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March: Food & Beverage
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June: Global & Multicultural
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August: Financial/I.R.
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### Trump, press scramble to rebuild Mueller narrative

pecial Counsel Robert Mueller's bombshell first indictments against former Trump campaign aides in the Russia investigation were revelatory for a number of reasons. First, the charges were substantive and wide-reaching enough to suggest the investigation won't be going away anytime soon.

Second, they underscored the lengths to which Trump loyalists in the media will go to keep their audiences dancing to the drumbeat of denial, with the usual menu of dismissive claims that it's all a witch hunt, or fake news, or launching a disinformation campaign of whataboutisms in a desperate attempt to redirect us to the *real* story: namely, Hillary Clinton's 2009 deal to grant U.S. uranium production to a Russian nuclear energy agency while she was Secretary of State, or "fake news" outlet the Washington Post's October report that the Clinton campaign helped fund the infamous 2016 Trump dossier.

Former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort, along with his business associate Richard Gates, were hit with a dozen counts not actually linked to anything involving the 2016 campaign: tax evasion, money laundering and intentionally conspiring to defraud the government by failing to register lobbying work for a pro-Russia Ukrainian political party with the Justice Department. Manafort, who's now the first campaign chief since Watergate to be indicted, has pleaded not guilty to those charges.

Then there's the case of George Papadopoulos, the 30-year-old former Trump foreign policy advisor who was quietly arrested in July and pleaded guilty in October to lying to federal investigators regarding his months-long attempts to arrange meetings between the Trump camp and high-ranking Russian government officials. Manafort, Gates and other senior Trump officials apparently knew what Papadopoulos was doing, as did Agriculture Dept. adviser Sam Clovis, who encouraged Papadopoulos to seal the deal on a meeting. So, why are we just hearing about it now? Unsealed court papers show Papadopoulos had been lending "proactive cooperation" to the investigation since his arrest, meaning for more than three months he may have worn a wire in exchange for cutting a plea deal, and his work with federal investigators could produce further charges against other staffers. This is very bad news.

So far, Trump and his administration have responded to the news with wild feats of obscurantism, utilizing a confusing communications strategy that serves to both distance the President from the allegations while, simultaneously, casting the developments as no big deal. Trump on Oct. 30 took to Twitter to respond to the arrests, claiming Manafort's unlawful activities occurred "years ago," and "long before [Manafort] came to the campaign." This is incorrect. According to Mueller's Oct. 30 indictment, Manafort hid Ukrainian payments from U.S. authorities between "approximately 2006 through at least 2016," during which time he was serving as Trump campaign Chairman. On Papadopoulos, Trump cast the former advisor as a "young, low level volunteer" who "has already proven to be a liar."

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders repeated these talking points, claiming the former campaign members were indicted on charges that had "nothing to do with the President." She then doubled down on the image of Papadopoulos as a glorified coffee boy, referring to him as an unpaid volunteer on an advisory council that met once in the course of a year.

Predictably, Trump's allies in the media have fallen lock-step behind these clumsy PR efforts, desperately attempting to spin a confusing narrative of often-contradictory talking points that downplay the indictments while attempting to use the opportunity as a chance to rally their audiences to follow them down the rabbit hole after their own cherry-picked conspiracy theories involving Hillary Clinton.

Sean Hannity, who's gone absolutely ballistic over the scandal, laid bare his paranoid, fevered delusions in an October monologue, claiming there's "zero evidence of Trump Russia collusion" before pivoting into a baseless conspiracy theory that Mueller is somehow "clearly complicit" in Clinton's 2009 Uranium One scandal. Jesse Watters, appearing on "The Five," also used the news as a classic "but Hillary!" bait-and-switch, claiming that what "Papadopoulos did, Hillary did 10 times worse." Sidney Powell, speaking on "Fox & Friends," claimed that "the entire investigation was set up, basically, to impugn this presidency and to make it as hard as possible for Mr. Trump to carry out his duties."

In a series of bizarre new developments, both the New York Post and the Wall Street Journal's editorial board have penned editorials calling for Mueller's resignation. In the strangest twist of all, Fox has now set its sights on the judges presiding over the Paul Manafort case, reporting that one judge has a son who was allegedly convicted of selling heroin, and that another donated \$1,000 to Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign.

There's another unlikely ally that has aligned with this narrative. Speaking with the media on Oct. 31, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov called the investigation "over-the-top Russophobic hysteria" and the suggestion of any election meddling "fantasies" without "a single piece of proof." Politics truly makes strange bedfellows. O

— Jon Gingerich



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### Millennials most likely to ignore product recalls

A recent survey suggests that Millennials are significantly more likely than other age groups to be noncompliant with product return notifications or to even take them seriously. **By Jon Gingerich** 

KEA. Volkswagen. Blue Bell. Lululemon. Samsung. Product recalls have been responsible for a growing share of headlines and crisis retainers in recent years, but members of the Millennial generation seem less likely than other age groups to respond to these product return notifications or even take them seriously, according to a recent consumer survey commissioned by recall management company Stericycle Expert Solutions.

