
10. APCO Worldwide, Raleigh, NC	10,025,000	38	21. BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	3,700,000	12
11. Taylor, Charlotte, NC	7,557,000	20	22. Gold PR & Social Media, Irvine, CA	3,303,255	7
12. Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	7,110,207	38	23. Clarity, San Francisco, CA	3,244,239	14
13. Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	3,490,674	18	24. Finn Partners, Seattle, WA	2,332,500	6
14. Edelman, Orlando, FL	3,407,000	15	25. Lavidge, Phoenix, AZ	2,250,144	66
15. BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	3,400,000	18	26. Infinite Global, San Francisco, CA	2,154,507	10
16. ARPR, Atlanta, GA	3,292,710	24	27. Perry Comms. Group, Inc., Sacramento, CA	2,123,518	9
17. Ehrhardt Group, The, New Orleans, LA	3,051,725	18	28. Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,601,000	8
18. Otter PR, St. Petersburg, FL	2,364,347	43	29. Firecracker PR, Brea, CA	1,484,000	7
19. Finn Partners, Atlanta, GA	1,396,000	3	30. Peppercomm, San Francisco, CA	1,416,137	3
20. Hemsworth Comms., Ft. Lauderdale, FL	1,080,588	18	31. Marketing Maven PR, Camarillo, CA	1,359,730	10
21. Pineapple Public Relations, Chamblee, GA	987,945	12	32. Hoyt Organization Inc., The, Torrance, CA	925,000	7
22. CommCentric Solutions, Inc., Tampa, FL	939,970	8	33. Finn Partners, Denver, CO	894,500	12
23. Kivvit, Miami, FL	740,683	5	34. MWW, Denver, CO	854,745	4
LOS ANGELES			35. Clarity, Los Angeles, CA	755,191	3
1. Edelman (includes Beverly Hills)	40,790,000	201	36. MWW, Los Angeles, CA	751,532	18
2. Davies, Santa Barbara, CA	11,250,000	33	37. Taylor, Los Angeles, CA	500,000	5
3. IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	3,975,640	10			

Implications of PR training and working from home

The long-term challenges of training public relations executives in a work-from-home environment.

By Henry Feintuch

I can guarantee one topic that's come up at your senior staff meeting, your family dinner table and that recent social event you attended. It's "working from home" and what part it will play in our lives over the next five-to-10 years.

Our own team has now moved back to the office, but with increased flexibility compared to pre-COVID-19 days. There's more than enough evidence to suggest that some aspect of WFH is here to stay. For example, here are some stats from Ivanti's 2022 Everywhere Workplace Survey:

- 71 percent of employees would choose to work from anywhere over being promoted.
- 64 percent of employees would even take a pay cut to be able to work from anywhere.
- Only 13 percent of employees would like to permanently return to the office full-time
- 42 percent would prefer a hybrid model.

The top benefits of remote work were cited as: time savings due to less commuting (48 percent), better work/life balance (43 percent), flexible work schedule (43 percent) and saving money (40 percent).

That works out to 87 percent of respondents saying, very clearly, that they don't want to work in an office full-time. Some agencies have responded with 3/2 hybrid schedules. Some are on eight-day-a-month schedules. Others have ditched offices altogether and have no plans to return to a physical office any time soon. As much as it might pain some of us, we have to accept this new reality, rework our team structures to keep A-list employees on the A list and keep doing quality work for our clients.

How does that translate into our industry's training agenda? There are account executives working today who graduated from college in 2020 and have never set foot in an office. Do those employees have the same skill set as their predecessors? Can they field questions from journalists, present themselves well at a new business pitch and figure out what to do when Cision doesn't have the correct email address? Long-distance training is a whole new ball game.

The Great Resignation contributes to this problem by forcing agencies to promote people in order to retain them in a difficult labor market. This results in a nightmare loop scenario that's difficult to get out of once it begins: those who might not oth-

erwise have gotten a bump get one. Maybe they aren't quite up to snuff in terms of managing people; maybe their client interaction isn't where you'd like it to be. Now your "promoted-too-soon" account director is in charge of the professional development of a newly-promoted account coordinator and neither of them are particularly skilled writers. You've built a reputation on serving clients in a particular way and now your ability to do that is in jeopardy.



So, how do we cope? Our industry has risen to the occasion remarkably well, by all accounts. We've amped up our IT. We made sure our servers are secure. We dithered over what kind of video call software to use. Zoom? Teams? Google Meet? We've sorted through all the fundamentals of distributed work. Now it's time for agency leaders to put a real focus on professional development. It's always been key to a successful—and profitable—team, and now, it's more important than it's ever been. It just needs a bit of an update. Here are a few ways to re-introduce professional development into the hybrid workday:

- Take an hour each week and leave Zoom on—I know—while the team works together on a task. It could be writing or refining a pitch or putting together a press release. The more seasoned members of the team can explain what's worked for them, and why.
- Take a walk "together" while having a check-in conversation. This will relax junior staffers and they'll be more likely to open up and talk about issues and ways to resolve them.
- Make the most of asynchronous feedback. After all, students have preferred it for quite some time. While a lot of conversations happen in real-time, they don't have to. Giving team members time to think will

almost always result in more thoughtful contributions. For example, take a recent press release or pitch letter and ask junior staffers to approach it from a different angle. Give them a deadline of 24 or 48 hours and then discuss the results on camera.

- Make sure that team members don't feel overwhelmed by the combination of WFH and the sheer number of meetings each day. Remind everyone to take the time they need to do their jobs and stay sane. Encourage staffers to use all of your messaging app's available features. Use the meeting icons; add info to names to indicate lunch, a walk, an appointment and the need to focus on a project. Tailor at-home days the same way that office days were tailored.

- Gamify! Learning management systems like Moodle can turn chores into, well, something a little more entertaining than chores. Pricing varies but some are quite doable, even for small shops.

Working from home also comes with its own set of parameters. Revisit the apps that you use to ensure that they're still working for your teams and use those apps to their full capabilities.

- Most messaging apps have a stand-up meeting feature. You can set one of these for the entire agency once a week, for teams each day, etc. The time input is minimal and it's a great way to keep people focused and informed.

- No-Zoom Fridays. Have one day each week with a guarantee of no on-camera meetings. Use a creative stand-in instead; have a contest for the most creative/funniest image or background.

- Add a #watercooler channel to your messaging app. It will encourage creativity and interaction. If you see that things seem unusually quiet, toss up an oddball question. Is a hot dog a sandwich? Will the DH make a difference in this year's baseball season? Add other channels that mimic office life; #whatIdidthisweekend, #realityTV, etc.

It's easy to let staff training fall between the cracks. We tend to amp up marketing efforts in advance of a new business push. COVID and its aftermath mean we have to keep professional development top of mind so that we can continue to serve our clients consistently and well.

Henry Feintuch is President of Feintuch Communications. ○



Henry Feintuch

We'd like to thank the Academy.

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Technology roundup

— Continued from page 24

Hamilton, Toshiba, Amwell, BitDefender, Quickbase, Algolia and Collibra.

In 2021, PAN launched its strategic consulting group, which looks “looks at strategic storytelling through the lens of messaging/positioning.” The agency also expanded its media department, which helps media-train executives, brainstorm creative stories or angles, and lean into trending topics, among other functions.



Mark Nardone

Over the coming year, Nardone says he sees “significant growth and investment in Cybersecurity, Web 3.0, Commerce, and future of work (HR tech) and DEI initiatives.”

Hoffman hits hyper-growth

“We feel good about our 2021 performance, one that showed us shifting into hyper-growth mode—defined as increasing revenue over 30 percent,” said The Hoffman Group CEO Lou Hoffman.

“The top tech shops found demand for their services outstripping supply in 2021,” said Hoffman. “The previous year found buyers with a mindset that simply maintaining the status quo or even retrenching was a win. By the time 2021 rolled out, these same buyers had decided it was time to get

on with it and invest in communications.”

Another factor in 2021’s growth spurt: “employee communications and a renewed emphasis on corporate communications with an eye on demonstrating purpose”



Lou Hoffman

Hoffman also cited the “outsized impact” that startups had on the tech PR market, with new companies “hiring seasoned PR pros much earlier in the process—often after raising Series A funding—and allocating larger budgets for sophisticated programing.”

Since the U.S. remains “ground zero for the tech industry,” Hoffman said that the leadership position for his firm’s U.S. team is critical to its global strategy. “You can see how this played out in 2021 with revenue in APAC and Europe derived from programs that started in the U.S. coming in at \$1.93 million, roughly 10 percent of global revenue. This number will grow significantly in 2022.”

Finally, he stressed the importance of the “employee experience” at his firm, which includes a strong focus on staff wellness. “There’s no magic wand to getting this right,” Hoffman said. “It requires informal and formal mechanisms to ensure we’re hearing the employees’ voice and acting on this feedback.”

Clarity expands its range

Clarity CEO Sami McCabe said that the agency “scaled nearly 60 percent globally” in 2021, working with such clients as What3Words, OpenWeb and Pay Zilch.

With \$14.4 million in net fees (up from \$9 million last year), Clarity moved up one spot to #13 on this year’s tech list.

“Incredible advances in technology, both from a product innovation standpoint as well as the impact the sector has on the world at large” spurred the growth wave, McCabe said. He singled out “sustainability, fintech, enterprise and consumer” as being especially important.

Clarity acquired digital agency 3WhiteHats in May 2021, a move that McCabe says is “the next step in our journey to provide a robust and comprehensive range of marketing communications services to our clients.”

He adds that “clients are looking for a true partner that can bring a broad range of tools to bear on solving their most pressing business challenges and seizing their biggest opportunities.”

McCabe said he is “optimistic that technology industry leaders will prioritize making a positive impact on society and build a fairer, cleaner, healthier and more equitable future.” ●



Sami McCabe

Finance roundup

— Continued from page 28

growth with new and existing clients as well as recent wins with public companies and PE firms looking for bottom-line impact.

“Industry results across the board were solid, but financial comms and IR outpaced most sectors due to the broader post-pandemic rebound in the Capital Markets, record private equity and VC deal flow, and the SPAC and IPO wave that demanded more of the consulting and integrated model we deploy,” Lambert said. “But the real test is not how you fare in a frothy market, but rather, how you navigate the coming year and the inevitable softening that’s coming.”



Jeff Lambert

Lambert said the markets are already beginning to correct and as a result, there’s now a flight from speculative companies and stories to proven profits.

“That means opportunity for us as we can blend Wall Street-pros with digital marketing,

branding and PR to create compelling investor narratives and reach untapped audiences like individual investors, smaller funds and family offices,” Lambert said.

Bliss brings purpose

The Bliss Group jumped to \$5.2 million in finance-related fees in 2021, a \$1.5 million uptick from 2020’s \$3.7 million.

Greg Hassel, Senior Vice President and Financial Services Practice Lead, said the success of the agency’s financial services practice is illustrative of Bliss’ overall growth, which saw topline revenue rise more than 20 percent year-over-year and is now on pace for more than 30 percent growth in 2022. Within financial services specifically, Hassel said Bliss saw increased demand for services beyond traditional PR and earned media, both from existing and new clients.