Stericycle's survey suggests that those belonging to the 18-to-34-year-old demographic are the least compliant across all age groups when it comes to recall notices involving everything from food, pharmaceuticals and motor vehicles to consumer electronics.

In fact, the survey found that Millennials are three times more likely to simply ignore recall notices after reading them compared to members of the Baby Boomer generation (18 percent vs. six percent), are twice as likely to toss these notices in the trash

(36 percent vs. 16 percent) and also more likely to characterize recall notices as "not serious" (33 percent vs. 21 percent).

Of the different types of potential product recalls listed in the survey, Millennials expressed the greatest lack of interest in recalls involving consumer electronic products. On the other hand, Millennials seemed to agree with older age groups on the gravity of recalls pertaining to either food or pharmaceutical products. Nearly 70 percent of all respondents ranked one of these recall categories as either the most serious or second-most serious form of recall, with a wide majority - 85 percent — claiming they check their refrigerators or cupboards when they hear about a food recall on the news, and 82 percent claiming to do the same in their medicine cabinet when it involves a recalled pharmaceutical product.

The survey also found that personal relevance — or lack thereof — was a key driver of recall non-compliance among members of the Millennial, Generation X and Baby Boomer generations. Approximately 70 percent of all respondents admitted that they judge recall notices based on whether they believe they're personally at risk. More than a quarter (26 percent) of all respondents polled said they believe recall notices are simply sent primarily out of legal obli-

Finally, the survey found that overall, across all age groups, respondents took most seriously product recalls involving appliances and power tools. O

### Magazines bank on events to drive growth

By Jon Gingerich

espite years of dwindling pagecounts, advertisers and audiences, an October survey of industry experts shows that professionals working at magazine brands appear unexpectedly confident on the future of the magazine-media land-

According to the survey, conducted by magazine industry news site Folio, a reason for this rests on one key area where activity seems to be booming: events.

Nearly 54 percent of respondents said that publisher-branded events — trade shows, exhibits, sponsorships and other live opportunities that forge partnerships between media brands and advertisers will be a top source of growth within the next year.

About a quarter (23 percent) of magazine pros surveyed said events now comprise the fastest growing part of their business, although a greater share (44 percent) said digital media currently claims that role. Content marketing and print followed, at 18 percent and 15 percent, respectively.

Apparently, the publisher-branded event landscape has the magazine media industry feeling uncharacteristically bullish in 2017, as nearly 70 percent of the survey's respondents said they now anticipate their revenue to grow within the next year, with nearly 40 percent expecting double-digit gains, while 30 percent claim they expect growth to hover somewhere in the single digits.

Nearly half of magazine-media pros polled (46 percent) also cited print and digital advertising opportunities as big areas of growth within the coming year. Marketing services such as white papers, webinars and special e-blasts followed closely behind, at 36 percent. Only 18 percent believe supplemental materials will drive growth, followed by subscriptions, at 10 percent. O



### Facebook use plummets across Middle East

Facebook's popularity among Internet users is rapidly declining throughout the MENA region, and has now been dethroned by WhatsApp as the social media platform of choice. **By Jon Gingerich** 

espite a general rise in social media use in the Middle East and a consistent increase of Internet penetration across every country in that region, Facebook's popularity now appears to be on the decline, according to a seven-nation survey of Middle Eastern media use conducted by Northwestern University in Oatar.

With a penetration of nearly 75 percent of Internet users, Facebook has long-been the dominant social media platform in the MENA region, but that appears to be changing. While Internet penetration has risen overall in every country in the region, Facebook use among Internet users has declined across nearly all countries during the same time period, dropping 10 percentage points since 2015 and 20 percentage points since 2013.

In Qatar and Saudi Arabia, Facebook use plummeted by more than 20 percentage points in the last two years alone, to 22 percent in Qatar (compared to 43 percent in 2015) and 55 percent in Saudi Arabia (com-

behind, with more than 15 million engage-

By Jon Gingerich

pared to 76 percent in 2015).

In the United Arab Emirates, Facebook use among all nationals declined to about 70 percent, versus 83 percent in 2015 and 84 percent in 2013.

On the other hand, smartphone instant messaging service WhatsApp has exploded in the Middle East, with about two-thirds of all nationals citing its use and now accounting for nearly 80 percent penetration this year among the region's Internet users, edging out Facebook for the first time and now topping the list of the region's preferred social media platform.

Photo-sharing service Instagram has also surged, from six percent to 39 percent penetration among Internet users in the region. Use of messaging app Snapchat has also grown, now used by about 28 percent of the population.

According to the survey, younger nationals (18-24 year-olds and 25-34 year-olds) tend to favor Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter. While WhatsApp, Facebook and YouTube tend to skew younger as well, older demographics (45+) are more inclined to cite these platforms as their mediums of choice. O

### Viral content battles news for social engagement

oft" media items — or viral, "feel tent also appear to be yielding relatively higher levels of engagement than years prior. Conservative news and opinion site The Daily Wire produces nearly 16 million engagements on more than 1,100 articles, and Capitol Hill mainstay The Hill wasn't far

good" content produced by online publishers - could be edging out hard news sites for stories that yield the most interactions on Facebook, according to findings by analytics firm NewsWhip. NewsWhip's latest Facebook publish-

er rankings, which listed the top 25 sites ranked by total engagements - likes, comments, shares and reactions — on Facebook in September reveal that while "traditional" publishers still produce the content most likely to be shared, commented on and discussed via the social platform, that trend could be changing.

Bored Panda, the cute-centric art and photo site focusing on viral, animal-based content, earned NewsWhip's number-one spot for engagement for the month of September, recording more than 32 million interactions throughout with 1,231 published articles.

Fox News and the New York Times took second and third place, respectively, for a near tie (Fox netted 28 million interactions on 55,000 articles, versus NYT's 26 million interactions on about 5,700 articles). CNN. com, NBC.com and the U.K.'s Daily Mail rounded out the rankings' top five, earning 23.8 million, 23.5 million and 21.3 million engagements, respectively.

Millennial-focused online news and entertainment site BuzzFeed landed in News-Whip's top ten for the first time, recording nearly 17 million Facebook engagements through nearly 9,000 articles. Inspiration-oriented site Shareably took the 19th spot, beating top-tier outlets such as ESPN and the U.K.'s Independent with more than 13 million engagements.

Digital outlets focusing on political con-

ments on nearly 4,000 articles. O 21 Years in 2017 as the Broadcast PR Industry Leader The Nation's Premier Public Relations, Communications, and Strategy Firm Specializing in Radio and Television Strauss Me STRATEGI Quality Radio and Television Satellite Media Tours With Strategic, Targeted, & High-Level Results Audio News Releases: Largest Distribution Network & Most Premium **Guaranteed Placements**  Other Services: Actualities, Advertising, Audio News Releases, Audio & Video Podcasting, Bites & B-Roll, On-Site Event Coverage, Promotions & PSAs, Satellite Uplink and Downlink Service Expertise Includes Public Affairs, Healthcare, Technology, Entertainment, Spanish-Language, African American, & More National Contacts Include: Bloomberg, CBS Newspath, CNBC, CNN, Fox News Edge, MSNBC, NBC News Channel, & Many Others Established Relationships with Radio & Television Outlets in All Major Media Markets Best Customer Service & Most Thorough Reports in the Industry Call Us Toll-Free at (888) 638-0220 www.straussmedia.com WASHINGTON, DC: **NEW YORK:** LOS ANGELES: **National Press Building** 262 W 38th Street (626) 794-1350 529 14th Street, NW Suite 803 losangeles@ New York, NY 10018 (212) 302-1234 **Suite 1163** straussmedia.com Washington, DC 20045 (202) 638-0200 newvork@ straussmedia.com info@straussmedia.com

### **Communicating in turbulent times**

In a world transformed by technology, leaders in the tech industry has been entrusted with a major responsibility to demonstrate an awareness of the impact their products and services have on individuals and communities in the information era.

By Peter Prodromou

ver the past four decades, technological progress has redefined the modern world, changing how we live, work, meet, play, even love. It has brought billions of people into the middle class, created an infrastructure for health, commerce and education in some of the most remote parts of the globe. It was guided by a utopian libertarianism that believed only the best ideas would rise to the surface. Despite the massive good done by these innovations, this viewpoint also left blind spots and neglected to confront or plan for the side effects of such a massive revolution. And now, we've begun to see the world so wholly transformed begin to push back, its cultural and civic cornerstones unable to keep pace with such rapid technological progress.

Today, we're seeing an unprecedented consumption of information over the Internet. Almost 90 percent of America has access to the Internet, and one out of every two individuals worldwide has Internet access as well. Internet and mobile penetration rates continue to grow each year. Google easily leads Internet searches with more than 80 percent of the market.