“Many financial services companies prepared for the worst in 2020 and came out better than expected, which enabled them to explore partnerships with agencies that could bring their stories—including new ones born out of the pandemic—to life through a full-funnel marketing approach,” Hassel said. “Traditional PR and earned media remain critical pieces to the commu-

nications puzzle, but we’ve been able to help clients see what’s ‘next’ with new models and campaigns that truly resonate with their end audiences.”

The agency also launched Bliss Impact, an offering focused on providing counsel, campaign management and collaboration for clients who want to align their strategic priorities and sustainable programs with societal change.

“Now, more than ever, companies—especially in financial services—are leaning into purpose-driven work,” Hassel said. “Strides have been made, but as an industry, there’s still a long way to go and Bliss is committed to helping bring about change. On a more tactical level, data and analytics have completely transformed how we do business. Agencies that harness the power of data—from how we target key audiences to how we measure ‘wins’—are in the best position to help clients achieve and tangibly show success.” ●



Greg Hassel

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.

READY for a LIFE LINE?

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COMMUNICATIONS

PR spring cleaning: time for a reputational audit

Now is the time for communicators to focus on the opportunities and challenges ahead.

By Alex Stanton

We're all emerging from two long years of COVID-related impacts, and from a period when communications proved to be an even more important resource for organizations in their engagement with team members, business partners, customers and other key stakeholders.

It's also been a busy time for balancing the demands of work life and home life, and this has created challenges in finding the time and resources to do strategic reassessments of reputational risks and opportunities. So, when better to do this than spring, a time of renewal and cleaning out winter clutter to make room for focus on new growth opportunities?

Too often, reputational risks are addressed only once a crisis occurs. Despite the best intentions, once the metaphorical fire has been put out, organizations tend to breathe a sigh of relief, get back to business as usual and put off dedicating the time and resources to address potential future vulnerabilities.

That's why "now" is the right time for communications leaders to conduct a "reputational audit" of their organizations, to identify and address potential negative exposure to their earned reputation and/or value proposition in today's difficult environment. And in the process, to make plans for amplifying attention on the positive things the organization does to make a difference.

In our experience, every communications leader has an innate sense of where the real risks reside, and at least a running start on how best to address them. Part of this "sixth sense" is a nagging recognition that they haven't done enough to prepare their organizations to address these downside risks, or to promote the positive contributions that would partially offset these negative perceptions.

Here are some thoughts on how you might get started on this initiative:

Conduct scenario planning around your five or six biggest potential reputational risks. You know what they are. These are the things that could really undermine the confidence that your employees, customers, regulators, suppliers and other key audiences have in your organization and its leadership. The damage from these can be temporary or permanent, but you know they are things that will stick. Corners you

cut to survive or thrive during COVID? Executive attitude issues? Departures from sales or service practices the business community or society would expect you to live up to? Use of technology in ways that might disappoint outside observers?

Look in the rearview mirror to examine the last two years of media coverage and social channel activity to really evaluate any negative stories and/or accusations about the company. This look back, outside of the stress and emotion of the moment, tends to enlighten future responses. Was your messaging on point and effective? What could have been done better? Are there systemic issues or roadblocks in how your organization activates and responds that could still be better? How effective have you been since that time in telling the positive side of your story on those issues?

Re-examine your responsibilities matrix and protocols for timely handling of media inquiries and for monitoring relevant reporter activity on social channels. Any adjustments needed to reflect changes or geographic shifts in your business operations? What about staff changes or alterations in hybrid work schedules and operations? Who are key influencers inside the organization whose opinions shape employee attitudes?

Examine ESG communications practices to keep pace with a fast-moving and high profile business area. A decade ago, ESG, if talked about at all, was "set it and forget it"—just stating you had a policy was often good enough for investors, employees, and business partners. Today, ESG receives more scrutiny from more groups than almost anything else your company does. There is no shortage of potential criticism for overstating your contributions or greenwashing. Is your organization living up to the principles and commitments you espouse in your ESG communications? Where can improvements be made? What accomplishments should be recognized and highlighted, and where is it better not to try to claim credit?

Review social media policies platform-by-platform to try to address problems before they start. Social media is something you can't control, but you can hope to contain it. If you haven't updated your social media guidelines for employees with respect to what they should and should not post on their personal accounts

regarding your organization, this is an opportune juncture to do so. Do gaps exist between guidelines for corporate sites and what's asked of employees? Are you paying appropriate attention to the activity of senior executives who are on social and who have wide networks and meaningful connections (including reporters)?

Re-evaluate your philanthropy to reflect a post-COVID environment.

You've faced unprecedented demand for support from community partners to help them navigate the impact of the pandemic on the people they serve and maybe added new partners to address unmet needs. Now is a good time to re-evaluate the go-forward potential of those partnerships to generate real impact in the community while also contributing to your company's trust bank with important stakeholders. Are you backing causes that are relevant today? Are your employees fully aware of and engaged in your charitable work? Are you getting appropriate credit for your good works?

Giving attention to business risks and creating plans to address them during springtime will allow you to focus the rest of the year on communicating the good news of your organization, knowing you have a solid foundation and are ready for whatever crises may come your way.

Alex Stanton is CEO of Stanton, a communications firm with offices in New York and the San Francisco Bay Area. He can be reached at astanton@stantonpr.com. ◉



Alex Stanton

PR brief

Qatar Museums enlist Finn Partners for cultural PR

Finn Partners has a \$1.2 million contract with Qatar Museums to handle communications and media relations connected to the "2022 Year of Culture" programming.

The independent firm's Polskin Arts & Communications Counselors team will help celebrate the achievements of the Middle East, Northern Africa, Southern Asia region with events and projects in Qatar.

Those activities will lead up to Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup, which kicks off Nov. 21 and runs through Dec. 18.

Polskin will develop a comprehensive strategic communications framework as well as story angles and organize media trips to Qatar for press from targeted MENA nations to cover key initiatives related to the YOC sessions.

The firm will prepare a crisis template and hammer out protocols for specific situations that may arise.

Strategic Communications at the Intersection of **Valuation** and **Reputation**



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SLOANE & COMPANY

O'Dwyer's guide to RANKED PR FIRMS



APCO North America President Kelly Williamson (center) and members of the leadership team.

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Ronn D. Torossian, Founder & Chairman

Since 2003, New York City-based 5W Public Relations (5WPR) has worked with widely known and emerging brands, corporations and high-profile individuals. Our practice areas include Consumer Products & Brands, Food & Beverage, Health & Wellness, Beauty, Apparel & Accessories, Home & Housewares, Travel & Hospitality, Entertainment & Sports, Corporate, Financial Communications, Technology, Public Affairs & Government Relations, Nonprofit, Crisis Communications, Events and Digital & Social Media. We have a 360-degree approach to PR, social media, branding and digital marketing that delivers game-changing results to our clients. Our 375+ tenacious and creative communications practitioners develop and execute creative campaigns that connect our clients with their target audiences in memorable ways. Every aspect of programming is designed to impact our clients' bottom line, bringing leading businesses a resourceful, bold and results-driven approach to communication.

5WPR's notable clients include GNC Holdings, Crayola, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, Axiom Space, Therabody, Prinics,

The Pioneer Woman, iDEAL Semiconductor, Integral Ad Science, Samsung SmartThings and Quince. Our innovative work has been awarded PR Agency of the Year, PR Executive of the Year, Product Launch of the Year and Business to Business Program of the Year.

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We articulate and amplify thought leadership. A national content-driven marketing and public relations firm, we are highly specialized in financial services, real estate, professional services and cannabis. Our senior storytellers write and work with media to inspire individual decision-makers to action: your clients, prospects, media and influencers alike. We speak

the language of business in ways that connect investors, buyers and company leaders.

No subject matter is too complex, no growth vision too expansive for #TeamAkrete's 25+ person team of senior storytellers. Our vibrant, thought leadership-driven campaigns are delivered with high-touch service and attention to timelines that accelerate business. Accept no substitute for strong content; our team can make your ideas come alive and help you raise your profile with the people that matter most to your business, in your industry.

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Brad Staples, CEO

APCO Worldwide is an advisory and advocacy communications consultancy helping leading public and private sector organizations be catalysts for progress by navigating the challenges of today, acting with agility, anticipating social risk and building organizational reputations, relationships and solutions to succeed. APCO is proudly an independent and majority women-owned business. More importantly, we are a trusted partner to our clients, who hire us to help them anticipate, plan, execute and secure their futures.

Our decades of 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, CEOs and other C-suite leaders on their most pressing political, social and business opportunities and challenges. 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.

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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/ESG. 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 financial 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.

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*. BackBay also consistently ranks as a top 10 global PR Agency in *The Deal's* private equity league tables.

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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 School of Rock, 9Round Fitness, Neighborly, FASTSIGNS, Friendly's, Best Life Brands, Restoration 1, All About Vision, Brix and 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.

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company

The Bliss Group is a data-driven marketing communications agency that specializes in building value for top-tier healthcare, technology, financial and professional services companies. We are storytellers and integrated marketers working with data scientists to create proprietary algorithms and innovative media models that give our clients a unique market advantage.

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. We combine this with an exceptionally high level of client engagement to ensure we are aligned, as a team and to the audience we plan to reach.

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: AuthID.AI, BDO, Bill.com, CVS Health and Aetna, E*Trade, Exponent Women, Ford Foundation, Freshfields, Funding Circle, The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, KeyCorp, Kezzler, Kotter, LeaseQuery, MSD Japan, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Nationwide Advisory Solutions, RapidRatings, TriVista, USO, West Monroe.



Bospar's politely pushy Principal, Curtis Sparrer.

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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.

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Bospar is the award-winning "politely pushy" PR firm that puts tech companies on the map. Named one of the 500 fastest-growing companies in 2022 by *Financial Times*, Bospar delivers noteworthy business results to clients targeting consumer, developer and enterprise audiences across IT, fintech, healthtech, marketing, human resources, and security industries. What separates Bospar from others is its virtual business model that frees teams from geographical constraints, giving clients the focus of a small PR firm with the footprint of a large agency. Equally unusual is the company's value proposition: a commitment to balance clients with compassion for employees. *O'Dwyer's* recognized Bospar as a Top 50 PR firm, achieving the highest increase in client fees in 2021. Bospar also won *Forbes'* top honor of America's Best PR Agencies in 2021 and achieved a coveted spot on the 2021 *Inc.* 5000, a prestigious ranking of the nation's fastest-growing private companies.

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What makes Caliber unique?

Caliber is a trusted partner to companies in financial services, fintech, insurtech and proptech and related professional services. We provide best-in-class strategy and execution in public relations, content, social media and digital marketing. We take pride in bringing a fresh perspective as external marketing counsel, and in acting as an extension of your team. Co-headquartered in New York and Austin, with team members across the U.S.

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CALIBER

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and Europe, we serve a global client base.