Technology companies like Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft, Tencent, Apple and Alibaba now dominate the landscape, and Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple have all continued to grow in revenues and net income and have outpaced the S&P 500. The combined revenue of these firms exceeds the GDP of 88 percent of countries worldwide, according to 2016 GDP estimates from StatisticsTimes.com. These companies are transforming the economy and industries. Traditional bricks and mortar retail risk finding themselves uncompetitive.

### The growing influence of social media

More than two-thirds of U.S. adults get their news from social media. Facebook and YouTube dominate social media with 66 percent of adults using Facebook and 58 percent using YouTube. A stunning percentage of adults, 45 percent, get their largely disintermediated news from Facebook and 18 percent from YouTube, according to Pew Research Center's News Use Across Social Media Platforms 2017 survey.

Disintermediation is making traditional media irrelevant and is taking newspapers down. No one is checking to ensure the accuracy of the news. The telephone is being used to manage and materially affect the outcome of elections.

In the old days, the news and news analysis was comprehensive. There were four networks you could trust. Today, cynical institutions are creating disfavor of others to lessen their influence. The 24/7 news cycle waters down our ability to judge the veracity of what we read, see and hear. And there's an increasing lack of trust in traditional touchstones - media, government, industry associations and academia - characterized as fake news as a result of a proliferation of the same. Fox News demonstrated its ability to move voter percentages to the right and the left. Our President deploys Twitter today to communicate directly to his constituencies and to set the news agenda.

Across the globe, we've seen large numbers of people feeling alienated from a culture that they believe is moving too fast, where truth is no longer concrete due to the proliferation of fake news, where mass amounts of generated wealth have made inequality easier to see. And in response to all of this, we've seen the rise of reactionary movements on the right and on the left, all too willing to place these technology companies in the crosshairs of legislation, regulation and negative popular sentiment. Google was fined earlier this year a record \$2.7 billion in an E.U Anti-trust ruling; and the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee is currently summoning Facebook about the prospect of the Russian use of Facebook to influence the U.S. presidential election.

### Responding to the challenge

To continue to thrive, the technology industry must first be ethical as an industry. It must chart a path forward that demonstrates an awareness of the impact of the products and services it sells on the individuals and communities that rely on them. Other agenda for technology companies includes:

Embrace the idea of long-term civic good. It must embrace the idea that fostering a long-term civic good is better for the company than generating short-term

Get outside the bubble. Leading technology companies must demonstrate willingness to engage openly with experts outside of technology - policymakers, sociologists, economists — who can deliver guidance that goes beyond the Silicon Vallev bubble.

Build a commitment self-governance. They must also build an industry-wide commitment to self-governance centered on global socio-economic stability and smart innovation.



Peter Prodromou

For media companies, it's time for these firms

to take a stand on what modern media is and define their roles and responsibilities in it. They have an opportunity to establish fact-based dialogues that challenge the current status quo and misinformation they have been helping to peddle. They can also highlight the opportunity this transformative industry is creating with new businesses and new good paying jobs, inspiring innovation and boosting entrepreneurship. Finally, they can take an active role in restoring faith in U.S. institutions, by taking an activist role in community-based approaches and managing themselves as media companies. An agenda for these companies includes:

Intermediated newsrooms. Contentladen media companies like Facebook and Google should consider putting intermediated newsrooms in place to help assure the accuracy of news and begin to restore confidence in the medium.

Shared connection campaigns. Online shared connection campaigns led by these companies could connect users and drive conversations around political, economic, moral leadership, innovation and other important issues of the day.

Public trust consortia. This initiative would lay the foundation for developing a consortium of major technology firms to address the issues of public trust, media curation, and the integrity of online news. The consortium could highlight the responsible role these media firms are trying to play and serve as a think tank for policies that increases Facebook's standing, and as a hub for third-party coordination on matters of public policy.

\_ Continued on page 19

## We Get Storytelling.

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### **Emerging technologies, smartphone-level impact**

Mobile devices and the app economy have transformed every aspect of our lives. Here are some of the ways today's emerging technologies might disrupt — or assist — our world in the years to come.

By Lisa Vallee-Smith

ver the past decade, we've seen significant changes in the technology industry. Hardware, software, interfaces and services have all transformed in remarkable ways. The cumulative effect of these innovations can be summed up simply: technology isn't just part of our everyday lives now, it's at the core of human in-

For the most part, this evolution traces back to the dawn of the smartphone. As mobile devices have become more capable, easier to use, and ubiquitous, they've changed how people consider the concept of "personal computing." It no longer means sitting down at a desk and using a keyboard and mouse. Within the context of our daily lives, the phones in our pockets are more powerful than any laptop or desktop.