Clients Include: Bank of Montreal, Bolt Insurance, Clear Capital, Finos, Information Venture Partners, MTech Capital, Northern Trust, Openly Insurance, Shearman & Sterling, Smart Pension, Symphony

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Champion is an award-winning, privately held public relations, digital/social media, local store marketing, franchise development and crisis management agency. Corporations, not-for-profits and entertainers hire us because we are experts in public relations, we build and execute spot-on local market activation plans and we know how to break through the clutter via traditional and social media. We're based in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, but we're calling on the media and working on local marketing campaigns in 20-25 different states as you read this.

Our unique team structure (it's proprietary, so you'll have to call us to find out) helps us exceed client expectations for service, responsiveness and results. And though we've been referred to as "the fastest growing PR firm in the restaurant industry," our clients span a wide array of industries, including foodservice, event produc-

tion, high tech, hospitality, sports and entertainment, commercial equipment and not-for-profits.

Clients Include: 1Huddle, Bad Daddy's Burger Bar, Ballard Brands/PJ's Coffee/New Orleans Roast, Bar Louie, BarVision, BeerBoard, bellagreen, Bennigan's, Boyd's Coffee, China Mist, Choice Market, Coalition to Salute America's Heroes, Coolgreens, Dickey's Barbecue Pit, Dog Haus, El Pollo Loco, Farmer Bros. Coffee, Fazoli's, FB Society (Haywire, Sixty Vines, Mexican Sugar, Whiskey Cake, Son of a Butcher, The Ranch at Las Colinas, Ida Claire), Freerange Concepts (Bowl & Barrel, Joe Leo, Mutts Canine Cantina, The General Public, The Rustic), Golden Corral, GoVision, Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream, Harrison Design Architects, JINYA Ramen Bar/bushi by JINYA, Kitchen United, Ledo Pizza, LUV Car Wash, Milkshake Concepts (Dirty Bones, The Finch, Harper's, Serious Pizza, STIRR, Vidorra), Mr Brews Tap-house, Mr Gatti's Pizza, Naf Naf Middle Eastern Grill, MOOYAH Burgers, Fries & Shakes, National Food Hall Solutions, Newk's Eatery, Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt, Original ChopShop, Perry's Steakhouse & Grille, Punchh, Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, Savory Fund (Crack Shack, Hash Kitchen, Mo' Bettahs Hawaiian, PINCHO, Swig, Via 313), Service King Collision Repair, SPB Hospitality (Logan's Roadhouse, Old Chicago Pizza & Taproom, Rock Bottom Brewery, Gordon Biersch Brewery), Sweetfin, Taco John's, Tarka Indian Kitchen, Taziki's, The Greene Turtle, The Toasted Yolk, Tim Hortons, Twin Peaks, Urban Air Adventure Park, V/O Med Spa, Walk-On's Sports Bistreaux and Zunzi's & Zunzibar.

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At Citizen Relations our mission is to make every conversation count. We believe (and prove) that

conversations are the key to changing opinions, attitudes and behaviors and a leading factor in causing actions and transactions, which is why we're obsessed with making them count each and every time.

Citizen offers a full scope of capabilities including consumer marketing, corporate communications, social media, digital strategy and planning, influencer marketing & data and analytics. The agency operates from eight offices in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Quebec City, New York, Los Angeles, Irvine and London. As part of the PLUS Company, Citizen often works in partnership with our network of sister agencies to enhance client programs whenever it's required.

We're trusted strategic partners to our clients, providing advice and counsel, building unique strategies, journey modeling and big creative ideas, or leveraging our breadth of digital expertise to drive performance and relevance and maximize outcomes. With our design-to-execution model, we design teams based on the needs of our clients, meaning no two teams look exactly alike. As a continuation of Citizen's values, our people and DE&I are at the core of Citizen's culture, defining the behaviors and traditions of how we work together, how we hire, our training curriculums, internship partnership programs and performance management. We partner with several organizations to drive diversity within our own teams, but also take on pro bono work with important causes our teams feel strongly about, which largely focus on societal and environmental issues.

From an industry perspective, Citizen's expertise focuses on CPG, Food & Beverage, Automotive, Financial Services, Retail & e-commerce, Consumer Health, Social Impact, DE&I, Travel & Tourism, among others.

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Founded in 1991, Coyne PR is one of the nation's most sought-after full-service integrated communications agencies. 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.

But that's not what motivates us. At Coyne, "Y" is always at the center of who we are and what we do. Understanding "WHY" clarifies the greater intent that drives our work; and sets the foundation for discovering every client's true purpose. Because we believe that great storytelling has the power to change the world. And that every company, every product and every person has a story to tell.

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 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

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COYNE PUBLIC RELATIONS

Continued from page 66

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.

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

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

The firm has specialized practices in Healthcare, Government, Nonprofits and Causes, and Military and Veterans. Clients include the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, Centers for Disease Control and



Crosby's leadership team includes (L-R) Anna Zawislanski, EVP, Government Practice Leader; Pam Atkinson, EVP, Director of Connection Planning; David Butler, EVP, Multimedia Production; Denise Aube, EVP, Healthcare Practice Leader; Raymond Crosby, President & CEO; Amy Hitt, EVP, Director of Operations; Suresh John, EVP, Digital Strategy & Analytics; and Rob Schnapp, Executive Creative Director.

Prevention (CDC), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), Dept. of Defense/Military OneSource, ENERGY STAR, Kaiser Permanente, OrganDonor.gov, Partnership to Fight Cybercrime, Peace Corps, Refuah Health, Shriners Hospitals for Children, Social Security Administration, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, United Urology, Veterans Healthcare Administration, and The Wallace Foundation.

Crosby is a Google Premier Partner, #22 on *O'Dwyer's* national ranking of PR firms and #10 for healthcare PR, and a member of the PR Council and American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As). The firm has offices in Maryland's state capital of Annapolis and in Washington, D.C. To see case studies and capabilities, visit www.crosbymarketing.com.

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Dukas Linden Public Relations (DLPR) is a communications partner for leaders in finance, asset

management, professional services, fintech, B2B technology and cleantech. 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 and as one of the 50 Best PR Firms in America by the *Observer*, we're driven by a passion to deliver targeted strategies and creative solutions that provide measurable benefits to clients—and help their businesses grow and succeed. Our 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 reputation 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, investment and community banking and cryptocurrency. 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 secured more than 1,110 bookings in 2021, primarily on CNBC,

Bloomberg, Fox Business and Yahoo! Finance.

Clients Include: Cathie Wood's ARK-Invest, AVA Labs, Bitwise Investments, Brandes Investment Partners, Brightstar Capital Partners, Brown Advisory, Crossmark Global Investments, EisnerAmper, Global X Management, Guidehouse, JMP Group, Kearney, Kroll, Neuberger Berman, OceanFirst Bank, Piedmont Lithium, 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



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

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).

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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 more than 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.

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Feintuch Communications President Henry Feintuch flanked (l. to right) by Gerardo Gimeno and Pierre Blanc of Leclanché at the Jan. 2022 BNEF energy conference.

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Alexis Penty, chief strategy officer, North America

Evoke (www.evokegroup.com) is a leading marketing, media, and communications agency bound by a common purpose: Health more human™. With offices in New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, Dublin, Princeton, and Chicago, and more than 850 employees, Evoke proudly works with 18 of the top 20 pharmaceutical companies worldwide.

Evoke is a *Crain's* Best Places to Work and includes the specialty agency brands Evoke KYNE, focusing on communications and PR, and Evoke Navience, focusing on market access and payer marketing.

Evoke is part of Huntsworth plc (www.huntsworth.com), an international healthcare and communications group. Huntsworth's principal areas of focus are marketing, medical, and immersive communication services for healthcare

clients, which are primarily large and mid-sized pharmaceutical and biotech companies. Clayton, Dubilier & Rice acquired Huntsworth plc on May 1, 2020.

FAHLGREN MORTINE

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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.; 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 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 net promoter score that consistent-

ly and significantly outpaces the 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.

FEINTUCH COMMUNICATIONS

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Henry Feintuch, President
Doug Wright, Vice President

Feintuch Communications (FC) is an award-winning tech PR firm providing senior counsel, experience and tactical support to a broad range of organizations. Key market segments include AV, adtech, cleantech, consumer electronics, e-commerce, fintech and financial services, industrial tech, professional services and start-ups.

We are focused on business results—helping our clients to position and launch new products/services, build distribution, boost sales and strengthen their corporate or brand image. All client engagements are managed—hands-

Continued on page 70



Franco, a Detroit-based integrated communications agency, was founded in 1964 and has evolved to remain at the forefront of a changing industry. Franco builds strategic integrated communications programs for B2B and B2C clients in a variety of industries with a local, national and global reach.

FEINTUCH

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on — by a senior practitioner who 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.

We are especially adept at helping international entities to enter the U.S. market. 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 116 countries.

Clients include: ClassWallet, HDMI Licensing Administrator, Leclanché, NCSolutions, Surge-Pays, XL Construction and Zee-Vee.

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Gil Bashe, Managing Partner, Chair Global Health & Purpose
Marty Ettlemeyer, CFO

When Peter Finn founded FINN Partners a decade ago, his vision was to build a world-class, best-place-to-work agency with a heart and conscience, that any major client around the world would be

proud to have as a partner. 10 years later, in the wake of a global pandemic, racial strife and business tumult, Peter's original vision has not only been realized; it has accelerated. Thanks to the agency's values-driven culture, category-leading expertise, and independent model, FINN has achieved record growth and global powerhouse status—with revenues up 49% and fees hitting \$162.2M in 2021, and expectations to exceed \$200MM in fees this year.

FINN's values-centric culture has been rocket fuel for the agency's growth: serving as a magnet for clients in need of trusted counsel, employees in search of upward career mobility and meaning, and a haven for entrepreneurs eager to tap into the agency's financial stability and global scale.

High growth practice areas included technology, health, con-

sumer, travel, purpose/CSR, financial services, and integrated marketing, and the firm expanded significantly in key regions such as the Southeast, Midwest, West and Hawaii.

With more than 1,200 professionals in the Americas, Europe and Asia, the agency acts as ONE FINN, united by a shared vision, unwavering values, and a relentless commitment to driving positive change.

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Tina Kozak, CEO
Tina Sullivan, President & COO
Nikki Little, Senior Vice President

As an integrated communications agency, Franco's programs are comprised of a variety of paid, earned, shared and owned services. Our capabilities include media and influencer relations, community relations, brand development, crisis and reputation management, marketing, digital marketing, event management, creative and video development, social media and digital and traditional advertising. Our team thrives on the principles of traditional public relations while embracing the combination of data-driven, people-powered integrated communications. We skillfully combine analytics and insights with relationships and instinct to build multi-faceted B2B and B2C integrated communications programs that define leaders, innovators and influencers in Detroit and around the world. No matter the size of our clients' communications and marketing programs, we make recommendations on how to leverage opportunities across paid, earned, shared and owned platforms for an integrated program that aligns with each organization's unique goals.

FRENCH | WEST | VAUGHAN

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Rick French, Chairman & CEO
David Gwyn, President
Natalie Best, Chief Operating Officer

French/West/Vaughan (FWV) is the Southeast's leading public



Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, French/West/Vaughan is the Southeast's leading public relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency and the most-decorated agency in the history of the Southeast.

relations, public affairs, advertising and digital media agency and has been in the top 20 nationally for more than two decades. Headquartered in Raleigh and founded on April 1, 1997, FWV now has offices in New York, Tampa, Los Angeles, San Francisco and the Greater Boston area. The agency has earned 23 National Agency of the Year honors and amassed more than 1,400 awards on behalf of its global roster of blue-chip clients, making it the most-decorated agency in the history of the Southeastern U.S.

FWV continues to reinvent itself. After 25 years, it is still reimagining the art, soul and science of marketing. By finding challenge and purpose in uncharted territory, betting on exceptional people with diverse points of view and pushing boundaries with bold, original storytelling, the agency has disrupted an industry.

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.



Gregory FCA Founder/Owner Greg Matusky and President/Owner Joe Anthony.

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Greg Matusky, Founder & President
Joe Anthony, Partner & President

Gregory FCA is a 30-year success story, forged by exceeding client expectations during every engagement and taking a fundamentally different approach than other firms. We staff each of our PR teams by vertical, allowing them to become experts in your field. This allows Gregory FCA to have expert PR teams dedicated solely to specific industries, including: Asset Management, Banking, Cleantech & Energy, Consumer Tech, Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Technology, Cybersecurity, Education, Enterprise Tech, ETFs, Finance Intelligence, Financial Services, Fintech, Gaming & esports, Health Tech, Healthcare, Industrials, Institutions, Insurance, Investment Strategy, Investor Relations, Mutual Funds, Real Estate, Retirement, RIA, and Supply Chain & Logistics.

Our specialized teams know how to tell your story to the targeted media with whom we've been building relationships for three decades. These bonds have become so intrinsic that more than 15% of our employees today actually come

from the media. Whether through press releases, bylines, blogs, video, SEM, SEO or social media, crafting messaging that is newsworthy and aligned with real-world objectives is our passion. A passion that leads to exemplary service to our clients. We are there when you need us, never counting hours, and never going dark. Available, accessible, and accountable.

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Celebrating its 30th year in 2022, 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, travel, with category expertise in food and beverage, consumer packaged goods, spirits and retail/restaurants.

Clients include: Jaguar Land Rover, JPMorgan Chase, Maui Jim, Merrell, LiveRamp, Wholly Guacamole, Panda Express, RE/MAX, Schlage, Shure, Sun-Maid, TurboTax, Spindrift, Method, Norwegian Cruise Line and Merchants Fleet.

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Mark Pinsent, Managing Director, Europe
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 (don't worship individual office P/L). This leverage of content and thinking across geographies ultimately generates better results.

Sample Clients: Alation, Airwallex, ASML, Axis Communi-

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HOFFMAN AGENCY

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cations, Baidu, City of Fremont, Graphcore, Lam Research, Lumileds, Moloco, Nautilus, NextFlex, Nextiva, Nokia, Nylas, Nutanix, Oracle, Rambus, Skyworks, Synopsys, Trellix, SuperMicro, Tealium, TSMC, Twitter, Twitch, Workiva and Zoom

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Heather Craft, Co-President, North America
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Kam White, Chief People & Culture Officer
Nicholas Love, Vice President, Global Marketing

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 10 locations covering the US, UK, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Australia, together with a partner network spanning 29 cities around the world.

HUNTER

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Grace Leong, CEO
Jonathan Lyon, Chief Operating Office
Gigi García Russo, Chief Innovation and Growth Officer
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Samara Farber Mormar, CMO

HUNTER is an award-winning consumer marketing communications firm ranked as a “Best Place to Work” with offices in New York, Los Angeles and London and partnerships that extend our reach globally. Beginning with research-driven insights, HUNTER executes strategic, integrated programs that build brand equity, increase engagement and drive measurable business results for consumer products and services. The 200+ person firm employs a powerful blend of marketing solutions 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 expanded organically into adjacent categories and as our clients moved on to new sectors and took us with them. Leading practice areas now include Retail, E-Commerce + Tech, Fashion, Health + Wellness, Beauty + Personal Care, and Home + Lifestyle. We have evolved our capabilities dramatically over the past decade to include a full suite of integrated consumer marketing communications services including brand strategy; talent and influencer engagement; social and digital media; multicultural programming and content creation for all mediums.



HUNTER helped encourage people to stay safe and get tested by tapping a diverse range of influencers within the lifestyle, parenting, health/wellness and travel spaces to communicate how Abbott BinaxNOW Covid-19 Self Tests can help us all return to the social activities we love.

Photo credit @tjdavidsonfilms.

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 33 years ago and still a client today.

ICR

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Thomas Ryan, CEO (tom.ryan@icrinc.com)
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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



The Hoffman Agency’s U.S. team celebrated their holiday party this April, meeting in person for the first time since the lockdown.

es on capital markets transactions through ICR Capital, LLC.

Clients Include: Abbott Laboratories, American Well, Asana, BigCommerce Holdings, 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, Zoom and ZoomInfo.

IMRE

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Dave Imre, CEO

A High Proclivity for Change: Growth Goes from Good to Great. imre experienced increased growth, up 22.5 percent to \$45M in 2021, on top of the 10.2% growth witnessed in 2020.

CEO, Dave Imre, attributes the agency's 2021 success to becoming champions of change.

"We're creating new partnerships and revolutionizing our ways of working, to bring new ideas to the table, faster. 2021 was all about new ways to keep people and new thinking at the center of the action," Imre said.

Fifty-four new employees joined the agency in 2021, and this increase is credited to great work and increased flexibility in where that work gets done. With a successful Work From Anywhere model, this willingness to change has bolstered talent in growing service areas, particularly Omnichannel Marketing, Earned Media, Brand Strategy, Media Planning, and Technology, Data and Analytics.

In 2022, the agency emphasis will remain on preserving its culture by remaining adaptable to ever-increasing market demands.

INFINITE GLOBAL

21 W 38th Street



The JeffreyGroup Management Team at the Annual Leadership Summit at its Miami headquarters in March 2022 with CEO Brian Burlingame (far right) and Founder/Chairman Jeffrey Sharlach (far left).

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Additional offices: San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C. and London

Jamie Diaferia, Founder & CEO
Zach Olsen, President
Isabel Podda, COO

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.

INKHOUSE

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Keith Giannini, Executive Vice President, keith@inkhouse.com

Inkhouse is an integrated PR agency for innovative thinkers, creators and leaders who believe in the power of stories to effect positive change. We're a culture and values-driven firm that believes what's good for our people is good for business and our clients, highlighted by PR industry-leading benefits like 20 weeks of paid family leave, pregnancy loss paid leave

and every other Friday off for all members of our team. Founded in 2007, Inkhouse has grown organically to an agency of 140 people in seven major cities with remote employees across 11 states. Learn more at: www.inkhouse.com.

Client list: Acquia, Amplitude, AT&T Cybersecurity, Beamery, BioMed Realty, BlueVine Capital, Brightline, Brown Brothers Harriman & Co., Cambium Learning, Capella Space, Checkmarx, Cockroach Labs, Code42, Corvus Insurance, CropOne, Crunchbase, Databricks, Datto, Deepgram, Emeritus, Ergotron, Front, Gigamon, Ground Labs, Harvard School of Education, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care, Incredible Health, Molekule, NEXT Insurance, Netskope, OpenView Ventures, PhysicianOne Urgent Care, Plume, Puma, Qumulo, Raytheon, ReliaQuest, Remitly, Rockland Trust, Roofstock, ServiceTitan, SmartRent, Starburst, Strava, The Markup, UMass Memorial, Wasabi, Whitesource, Wistia and Xerox.

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Brian Burlingame, CEO
Jeffrey Sharlach, Chairman

Coming up on its 30th Anniversary in 2023, JeffreyGroup is respected as the leading agency

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JEFFREYGROUP

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in Latin America for multinational companies and global brands. With more than 300 full-time staff in six wholly-owned offices, and supplemented by contracted local partners throughout the region, the firm provides a full range of strategic communications services, including brand promotion, corporate communications, brand purpose, public affairs and data-driven insights and analysis. Known for its award-winning work for longtime clients including Airbus, Amazon, American Airlines, Bayer, Citibank, Marriott, MasterCard, PepsiCo, Salesforce and Tetra Pak, JeffreyGroup continues to set the standard for top-level service in results in this fast-growing part of the world. Brian Burlingame, who took over as CEO from founder Jeffrey Sharlach in 2015, runs the firm from its Miami HQ along with a leadership team of top professionals to consistently deliver the results multinational clients demand and expect.

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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 public health. JPA Health has offices in Washington, DC; Boston; New York City; and London. Email carrie@jpa.com to learn more.

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Eric Sedler, Founder and CEO

Kivvit is one of *O'Dwyer's* top 20-ranked independent strategic communications and public affairs firms in the United States.

What sets Kivvit apart is our unique ability to integrate cutting-edge analytics to inform a full suite of strategic communications, creative content, and data-driven advertising capabilities. Our wide-ranging expertise and relentless focus on measurement enables us to achieve real outcomes and demonstrate business impact across sectors.

We take pride in operating as a one P & L firm, which has cultivated a truly collaborative team culture, a strong national client base, and integrated suite of capabilities. In addition to our core public affairs teams, about 40% of Kivvit professionals are specialists on one of our award-winning service teams, which maintain deep expertise in brand strategy, creative design, digital, and insights.

Kivvit achieved record business performance in 2021 and made significant investments to accelerate our evolution as the agency of the future and create a world class culture that fosters collaboration, creativity, diversity, and innovation.

Our success delivering on these priorities has earned Kivvit recognition as *Campaigns & Elections* magazine's Public Affairs Firm of the Year in 2021 and 2020 and as one of PRovoke's North America Agencies of the Year for the past 5 years.

Kivvit also leads *O'Dwyer's* specialty rankings across multiple categories, including Energy, Education, Environment & Sustainability, Health, Purpose & Corporate Social Responsibility, Real Estate, Sports, and Transportation.

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

Jeff Lambert, CEO & Founder
Walter Ward, Chief of Staff
Don Hunt, President
Michelle Olson, Managing Partner
Sarah Smith, Chief Growth Officer
Jordan Custer, Gen. 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 TiICKER, 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.

Clients Include: Bell Helicopter Textron, Blackford Capital, Capital Impact Partners, Cafe Valley Bakery, Central Michigan University, Clearlake Capital, Denali Flavors/MooseTracks® Ice Cream, Detroit

Pistons, Develop Detroit, EDAG, Inc., eVisit, Flint Community Schools, Great Expressions Dental Centers, Green Giant Fresh, Hillsdale College, Huron Capital Partners, iEducation/Fusion Education, International Automotive Components, Maracay Homes LLC, Michigan Economic Development Corp. (MEDC), North American International Auto Show (NAIAS), OmniSeq, Inc., Perrigo / Ranir, Phoenix Rescue Mission, Plackers, Rehmann Group, Rockford Construction, Samaritas, TiiCKER, True Women's Health, Yazaki North America, Colony Capital (NYSE:CLNY), Mercantile Bank (NASDAQ:MBWM), MGP Ingredients (NASDAQ:MGPI), Shyft Group (NASDAQ:SHYF), Thor Industries (NYSE:THO), and Wolverine Worldwide (NYSE:WWW).