Mobile devices have become our cameras of choice, our handheld gaming consoles, our GPS units, our social-media dashboards, our VR and AR headsets, our music players, our mobile TVs, our department stores and our newspapers. They've changed the way we summon a ride, order food, split a bill, and even find a date. The app economy is worth a trillion dollars, and it didn't even exist a decade ago.

Yes, the smartphone has changed a lot of things. That's not news. However, it's important to consider the smartphone as a symbol of how certain technologies can impact seemingly everything around us. Now that we're living in a mobile-first world, what will be the next technological sea change to transform our lives?

It'll be much bigger than phones. The next 10 years will see significant advancements in human-machine interfaces, transportation and city infrastructure. Technology is bound to become an even bigger part of our lives. In the coming years, these advancements will maintain the dizzying pace of

### Voice is the default interface

As much as touchscreens and apps have changed the world, we're already moving beyond them. Amazon launched its first Alexa-powered Echo device three years ago, and while voice controls were part of our mobile devices before the Echo, putting them in a fixed in-home device was a revelation. These smarter speakers don't just make it easier to check the weather or play our favorite music, they've also become control

centers for our increasingly smarter homes. Google and Apple have since joined the voice-speaker fray, which means spoken-word interfaces will only get better and more pervasive from here on out. Big-name competition and ongoing improvements in artificial intelligence and deep learning will help these voice platforms get much smarter in the coming years.

Just as smartphones made touchscreen interfaces mainstream, these popular voice assistants make spoken commands the new normal. Now that there are several options for your home, in-car systems are likely to be the next major voice battleground.

### Cities become giant computers

Think of the rapid evolution of the smart home. Now, expand that idea citywide. The upcoming transition to 5G networks - another major trend to watch in the coming years — will allow city infrastructure to become increasingly connected. Combined with that connectivity, maturing IoT technologies and evolving artificial intelligence will help population centers analyze large pools of data in real time and adapt accordingly.

Imagine public-safety workers being automatically alerted when a person is in danger, or ambulances being automatically deployed when a car accident occurs. Picture traffic lights changing as an ambulance approaches an intersection or your car automatically finding an open parking space near a popular restaurant.

Not all of these applications will be a reality right away, but your city may turn "smart" sooner than you think. The Consumer Technology Association predicts there will be 88 smart cities around the globe by 2025. In 2018, for the first time, International CES will have a large portion of its show floor devoted to smart cities.

### Self-driving cars dominate the roads

Just as smart cities will evolve steadily over the next decade, the vehicles that populate their roads will offer increasing levels of automation. We've already seen in-car systems that can change lanes, parallel park and take some of the tedium out of being stuck in traffic. We're on the brink of those automated systems becoming standard-issue features in all cars. However, the real self-driving revolution will happen outside of individually owned vehicles.

Taxis and shuttles will be the first fully au-

tonomous vehicles on the road, with preset routes to airports, landmarks or city centers. While these vehicles will be designed to drive without any human interaction, the way they do so will evolve. The first generation will navigate with built-in sensors and onboard mapping systems. However, as smart cities evolve, so will these navigation systems; the vehicles will interact with one

another and their surroundings, taking cues from the infrastructure itself. Smart traffic signals, road signs, and car-to-car communication will reshape and optimize the flow of traffic.



Lisa Vallee-Smith

All this will also leave a lot of in-car downtime for passengers.

Without the need to steer, cars can become more like extensions of our homes. They'll allow us to get some work done, bingewatch Netflix, and maybe even catch an extra 20 minutes of sleep. The shapes, sizes, and interiors of cars will all go through radical redesigns, and the roads of the future will look incredibly different due to all the automation.

### Changes that go well beyond technology

As was the case with smartphones, each of these emerging technologies may have a societal impact that extends beyond its core purpose. And they aren't all positive.

Improved voice interactions can change the future of computer interfaces, creating devices that are more personal — and more intrusive - than ever before. Smarter cities may lead to efficient large-scale infrastructures, but at the risk of creating new concerns about personal privacy and security. And while self-driving cars can pave the way to safer roads, many people aren't comfortable with the idea of cars taking the wheel by themselves. The implications of more-advanced AI and automation will have a substantial impact on the job market and society at large.

It all comes back to another lesson we can learn from the rise of the smartphone: even the best technologies can have negative consequences. As technology becomes an even bigger part of our lives in the future, it's important for it to become more assistive than disruptive.

Lisa Vallee-Smith is CEO of Airfoil. A public relations and marketing communications consultant with more than 25 years of experience. her expertise includes primary research, strategic planning, corporate communications, and issues/crisis management. O



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## Somebody is going to redefine your industry, will it be you?