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Sean Dowdall, President
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. is celebrating 31 years in business. Landis 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.

Landis is an integrated public relations, digital/social media and marketing communications agency with clients in health care, technology, sustainability/environmental science and consumer goods and services. Landis' services include: public relations, marketing, content marketing, social media, digital marketing, advertising, email marketing, video production, crisis communications, media and presentation training and more. Clients include AEye, Altais Health, Centre for Neuro Skills, Lucile Packard Children's Foundation for Children's Health, UCSF, Global Alzheimer's Platform Foundation, Save the Redwoods League, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sonoma Land Trust, Together Bay Area, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Graton Casino Resort, PRC, Hyde Street Community Services and more. LCI is a certified member of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, is an official Corporate Diversity Supplier and 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.

LANSON'S

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Josh Passman, CEO (NY)

Lansons is a leading independent reputation management consultancy with offices in New York and London. In New York, Lansons primarily serves financial services, technology, corporate and B2B clients. 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 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 through-

out the world.

Clients include, among others, Asahi Kasei, John Hancock/Manulife, Royal Bank of Canada, Société Générale, Reaves Asset Management, Roosevelt & Cross, BestEx Research and Rainmaker Securities.

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Lisa Picasso, Consumer Practice Lead

LaunchSquad is an award-winning public relations and creative communications agency with a virtual first mindset and offices in New York, San Francisco, Boston and Chicago. LaunchSquad is a group of 100+ dynamic storytellers who specialize in creating and sharing the stories of fast-growing, change-the-world companies.

Over the past 22 years, our work has helped clients raise billions of dollars in funding, fueled IPOs and multi-billion dollar exits, and taken countless upstarts from unknown brands to market leaders. LaunchSquad's expertise spans both consumer-facing and B2B clients in a variety of industries including climate/energy, healthcare, transportation, consumer and enterprise technology, entertainment and media, e-commerce, finance, retail and more.

Clients include: Netflix, Uber, Zipline, On Running, The Trevor Project, Monday.com, General Catalyst, and Kroger.

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Donna L. LaVoie, President & CEO
Lisa DeScenza, VP, Integrated Comms. & Head, BD & Mktg.

LaVoieHealthScience advances health and science innovations through strategic communications. We offer fully integrated public relations, investor relations, marketing, and digital services and are ranked among the Top 30 independent healthcare communications agencies in the United States according to *O'Dwyer's* 2022 public relations firm rankings. We are also one of *Inc.* 5000's fastest-growing private companies, and *Boston Business Journal's* 2022 Fast 50 representing the 50 fastest growing companies in Massachusetts. We are certified in healthcare communications compliance and serve commercial and pre-commercial clients both domestically and globally. Through our alliance with Omnicom Public Relations Group, we bring our global clients a broader set of health and science teams offering over 2,000 health experts worldwide. We are committed to serving health and science clients offering domain experience in autoimmune diseases, CAR-T, cell and gene therapy, CNS, CRISPR, immuno-oncology, lysosomal diseases, MedTech, medical devices, neurodegeneration, oncology, ophthalmology, precision medicines, rare disease, RNA, and regenerative medicine. We've earned our clients' trust with 20 years in our sector, have won over 60 public relations and investor relations awards, developed over 400 communications plans, and have doubled the size of the agency since 2018.

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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.

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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, and Tampa, 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, 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.

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Dana Coleman, Vice President
Robin Embry, Vice President
Erin George, Vice President
Susanne Powelson, Vice President

For more than 30 years, Lovell Communications has served as

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LOVELL COMMUNICATIONS

— Continued from page 75

strategic counsel and trusted partner to health care providers and suppliers across the country. We are committed to improving the health of health care business.

Publicly traded companies, not-for-profit systems, early-stage and mature companies draw upon our vast communications expertise to support them through phases—or just moments—when it's crucial to persuade audiences or influence decision makers.

Our firm is comprised of highly skilled strategists with vast communications experience in health care delivery, development, reimbursement, innovation, regulation and transaction. We're proud to say that expertise translates into long-term client relationships that are three times the industry average.

Key Practices:

- Thought Leadership
- Communications
- Marketing Strategy
- Transaction Support
- Crisis Communications

M BOOTH HEALTH

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Peter Gay, Chief Impact Officer
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Tayla Mahmud, EVP, Health Equity & Multicultural Strategy
Leila Darabi, EVP, Social Impact

M Booth Health offers decades of medical, pharmaceutical, and public health expertise with the award-winning creative and digital talents of consumer PR powerhouse, M Booth. Clients turn to the agency 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 distinguishes the M Booth Health team is its track record navigating the complex commercial, policy, and advocacy environments, and a shared spirit of purpose across its team.

Services include research, strategic planning, and analytics; creative campaign development; earned/paid media and social me-



Matter Principal and CEO Scott Signore.

dia strategy and engagement; content design for visual storytelling; science writing and data communications; and experiential activations.

M Booth Health experienced double-digit growth and multi-million-dollar account wins in 2021. Nine major new clients included 2 pharmaceutical giants and a leading healthcare system, along with marketing communications and public affairs assignments for a range of health organizations. As a result of rapid growth, the firm expanded its staff significantly, including the addition of Stacey Bernstein as the firm's new CEO, Peter Matheson Gay as Chief Impact Officer, and Tayla Mahmud as EVP, Health Equity and Multicultural Strategy. The firm also added a new purpose-driven consulting practice, M/Pact, that helps brands and organizations tell stories of their impact in the areas of the environment, racial and gender equity, human rights and development, and food security.

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 nonprofits 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** 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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Parker Ray, Chief Digital Strategist
Michelle Rios, MD, Washington D.C.

Rich Tauberman, EVP, Issues and Crisis Management

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

Thirty-five-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 CorpSumTM insights, cultural opportunity, and breakthrough 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 MikeWorldWide, visit www.mww.com or follow us on social @MWW_PR.

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Julie Freeman, EVP & Managing Director
Lauren Kaufman, SVP
Nancy Friedman, Founder

At MMGY NJF we are global connectors, storytellers and curators of travel experiences – inspiring people to view the world differently and then see it for themselves. As marketers specializing solely in travel and hospitality, we help put travel brands on the map and navigate their narrative through innovative thinking, creativity and storytelling. MMGY NJF offers boutique service and expertise in consumer and trade media relations, social media, corporate and brand positioning, experiential and event marketing, strategic partner-

ships and promotions, influencer engagement and crisis communications. We are the winners of the 2020 HSMAI Adrian Award Best of Show in PR for our work on the National World War II Museum's 75th Anniversary of D-Day campaign.

For those seeking senior level counsel, unwavering brand advocacy and unrivaled media savvy, MMGY NJF is a PR powerhouse and one-stop shop. Hundreds of hotel, destination, travel and lifestyle brands have entrusted their reputations to MMGY NJF whose "Leave No Stone Unturned" philosophy has catapulted the firm to the top. Our integrated PR and social media team prides itself on long-standing client relationships and an innate ability to move within many spheres: tapping media and industry influencers, forging creative partnerships, uncovering strategic advantages, and providing global perspective. Our campaigns are rooted in research and insights, and we are master storytellers and content creators who know how to make news out of simple concepts or large-scale programs. We forge an emotional connection to reach our audiences where they live, work and play.

Clients Include: Amtrak, American Queen Voyages, Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection, Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, British Virgin Islands, Cheap Caribbean, City Experiences, Costa Rica Tourism, Etihad Airways, Eurail, Explore Worldwide, Fittler Club, Greater Palm Springs CVB, Go City, HEI Hotels, Hotel Vermont, Karisma Hotels, LATAM Airlines, London & Partners, Montauk Chamber of Commerce, Oceania Cruises, Pod Hotels, Presidio Tunnel Tops, Sea Island, South Dakota Tourism, St. Petersburg/Clearwater, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, The National World War II Museum, Travel Texas, Visit California, Visit Dallas, Visit KC, Visit Grand Rapids, Visit Newport, Visit Santa Barbara and Wheel the World.

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In partnership with CAMP, MMGY NJF worked with our client Visit California to bring Golden State sunshine and an all-new, immersive experience to the store's flagship location on 5th Avenue in NYC.

al 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 enables us to operate 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 include marketing communications & PR, corporate & financial communications, issues management & crisis communications, public affairs, litigation PR, branding and website design and development.

PADILLA

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Matt Kucharski, President

Padilla is a full-service public relations agency that transforms brands and organizations through strategically creative communications. Our work across deep areas of sector expertise in agriculture and environmental sciences, food, beverage and nutrition, health, technology and financial services, is consistently recognized by industry partners such as *PRWeek*, *PRovoke* and *PRSA*, among others. Padilla operates in seven cities in the U.S. through its family of brands which includes, *SHIFT*, *FoodMinds*, *Joe Smith* and *SMS Research Advisors*. As an *AVENIR*

GLOBAL company and a founding member of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, the agency provides services to clients through 155 offices worldwide. Transform with purpose at PadillaCo.com.

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Dan Martin, EVP, Healthcare
Gene Carozza, Senior VP, Technology & Head of Operations
Gareth Thomas, Managing Dir., UK

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 mid- and late-stage growth strategies through the firm's *NXT Stage* approach. Recognized as an 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, as well as a growing virtual community. The agency is positioned to help brands emerge in new markets and scale global-

ly, with experience driving integrated strategy across a variety of brands like *Rapid 7*, *Braze*, *Citrix*, *SailPoint*, *Quickbase*, *OneStream*, *Radial*, *athenahealth* and *Smartly.io*. 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: *Algolia*, *Amwell*, *athenahealth*, *Bitdefender*, *Booz Allen*, *Braze*, *Citrix*, *Clarify Health*, *Collibra*, *iCIMS*, *LeanTaaS*, *Quickbase*, *Menlo Security*, *NTT Data*, *Optimizely*, *Rapid7*, *SailPoint*, *Toshiba/Americas*, *UPS Capital* and *Veeam*.

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Jacqueline Kolek, Chief Innovation Officer, Senior Partner
Ann Barlow, West Coast President, Senior Partner, Managing Director, Employee Engagement
Tara Lilien, Chief Talent Officer, Partner

Peppercomm, A Ruder Finn company understands that how you tell your story can mean the difference between success and failure. That's why we have made a science of communication, combining wit and wisdom with proven communications discipline and innovative offerings to break through, build deeper connections and ensure our clients' success. One of those innovations, rooted in the tenets of humor, has proven so effective it's become embedded in how we work.

We have studied, embraced, and employed the tenets of humor to help our clients more clearly see who they are, why they exist and how they can connect to those they serve. Our model is about brand analysis, development of narrative and voice, and connection to the culture, media and influencers who matter.

Each should be thoughtful, bring perspective and insight, and—when appropriate—be a little unexpected.

Peppercomm, wit and wisdom.

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Every brand has a story to tell. And we're experts at telling it.

Prosek Partners is a certified Woman-Owned Business, among the largest integrated, independent communications and marketing 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.

Specializing in providing a full range of communications solutions to financial and professional services companies, the firm delivers an unexpected level of passion, creativity and marketing savvy. Services include digital and traditional media relations, financial communications, public affairs, investor relations, transaction services, crisis communications and issues management, content creation, publishing, media training and more. Its strategic branding offering—Prophecy by Prosek—takes a holistic approach to creative branding and storytelling, with capabilities spanning every facet of advertising, strategy and design to deliver breakthrough results.

The firm has been named PROvoke's "Best Agency to Work For" and "Global and North American Corporate/Financial Agency of the Year," an *Inc.* 5000 Fastest-Growing Company, a Best PR Firm in America by *Observer*, and a "Top Place to Work in PR" by *PR News*.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS INC.

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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 WORLDCOM 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.

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Dan Zaret, Chief Operating Officer
Andrea Sessler, Chief Human Resources Officer
Tim Goddard, President, Global Health Marketing & Communications (GHMC)

Spectrum Science is an integrated marketing, communications and media agency hyper-focused on science. This independent agency combines fearless scientific spirit with capabilities cultivated to meet the specific needs of clients from preclinical development through loss of patent exclusivity. Spectrum dreams beyond the realm of the possible—and delivers on it—with out-of-this-world experiences.

Spectrum's interwoven model integrates specialists across client service, strategy, creative and innovation to put clients at the center. Every engagement begins with a proprietary, insights-driven process steeped in data, science and human behavior that enables custom-built teams to work in lockstep to deliver atomic creative and game-changing activations for each client's goals.

Not limited by geography, Spectrum works seamlessly across offices in DC, New York, Chicago and Atlanta—with global reach through Global Health Marketing & Communications (GHMC), the largest independent health and science communications agency partnership 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 and Velvet Taco.

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Melissa Lackey, President & CEO

Standing Partnership is a certified women-owned business led by president and CEO Melissa Lackey, who has evolved the firm from its PR roots to an integrated marketing communications consulting firm. We drive growth for our clients through customer acquisition, customer retention and securing freedom to operate. We create actionable marketing plans and draw on the expertise of our team to exe-



Taylor executives celebrated with leaders from the United Negro College Fund at the UNCF's annual gala in New York City on March 24, 2021. Taylor is a longtime supporter of UNCF and HBCU's and serves on UNCF's New York Leadership Council.

cute and deliver results.

Clients Include: Ahern Agribusiness, Ameren, Bayer CropScience, Belden, BJC Healthcare, Carbogen AMCIS, Concordia Plan Services, Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, Elsevier, FieldWatch, Fortune Brands, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, Maritz, Inc., McCarthy Building Companies, Mid-America Transplant Services, MiTek, Naples Botanical Garden, Nozomi Networks, Russell HBD, ServiceNow, Inc., The Doe Run Co., Tronox, Unico Systems, United States Soybean Export Council.

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Stanton provides strategic public relations and integrated communications to clients across a spectrum of industry sectors and sizes, from global firms to mid-size leaders and entrepreneurial enterprises. Clients are attracted to—and find a home at—our firm because we deliver a unique blend of smart strategy, strong relationships, innovative thinking and first-class execution

that produces business-changing results.

With teams in New York and California, we support our clients across a variety of communications disciplines including media relations, brand messaging, content development and marketing, executive visibility, thought leadership, digital marketing, reputation & crisis management, senior executive counsel, and social media. Our deep understanding of the business and financial world and the media covering it allows us to position clients effectively within a broader context. We employ a “practitioner model” where senior professionals spend most of their time on client work. We ask tough questions, challenge assumptions, and suggest bold solutions. Flexibility, collaboration, responsiveness, and bureaucracy-free service are the hallmarks of our client relationships.

Clients Include: 3i, Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty, Aryaka Networks, Assurant, Bain Capital, Berding & Weil, Carl Marks Advisors, Conning Asset Management, CSAA Insurance Group, CVC Capital Partners, EIS, EmPRO Insurance, First Eagle Alternative Credit, FFL Partners, HGGC, Hometap, Kline Hill Partners, Makena Capital, Marin Health, MD7, Mosser Living, OceanSound Partners, One Equity Partner, Rackspace Technology, SaverLife, Sun Capital Partners, Summit Health/City MD, VSS Capital Partners 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, crisis 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.

TAYLOR

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Tony Signore, CEO & Managing Partner
Bryan Harris, COO & Managing Partner
John Liporace, Managing Partner
Maevae Hagen, President
Mike Costabile, Managing Partner

Taylor is an agency of creative thinkers that specializes in brand building through conversation. The way we see the world defines how we work. Taylor zeros in on a brand's context in culture and its relevance over time. Coupled with category mastery, this is what enables us to put brands into culture with authenticity and authority.

As “Shapers of Influence,” we partner with the world's leading brands with an integrated team across all marketing disciplines. Whether it's developing strategy, building powerful brand narratives, crafting insight-driven creative, producing content or engaging the media, everything we produce is designed to inspire, incite, and shape conversation for the benefit of our client partners, their customers and stakeholders.

Taylor's 2022 client partners include category leading brands such as AIG, Capital One, Captain Morgan, Crown Royal, Diageo, Guinness, Panini America, P&G, Red Bull, Secret, Smirnoff and Tide. Founded in 1984, Taylor is headquartered in New York, with offices in Los Angeles and Charlotte.

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On the eve of its 20th anniversary, Trevelino/Keller couldn't be more proud of its ranking as the third fastest growing [organically] firm in America. Its pioneering reputation marketing approach powered by public relations, growth marketing and creative services resonates with an increasing number of emerging and middle market companies wanting a single source solution.

Its build, launch and scale mission is driven by its unprecedented ability to retain talent, having only lost two people to agencies in 19 years. The firm's management team [average tenure of 15 years] has successfully incubated new talent, supported by its TKU professional development platform and innovative reward offerings like the recent debut of WBY, a travel curated package that sends staff members into the Wild Blue Yonder on vacation getaways.

Ranked as the #2 Atlanta-based firm, its home on Atlanta's burgeoning urban westside, speaks to its progressive culture that sets a tone unique to the public relations marketplace. Dominating in technology while successfully growing healthcare, financial services, government, lifestyle and franchising, the firm's client base cuts across the country and increasingly more often, around the world.

Initiatives like T/K SmallBiz—www.tksmallbiz.com—designed to serve more traditional small businesses, its corporate social responsibility platform T/K Raise—www.tkraise.com and its public education initiative—www.voice4changeproject.com are examples of its efforts to support and serve the underserved.

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Christine Turner, President
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TURNER represents the world's best luxury resorts, destinations, spirits, wellness, and outdoor brands. Our tenured teams in New York, Chicago, Denver, Charleston, Portland, and Miami, have unmatched industry experience and deliver nimble, innovative marketing communications strategies, helping brands connect and engage in a smarter, more relevant manner.

We're a boutique-minded crew with big agency resources, infinitely nimble and constantly problem-solving in unexpected ways. Our coast-to-coast footprint integrates seamlessly with global brands, whether it's a fitness startup, a boutique hotel, or an established outdoor brand looking for its next generation. We craft iconic ideas for heritage brands, emotional experiences for travel destinations, and unexpected stories in the wellness ecosystem. We know when to push the envelope, while ensuring brand priorities are at the forefront. We value our team above all else; we are consistently ranked as a "best place to work", diversity and inclusivity are our strengths, and giving back is in our DNA.

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Vested is a global and integrated communications and marketing agency 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, Goldman Sachs, Grayscale, CanadaLife, Morgan Stanley, RBC and more. We attract and retain the industry's best talent through our equity ownership model and entrepreneurial approach—from unlimited vacation days to sabbaticals. Entrepreneurial to the core, Vested launched the industry's first agency-run investment group, Vested Ventures; acquired business journalism site Talking Biz News, digital marketing and web development agency Red Lab and financial content firm Scribe; and works closely with its sister agency, Caliber.

The agency supports a range of firms across the financial spectrum, including banks, asset managers, private wealth, capital markets firms, industry associations, fintech companies and more. Clients include: Aon, Acrisure, Baillard, Bloomberg, DTCC, Diebold Nixdorf, Elliptic, Finastra, Goldman Sachs, Grayscale, Morgan Stanley Wealth, Museum of American Finance, NEPC, SEI and Unison.

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Dave Parro, Chief Operating Officer
Allison Ward, Chief People Officer
Mark Miller, Chief Financial Officer

Walker Sands is a full-service B2B marketing agency with core capabilities in public relations, demand generation, branding, creative, marketing strategy and web. Through strategic programs designed to meet our clients' needs, we offer a full range of marketing expertise—from strategy to execution.

For the past two decades, our

mission has been to accelerate the growth of B2B companies. We pride ourselves on helping B2B brands reach their goals—whether that's increasing revenue, pushing into new markets, going public or getting acquired.

Our integrated approach drives awareness, credibility and conversions for 100+ B2B technology and professional services clients worldwide. A nine-time Inc. 5000 honoree, Walker Sands is one of the fastest-growing B2B marketing agencies in the world, with offices in Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Boston and Atlanta.

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WordWrite exists to connect providers of complex services to the decision makers who hire them. We uncover, develop and share your company's Capital S Story to reveal why someone would want to do business with you, work for you, invest in you or partner with you. Over two decades, we've developed and refined a trademarked approach to public relations and marketing communications that reveals the Capital S Story: StoryCrafting®. Once we uncover and develop your Capital S Story, we share it through PESO, the 21st-century standard of marketing success.

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 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote, Everett & Hurite Eyecare Specialists, Koppers Inc., McClintock & Associates P.C., Meyer, Unkovic & Scott LLP, Mobile Aspects, Pfizer, Ryan Shazier Fund for Spinal Rehabilitation, SSCOR, The Waterfront, Three Wire Systems / MyAdvisor, Waldron Private Wealth, YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh ○

Applied Communications founder Kelly dies

Alan Kelly, who founded Applied Communications Group in 1992 in Silicon Valley, died April 13. He was 64.

Founded before the explosion of Internet usage, Applied ranked among the top ten technology firms with more than 60 staffers in San Francisco, Washington and Amsterdam.

It counted Hewlett-Packard, Sun Microsystems, Oracle, BEA Systems, VeriSign, Cisco, StorageTek and PayPal among its clients.

Kelly sold Applied's PR and communications research unit to Britain's Next 15, parent of Bite Communications in Text 100, in 2003.

He then launched Playmaker Systems in Bethesda in 2006 to help professionals anticipate moves in their markets.

Kelly also lectured on strategic communications at the University of Maryland, served as a political analyst at SiriusXM and blogged at HuffPost. ○



Alan Kelly

BCW names Hovey president

BCW has promoted Brooke Hovey to Global President. Hovey previously served as BCW's interim President of North America, as well as Global Chief Growth Officer.

In her new position, Hovey will report to BCW's Global CEO Donna Imperato and work with teams across all regions to further develop, operationalize and scale the agency's core services. ○



Brooke Hovey

Sitrick NY alum Faison joins Brunswick

Seth Faison, who did a five-year stint as Managing Director of Sitrick And Company's New York office, has joined Brunswick Group as partner in its freshly minted China hub.