### When hackers target public relations firms

Corporate communications companies and their counselors are ideal targets for cybersecurity breaches. Here are several steps firms can take to safeguard information and prevent further crisis to their clients.

By Frank Tortorici

he recent debacle surrounding the hacking of credit reporting bureau Equifax, which exposed millions of customers' proprietary and contact information, is just further evidence that cybersecurity issues are not going away and will remain at the forefront of international business concerns.

One cybersecurity matter very rarely examined, however, is how corporate communications firms, often charged with aiding and buttressing other businesses' corporate reputations, handle a situation that imperils their own online data and programs.

Communications firms and public relations agencies are often the experts people turn to in any matter of crisis and they are the purveyors of plans and programs designed to protect companies in times of struggle and disaster.

What happens when one of them is hacked?

PR agencies generally have a more-thanusual amount of sensitive information, because they have their own proprietary data, as well as reams of private material from a number of clients. Along with data loss, many organizations fear the reputational damages that they would incur as the result of a cyberattack. Case in point: Equifax.

Agencies that handle crisis communications are typically part of the process when responding to a cyberattack. Nation-state adversaries that want to control the narrative may specifically target such agencies precisely to meet that objective - controlling the narrative or to obtain information that could be otherwise damning.

"Everyone should be concerned with protecting employee, client, and company data including financial details — that goes without saying," said James Taliento, CEO and Founder of Cursive Security, a Long Island-based cybersecurity solutions company. "But PR is all about the communication and the content. Unfortunately, they would be an ideal attack point for a disruptor aiming to harm as many individuals and companies as possible."

Taliento believes that the top attack vectors would include those communication channels such as email, phone or messaging. Other areas of interest would be where sensitive information is being stored. Media outlets generally use highly accessible services to transfer such information: specifically, file storage services like DropBox, Drive and Box. Convenience is a necessity, but that information must be safeguarded to prevent further crisis to clients.

Global Ransomware attacks in June affected some communication companies, including British advertising agency WPP. Expert hackers know that going after a PR, marketing communications or advertising firm will likely bear them a treasure trove of private data.

Since many communications firms take pride in crisis preparations programs for clients, it makes sense that they should bulk up security themselves for all the client data they possess. Yes, one must always remember that any information stored on a computer doesn't belong to you simply because you entered it.

According to anti-malware company Malwarebytes, there are many steps that firms can take to safeguard information and communications firms especially should take heed of these.

The first is to constantly update your OS and other software so that hackers can't take advantage of outdated safeguards in your security programs. PR firms should invest in even more sophisticated technology such as Malwarebytes Anti-Exploit.

It also goes without saying that you should rid all traces from any devices you sell or discard. One tip that is often ignored is to not use open Wi-Fi, which is easily accessible to most hackers. The best way to do this is to use an encrypted password.

Some more obvious solutions are to create difficult passwords which you should change frequently and lock devices and make timeouts fairly short. Several services offer two-factor authentication which makes hacking much more difficult.

Also, be sure not to link accounts. If you work for a PR firm, be especially sure that you don't comment on a social media site using your personal Facebook or Twitter when you're speaking for the company or on client matters.

And although storing things on the cloud is convenient, keep client sensitive information off the cloud. Be sure to log activity for clients on private servers to which only trusted company personnel have access.

A question that has been floated around more than once in the cybersecurity industry is whether PR agencies and communication firms are indeed targeted more than other companies by hackers. It's difficult to say this categorically, but such attacks are

Who is targeting communications and PR companies on the internet and why is it becoming more common? To answer

this question, according to Matti Kon, CEO of New York-based cybersecurity solutions firm InfoTech, it's important to understand that cyberattacks are divided into two major categories:



Frank Tortorici

Random attacks. Random attacks are usually performed by a

malware that's not prejudiced; it doesn't care if you're a major business or a small store, or whether you're a PR company or a hospital. If an everyday average form of malware makes its way into your system it will destroy anything it can. Everyday malware has flooded its way throughout the Internet and can automatically replicate itself and continue to spread by compromised systems. This is also applicable to Ransomware, which is a specific type of malware that will hold your organization ransom for payments, which you either make or your data will be published/stolen/destroyed, etc.

Specifically-targeted attacks. In these cases, the PR or communications company is targeted by an entity who would like to penetrate the system and get information about clients, projects or bank account information. These aren't random attacks, but are probably the result of individuals using the Internet and weaknesses in your systems in order to penetrate your organizational information and steal it, perhaps to get ahead of their competition.

These are similar in nature to the cases in which the Russians are blamed for compromising the American electoral system during the last election. This is targeted criminal activity.

A PR company, although probably holding more sensitive information than other types of businesses, has to safeguard its interest on the Internet just like any other company. Whether it has to protect itself from a random attack or from a targeted attack, every communications and PR

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### **Expanding bandwidth in tech communications**

Pushing product remains crucial, but tech clients increasingly demanding their PR firms deliver more strategic communications.

By Matthew Schwartz

n late 2015, Hewlett-Packard split into two listed companies, HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, resulting in roughly 30,000 job cuts. Against that backdrop, HPE was eager to assuage concerns among existing employees and inject a new esprit de corps.

Enter W2O Group. The PR agency had represented the old Hewlett Packard for several years and was now tasked with engaging Hewlett Packard Enterprise employees posthaste.

W2O quickly created "BeHPE," or "Be

part of Hewlett Packard Enterprise." The which program, launched in early 2016, provides a "way to empower employees and encourage them to use their voice on behalf of the brand, driving interest in the company's vision," said Mad-



Madelyn Varella

elyn Varella, head of integrated planning at W2O Group.

As part of the effort, the agency trains HPE employees how to share content via their personal social media channels and spark conversations online regarding the company's brand, products and services. HPE, in turn, promotes the program via the company's social platforms, thought leadership initiatives and live events.

"BeHPE" exceeded its goal of 10 percent participation among company employees — within the first 18 months of the program — by the end of 2016, Varella said. "We want to help employees stay engaged, position their stories better and get the right messages to the right places."

### **Expanding aperture**

W2O Group's efforts on behalf of HPE help to illustrate the changing PR demands among technology clients. In a post-digital age, tech companies are looking to their PR agencies for more strategic communications and to reach out to a growing number of disparate audiences both internally and externally.

PR campaigns focused on extolling a new technology or gee whiz algorithm continue to serve their place. However, with technology having a growing impact throughout the business sector and society, PR agencies have started to expand their aperture on behalf of tech clients to include multiple issues ranging from cybersecurity to privacy

to public policy.

APCO, which generated \$10.7 million in tech fees in 2016, with growth expected for

2017, works with both enterprise companies in the tech space, such as Adobe, as well as startups like OneCon-

"We need to engage global institutions and talk about broader issues through a CSR (corporate social re-



**Evan Kraus** 

sponsibility) and public-policy lens, rather than a commercial lens," said Evan Kraus, President and Managing Director of Operations at APCO Worldwide. "Tech clients are aware that they need to have those conversations, rather than just doing 'PR."

Peter Prodromou, President and CEO of Racepoint Global, stressed that it's more important than ever for PR agencies to educate tech clients how to effectively communicate to a broader set of constituents than in the recent past, as tech companies face growing scrutiny from government regula-

"The implication is how to formulate business strategies and deal with a potentially harsh regulatory environment," said Prodromou, whose clients include AT&T, Extreme Networks and Panasonic. "That's a very different ask."

### Integrated model

Indeed, tech clients want their PR firms to cultivate an integrated communications model and work with a broader array of

business departments within the company.

"Silos still exist, and there are some communications strategies that are not done as holistically as they might be, but the market is moving so fast that clients are being forced to change their thought



Peter Prodromou

processes," Prodromou said, adding that more and more of his tech clients now ask him to attend C-suite meetings to discuss their PR and marketing efforts. "We'll continue to do great creative for products, but the agencies that will win in the future are the ones who can provide new strategic

Tech continues to be a dominant sector

for Racepoint. In 2016, the agency garnered \$23.7 million in tech-related fees, with an increase in such fees projected for 2017.

To bolster the agency's portfolio, Racepoint in September launched a thought leadership initiative called The Think Tank. The multifaceted program, which is designed to show all clients how technology is

changing their markets, focuses on the macro issues affecting tech companies, including job displacement / job creation, civic leadership and social responsibility.



**Content creation** 

W2O Group, whose clients include Intel,

Verizon and Visa, is also working more frequently with tech companies' marketing and advertising departments to encourage an integrated model.

The change is reflected in W2O's tech fees: It generated \$19.5 million in tech fees in 2016, and anticipates a 10 percent increase this year.

"We're sharing insights about digital influencers, which media outlets are key, and the relationship between earned media

and marketing," Varella said. "It always helps the client become more integrated, and those are the teams that get the visibility, funding, and usually have more success in their organizations."



Ross Levanto

Christa Conte, Senior VP and head of digital

commerce at PR agency Hotwire, amplified Varella's comments. "Integrated communications is commanding a more significant share of the marketing mix than ever before," she said. "This means developing communications strategies to support lead and demand gen, in addition to traditional awareness building activities such as events and media relations."