Prior to working at Mike Sitrick's Los Angeles-based crisis shop, Faison head-

ed the *New York Times'* Shanghai bureau and served as Beijing correspondent for the *South China Morning Post*, where he covered the Tiananmen Square massacre.

More recently, he was head of communications for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in Geneva.

Andy Browne, who spent 35 years reporting from Asia as China Editor for the *Wall Street Journal* and Asia-Pacific News editor for Thomson Reuters, rejoins Brunswick as head of its China hub.

He was previously at Brooklyn-headquartered Bloomberg New Economy Forum, where he was Editorial Director. Browne served as Partner for Brunswick in Beijing from 2007 to 2009.

The China hub is to bring together the firm's full suite of experience and understanding of key issues impacting the country so it can better serve its clients, according to CEO Nel Wolin. ○

Brunswick Group hires CNN vet Burke

Terence Burke has joined Brunswick Group as Global Head of Strategic Messaging and Firm Events.

He did a 16-year run at CNN, exiting in 2018 as Senior VP-National News.

Burke also worked overseas, contributing to the Baghdad bureau during the Iraq war, heading Haiti operations in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake and serving as a Global Affairs Producer at CNN International in London.

Most recently, Burke was Senior VP of Live Content and head of global programming at Fortune Media. ○



Seth Faison



Terence Burke

ARPR names Choudhury CEO

Atanta-based agency ARPR announced that it has named Raj Choudhury CEO.

Choudhury succeeds agency founder Anna Ruth Williams in the Chief Executive role. Williams will now serve as ARPR's Chief Strategy Officer.

Choudhury's appointment comes after taking an ownership stake in the firm. Financial terms of that transaction were not made public.

Choudhury has co-founded four agencies prior to his arrival at ARPR. His first shop, the digital agency Spunlogic, was founded in 1998. His venture Engauge was later acquired by Publicis Groupe. He also previously served as CEO for social ad tech company BLiNQ Media.

ARPR counts Instant Financial, Intelrad, PaySend, RxBenefits, SonicWall and Updfox as clients. ○



Raj Choudhury

Mercury hires Crawford-Whitaker as SVP

Mercury brings on Kristen Crawford-Whitaker as a SVP in its Florida office.

Crawford-Whitaker was previously Assistant Vice Chancellor of Public Policy and Advocacy for the State University System of Florida. In that role, she acted as the Board of Governors' chief liaison with the state's legislative and executive branches, university leadership and organizations throughout the state and coordinated a system-wide advocacy strategy to support the board's goals and legislative priorities. ○



Kristen Crawford-Whitaker

Verghese, grassroots vet, joins APCO

Nina Verghese, has joined APCO Worldwide as Senior Director and head of its campaigns and advocacy practice.

She takes over for Dan Meyers, who is now Deputy Managing Director of APCO/DC focused on business development.

Most recently, Verghese was at Locust Street Group in Washington, handling federal, state and local advocacy efforts.

Earlier, she worked at Burson-Marsteller and its Direct Impact arm. ○



Nina Verghese

Fed's miscommunication mangles market

By Fraser Seitel

After months of reassuring the markets that the Fed could engineer a “soft landing” from the rising prices and wages and wars that have afflicted the nation, Jerome Powell abruptly changed his tune and warned that rates would have to move higher more quickly to stave off the recessionary ravages of runaway inflation.



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*.

Predictably, the Dow Jones average tumbled nearly 1,000 points, margin calls resonated through Wall Street and investor confidence—that has helped buttress the U.S. economy

through two years of COVID lockdowns—was shattered.

Today, the Fed Chairman and the institution he heads confront their most serious crisis of confidence since Powell took over in 2018. To regain their credibility and the trust of an investing public that's vital for the economy to avoid a major meltdown, the Fed chairman must embrace the principles of crisis management that have guided public relations counselors for decades.

Be flexible.

This is crisis management 101. Four decades ago, when Johnson & Johnson responded to the deaths of seven people who consumed Tylenol, CEO James Burke famously posited, “We have to respond even on a minute-to-minute basis to answer changing facts and opinions.” And that was before the days of 24/7 social media.

Preparation and planning, standby statements and tabletop exercises are all obligatory in contemplating crisis, but no amount of preparation can adequately prepare you for all the unpredictable moments that accompany the glare of perpetual public attention.

As Powell learned the hard way at the IMF meeting, stubbornly reasserting that the Fed's plan would avoid recession isn't wise in the face of equally-stubborn price increases. There's a difference between inspiring confidence and wishful thinking.

In a crisis, the former is imperative, but there's no room for the latter.

Speak with one voice.

In normal times, freeing organizational channels of communication should be the rule to promote a culture of transparency and openness.

But in a crisis, words count. So, organizations must shut down communications channels and speak with one voice, to avoid discordant opinions that at best, confuse the public, or at worst, promote panic.

Such is the case today with the Fed, where officials other than Chairman Powell feel it incumbent to keep talking, whether or not their words enflame an already-incendiary situation.

Exhibit A is the pompous President of the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank James Bullard, whose quest to second-guess his chairman has only accelerated during the current crisis. With inflation and the Fed in the spotlight, Bullard has eagerly welcomed any and all media and speaking opportunities to reiterate his view that the Fed has been too slow and meek in combating rising prices, and inflation could easily get out of control.

Close behind the bombastic Bullard is former New York Federal Reserve President Bill Dudley, now a Bloomberg contributor, who has also jumped on the Powell-bashing bandwagon with great verve. Interestingly, Bullard and Dudley were both passed over for Fed Chairman and Vice Chairman when the positions were vacant.

Whether they've seized the spotlight out of genuine concern or political pique, the point is that in a time when investors and the economy nervously hang on every word from policy decision-makers, such public disharmony from the Fed just sows increased public worry.

Just as CEO Bob Chapek is the only Disney executive empowered to speak on the company's Florida's crisis, so, too, should Powell assert his prerogative to shut up the counterproductive, publicity-seeking naysayers in his administration.

Don't answer every question.

In a related sense, it's also important in a crisis to judiciously limit public comments. Stated another way, just because people want you to say something doesn't mean you have to oblige.

In today's Twitter-infused communications climate, everything is “news.” And that's especially the case when public officials comment on hyper-charged timely topics, like interest rate policy and inflation.

In such an environment, any comment from anyone at the Fed is certain to trigger CNBC “breaking news,” sending market

prices soaring or cratering on a moment's notice.

The point is that, in terms of the flow of commentary in crisis, less is more.

Squawk if you're wronged.

On the other hand, it is equally important to speak up in opposition if false information or misleading opinions are widely disseminated. In a crisis, a false assumption left uncorrected becomes a “media fact.”

One of Chairman Powell's great strengths is his coolness under pressure, and he has been reluctant to “correct the record” or respond directly to the criticisms of his detractors.

While this strategy has served him well over time, the current crisis atmosphere demands that he—or at least, surrogates—become more willing publicly to debunk the Fed bashers, to help prevent a tense situation from accelerating.

Lose the battle, but win the war.

As Johnson & Johnson learned after removing its best-selling product from every store shelf, costing it hundreds of millions of dollars—even though the company knew it wasn't to blame for the poisonings—in a crisis, you can lose the battle but still win the war.

All eyes are now on the Fed as it raises the federal funds rate by one-half point, the largest such increase since Alan Greenspan two decades ago. Chairman Powell should seize that opportunity to map out the expected interest rate increase trajectory through the rest of this year and into the next.

He should do so to avoid “surprises” as the battle continues. That kind of candid, yet confident, crisis management ultimately will reassure the markets and win the war. ○

PR brief

Interpublic gets Famous

Interpublic has acquired a stake in The Famous Group, a LA-based company that creates mixed and augmented reality for sports and other live events.

Launched in 1997, TFG has worked with the NFL (17 Super Bowls), NCAA Final Four, US Open, NBA, PGA, WWE and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

It has handled projects for Dunkin' Donuts, Nike, AT&T, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Fox and Lyft.

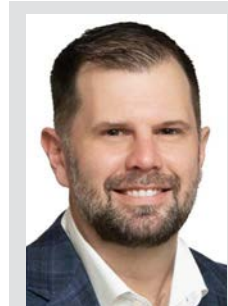
Interpublic CEO Philippe Krakowsky said the investment in TFG will “accelerate the pace at which we move to deliver the next generation of live events, with scalable technology platforms and a deeper connection to our data resources and capabilities.”

Though TFG will continue to operate under its brand and retain the ability to work independently with existing and future clients, it will be aligned with IPG's Momentum Worldwide, experiential marketing arm.

Are you spending enough time assessing your clients?

By Dennis Spring

When was the last time you assessed your client base? While most PR and marketing firms would prefer to work exclusively with clients that pay appropriate fees, pay in a timely manner and appreciate the work you do, often times that's not the reality. Our clients are human and may have occasionally missed the due date of a payment here or there. But when some clients' failures to pay on time starts to impact the financial health of your business—or when they become more challenging to work with from



CPA, is a Co-Partner in Charge of Janover LLC's New York City office. He leads the Professional Services group, and helps its clients satisfy their financial-reporting requirements successfully by providing assurance, tax and other advisory services.

a personality perspective—it's time to reassess what makes a good client for you and your firm.

When we think of ideal clients, we often think about a particular profile, demographic or target market. This is certainly important, especially when you have mature and developed niches as well as established go-to market approaches. A specialized industry approach typically requires less long-term investment in time and resources to learn and understand a particular industry. Once you have assessed them from that standpoint, and before you bring them on board as a new client, you should evaluate whether they're the right fit for your team and the services they're seeking, just as they're evaluating you. Are they looking for the firm charging the lowest fees? If they're basing their decision solely or largely on cost, you may not want to take them on as a client. They are unlikely to find a firm that provides fast, accurate and inexpensive services, as it's extremely rare to have all three. If responsiveness and accuracy are important to them, they should be evaluating based on the quality of work and not cost alone. Of course, everyone has a budget, so your services will still need to fall in the range they can afford.

Once a client decides to move forward with your firm it's important that there is alignment on the expectations of services

provided, in addition to the fees you'll charge those services. Clients need to be willing to pay reasonable fees for your services, and an agreement outlining a clear payment schedule needs to be established upfront.

Over time, client relationships evolve, and the costs of operating your business will certainly increase. As a result, fees need to be adjusted throughout your relationship. How do your clients respond to fee increases? If you have clients that are understanding and truly value what you do, they'll be less likely to push back on any fee increases.

We recommend performing a client analysis at least annually. The results of this analysis should be identifying which clients need to have fees increased, which clients need scope adjustments and which clients should be culled.

Tracking time

An important part of analyzing your clients is reviewing profitability, but how is this done? Does your firm track your time? While it's not necessary to bill based on an hourly rate, monitoring and tracking time can be an effective way for you to measure profitability, utilization and revenue. An analysis should be conducted to properly identify how much time your team is spending to complete projects and service your clients. Ultimately, this time equates to dollars and it needs to be aligned with what you're charging clients in order to maintain profitability. Which projects are the most time consuming? Do certain clients require more of your time? What clients expect more from you but do not think they should pay you more than they are already paying you?

Consider your labor costs, including salaries, benefits and payroll taxes. We often see a 3.3 times multiple—and sometimes more—applied to these costs to establish billing rates for team members. As technology costs continue to increase for PR and marketing firms, we oftentimes see a technology or administrative fee charged at a flat percent of revenue. This is another valuable way to recoup some of your costs and increase profitability.

While tracking time might seem like a daunting task, you can start small. The good news is that there are many scalable and inexpensive tools available on the market.

Ways to streamline billing

Now that we have identified who the right clients are for us and have analyzed profitability, we need to bill for our services. Is your billing process straightforward and

client-friendly? Do you offer an easy and convenient way for clients to pay their bill? Managing client billings and following up on unpaid invoices can be very time-consuming and labor-intensive. Like timekeeping, there are many tools available on the market that can help to streamline the billing and collection process. Many even offer ways for clients to receive bills, review and pay them directly from their mobile devices. These solutions can send reminders on your behalf so you do not have to keep following up with clients.

Using technology for billing and collections can help reduce payment delays and the amount of time your team is spending on the process.

Other considerations

Beyond whether a client is appreciative of your work and pays on time, there are other things to consider. Do they refer business to you? Do they address issues upfront? Do they call you constantly, at all hours of the day? While you can't necessarily assess these areas before taking them on as a client, these are items you can address upfront at the beginning your relationship.

Take the time to get to know the potential client you may be working with to ensure you feel like they're a good fit for your firm. It can be challenging to turn business away, but in the long term, it will be better for your business. It's important to establish policies and procedures so everyone is aligned going into the relationship. If you have built a strong relationship, it will be easier to overcome any issues that arise along the way. ●

PR brief

Boston firms merge to form Issues Management Group

Solomon McCown & Cence strategic communications shop and Murphy Donoghue Partners government relations firm have merged to form Issues Management Group in Boston.

Dan Cence will helm the more than 50-member firm, which also has an office in New York.

He said the combination will "enhance our ability to shape the conversation in an increasingly complex media political and regulatory environment."

MDP co-founders Jack Murphy and Roger Donoghue will serve as partners of IMG.

Murphy did a 14-year stint in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Donoghue also founded the Donoghue Barrett & Singal law firm.

Helene Solomon & Ashley McCown, who launched Solomon & McCown in 2003, are senior advisors of IMG.

Massachusetts Health & Hospital Assn., Beacon Capital Partners, New England Journal of Medicine, Altrius Health, Rockland Trust Bank and Women's Foundation of Boston are IMG clients.

Global Strategy admits it goofed

Global Strategy Group, a Democratic polling firm with union clients, admits it was dumb to represent Amazon as it sought to crush an organizing drive at its JFK8 warehouse on Staten Island.

The New York firm posted this April 11 statement on its website: “While there have been factual inaccuracies in recent reports about our work for Amazon, being involved in any way was a mistake. We are deeply sorry, and we have resigned that work.”

That statement replaced an earlier one that ripped the March 31 CNBC story, “Amazon hired an influential Democratic pollster to fight Staten Island union drive” as grossly inaccurate and a misrepresentation of its work. It cited GSG founding Partner/President Jeffrey Pollock as a source for more info.

GSG’s reputation has taken a hit in the labor community.

The American Federation of Teachers and Service Employees International Union’s New York affiliate told the liberal *Jacobin* Magazine that they would never hire the firm again.

“We are glad that GSG has written an apology, and is taking some accountability in the aftermath of the disclosure that they assisted Amazon,” AFT President Randi Weingarten told *Jacobin*.

The Nevada Democratic Party also has decided not to hire GSG again.

JFK8 is Amazon’s only unionized facility, though the company is challenging the results of the vote. ○

BGR Group gets Bytedance’s Urban

BGR Group has hired David Urban, Executive VP of North American Corporate Affairs for China’s ByteDance, as Managing Director.

He joined the parent of TikTok in 2020 to help it navigate tricky public policy issues and communications challenges. He also advised ByteDance on ESG and corporate social responsibility issues.

Earlier, Urban was president of the American Continental Group lobbying shop, handling clients such as Zoom and 7-Eleven.

Urban made his mark in Pennsylvania Republican politics, counseling Senators Arlen Specter, Rick Santorum and Pat Toomey.

He also served as Senior Campaign Advisor to Donald Trump during his presidential run.

BGR founding Partner Haley Barbour said Urban’s “insights into communications, policy, law and politics make him uniquely suited to the BGR team.” ○



David Urban

Harris comms director heads to Powell Tate

Ashley Etienne, who was Deputy Assistant to President Biden and Communications Director for Vice President Harris, joins Powell Tate, the public affairs unit of The Weber Shandwick Collective, as Senior Counselor.

Etienne has also served as Communications Director and Senior Advisor to Nancy Pelosi and Director of Communications for Rep. Elijah Cummings.

Based in Washington, D.C., she will provide senior counsel to



Ashley Etienne



clients in Powell Tate’s public affairs, crisis and issues management, corporate, social impact, and diversity, equity and inclusion practices. ○

WestExec hires nation’s ex-top spy

Former Central Intelligence Agency Director John Brennan is joining strategic advisory firm WestExec Advisors as Principal.

Brennan headed the CIA from March 2013 until January 2017. After leaving that post following Trump’s election, he was harshly critical of the former President. Trump responded by referring to Brennan as a “lowlife” and threatening to revoke his security clearance, a threat on which he did not follow through.

Prior to his CIA post, Brennan was Deputy National Security Advisor and Assistant to President Obama for homeland security and counterterrorism. He previously served as the CIA’s daily intelligence briefer to President Clinton and Chief of Staff to then-Director of the CIA George Tenet.

As Principal at WestExec, he’ll advise on strategy and geopolitical risk, as well as helping clients handle key business opportunities and navigate global challenges. ○



John Brennan

Biden’s COVID PR chief joins Disney

Kristina Schake has joined Walt Disney Co. as Executive VP-Global Communications as she wrapped up a 10-month stint as the Biden administration’s COVID-19 Public Education Campaign Director.

She took that post in the Department of Health and Human Services after serving as communications specialist for Barack and Michelle Obama’s Higher Ground Productions.

Schake also was Deputy Communications Director for Hillary Clinton’s 2016 Presidential Campaign and Communications Director for First Lady Michelle Obama.

Between political stints, Schake worked as head of global communications at Instagram and chief communications officer at L’Oreal.

At Disney, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary this year, Schake reports to Geoff Morrell, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer.

He said Schake’s experience in political and corporate campaigns will help him “integrate communications with government relations, public policy and corporate social responsibility into a new corporate affairs team.” ○



Kristina Schake

Libya votes for Podesta

Tony Podesta is working to assure the Biden administration, Congress and the US media that the Government of Libya is committed to conducting free and fair elections this year.

Libya's first presidential election was scheduled for Dec. 24, 2021, but failed to take place as rival factions could not agree on the political framework required to conduct the vote.

The United Nations backs elections in 2022, warning that the current political instability could further destabilize the oil-rich country.

The US, which "temporarily" relocated its Libyan embassy from Tripoli to Tunis (Tunisia) in 2015, says its official policy is to "promote the ability of Libyans to achieve a unified and inclusive government that can both secure the country and meet the economic and humanitarian needs of the Libyan people."

Podesta will push the dual purpose of maintaining political gains for the Libyan Government and advancing stability in Libya to foster agreement on a constitutional basis for elections in 2022.

Its contract is with Tala Elemery Consulting Middle East, a United Arab Emirates-based outfit that is retained and directed by Libya.

Podesta.com is to "purposefully liaise" with appropriate US government agencies and officials, and arrange meetings and media opportunities.

The firm is pursuing its objectives through a combination of policy and communications expertise and says it will carry out its duties "in an ethical and business-like manner."

Podesta Group, which was a top Democratic lobbying shop, imploded in 2017 after it became entangled in the federal investigation of former President Trump's ties to Russia. ○

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.

King & Spalding LLP, Atlanta, GA, **registered March 4, 2022 for America-Georgia Economic Cooperation Foundation**, Tblisi, Georgia, regarding researching and preparing a paper about the benefits of supporting trade and investment with Georgia.

Sidley Austin LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered March 9, 2022 for YPF Sociedad Anonima**, Buenos Aires, Argentina, regarding providing legal defense services and possible participation in off-the-record meetings which may involve government officials or representatives from the United States and Argentina.

Squire Patton Boggs LLP, Washington, D.C., **registered April 13, 2022 for The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**, The United States Embassy of Ethiopia, Washington, DC, regarding providing counsel on the U.S.-Ethiopia bilateral relationship and its interactions with the U.S. government.

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.

Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, Washington, D.C., **registered April 16, 2022 for Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound**, Hyannis, MA, regarding issues related to the permanent preservation of Nantucket Sound.

Fierce Government Relations, Washington, D.C., **registered April 20, 2022 for News Media Alliance**, Arlington, VA, regarding Journalism Competition and Preservation Act of 2021.

Monument Advocacy, Washington, D.C., **registered April 19, 2022 for The National Wildlife Federation**, Merrifield, VA, regarding issues related to conservation.

Van Scoyoc Assocs., Washington, D.C., **registered April 21, 2022 for the University of Alaska**, Fairbanks, AK, regarding science, technology and workforce development related issues.

FGH picks up \$1.2M DRC assignment

Finsbury Glover Hering has signed a \$1.2 million one-year strategic communications & government affairs pact with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The firm also will provide research, website services and collateral development to advance DRC's engagement with the US Millennium Challenge Corp. and other organizations in order to promote its economic objectives.

The contract, which was signed April 5, prohibits the DRC from hiring any FGH staffer working on the account for a year following termination of the contract. ○

Finn Partners burnishes UAE image

Finn Partners has inked a \$1.3 million, six-month contract with the Ministry of Presidential Affairs for the United Arab Emirates to develop a communications strategy designed to bolster the image of the Gulf State.

The contract calls for Finn Partners to "develop a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the current state of the UAE's image and soft power in terms of influence and impact on international affairs both regionally and globally."

It will identify areas of improvement for the UAE's soft power strategies by looking at the use of it by the UK, Europe, North America, South America and the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman).

Finn Partners will devise an "image enhancement action plan" that includes initiatives, objectives, stakeholder mapping, implementation and engagement strategy focused on priority countries of interest. ○

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j public relations

J Public Relations

530 7th Ave., #502, New York, NY 10018
212/924-3600
letstalk@jpublicrelations.com
www.jpublicrelations.com
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

Office Locations:

New York

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

San Diego

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

Los Angeles

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

London

123 Buckingham Palace Rd.
Victoria, London SW1W 9SH, UK
+44 (020) 3890 5838

Clients Include:

Adare Manor - Co. Limerick, Ireland
Africa Adventure Consultants
Andronis Exclusive (multiple properties) - Santorini, Greece
Château du Grand-Luce - Loire Valley, France
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Jamie Sigler O'Grady,
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