Hotwire, which garnered \$13.3 million in technology revenue in 2016, with a five percent increase expected this year, continues to ramp up its influencer engagement programs. For retail tech company Velocity Worldwide, for example, Hotwire targets

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### The 'Better Economy' and what it means for PR

An emerging confluence of trends in the market have handed unprecedented power to the consumer, with public relations practitioners poised to become one of the greatest benefactors.

By Jason Mandell

number of years ago, I read a book called "The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR" by Al and Laura Ries. The basic premise was that marketing was shifting away from traditional paid advertising to one dominated by what's today commonly referred to as earned and owned media. As the co-founder of a San Francisco-based PR firm, I believed every word and had already witnessed this happening firsthand.

Companies such as eBay, Google, Amazon and Netflix were prime examples. None of these brands spent a dime on advertising in their early years, and most didn't even pay for PR. They grew organically because what they were doing was exciting to so many people.

The preceding advertising-dominated era was perhaps best showcased in the AMC series "Mad Men," in which high-powered ad execs were portrayed as regularly building or saving brands. They would rely on TV-based campaigns that preyed on our emotional connections, employing tactics like puppies, babies and beautiful women to win over an audience. If it pushed the right buttons, a commercial could fundamentally change the trajectory of a company.

We talk a lot now about how the Internet and social media has democratized marketing and media, but the Rieses wrote their book before blogs, Twitter, Instagram et al were part of our world. The basic premise has actually been in the making for a very long time.

Beyond what's been happening in marketing, there's a far larger macro trend evolving that I refer to as the "Better Economy." Success in many ways has become quite simple: the way you win today is by creating something better than what existed before. It seems obvious, but that often wasn't the case before. Those revolutionary brands mentioned before all have one thing in common: they improved on what had come previously. Google was better than Yahoo. Netflix was better than Blockbuster. Amazon was better than Borders. eBay was better than driving down the street to your neighbor's garage sale.

They didn't have to pay anyone to sell that story to consumers. It was a field of dreams: build it and they'll come. The entrenched competition couldn't compete because they were simply inferior. No ad campaign could change that.

But those companies, and many others

like them in the pre-social world, still had their work cut out for them. It took years for them to spread the word to the masses and grow into market leaders. Remember, Twitter was invented in 2006; by then Google was already worth over \$100 billion and Amazon \$15 billion.

The most recent period has quickened the pace; markets are changing faster than ever before. A company like Uber can go from startup to market leader in just a few years through a mix of word-of-mouth marketing and a dramatic improvement in product, in this case over the taxi-based system it displaced. A sample Tweet circa 2012 might have looked something like this: "Just used this new service called @ uber, so much better than Yellow Cab, try it out! #taxissuck #gethomefast #iloveuber."

This "Better Economy" has been driving the incredible growth of Silicon Valley and all of the other Valley and Alleys and Silicons around the world for nearly 20 years. That's nothing new. What is new is this trend is becoming so powerful that even the largest brands in the oldest industries are powerless to stop it.

From banking to beer to transportation to energy to food to retail and fashion, every industry has felt threatened by the chance of something better coming along and making it obsolete before it even finishes preparing for its quarterly analyst briefing (Ok, maybe not that fast!). In earlier eras, being the market leader usually meant two huge advantages: control of distribution and access, and the biggest advertising budget you could muster. New upstart competitor at your ankles? You can squeeze them out by limiting their access to customers and pouring a small fortune into the highly effective 30-second spots to be devoured by impressionable consumers.

My personal favorite is the beer industry. A fantastic documentary called "Beer Wars" details how the beer oligopoly of Budweiser, Miller and Coors controlled the market for decades through a threetier distribution system the government created after Prohibition. Partnering with a regional distributor compels them to push your product over the little guys which lends itself well to retailers, bars and restaurants that care about volume discounting to max their bottom line. The end result was grocery shelves filled with 30 different Anheuser Busch products and taps exclusively pouring drafts from the

three big brewing giants. These profits were then spent on sport league sponsorships and TV campaigns featuring frogs, bikinis and "cool" dudes convincing you to drink the beer regardless of how it tasted. Small

brewers couldn't compete with that.

But things started to change once the craft beer market gained momentum in small pockets around the country, driven entirely by consumer demand. One six-pack at a time, people started to realize that beer could actually



Jason Mandell

taste good, or at the very least was far better than what had previously only been available. Suddenly they had access like never before. People began to talk. Then they starting blogging and sharing their new favorite beers in droves. Beer discovery became a market in and of itself with festivals and pairings and all kinds of fun. The marketing cost is essentially zero.

Today, craft beer is approaching 20 percent market share in the U.S. and growing about 13 percent annually versus a decline in the "domestic" beer market. The consumer is now empowered in ways never before possible and the big brewers are no longer capable of controlling access and developing cute ads meant to move the market share needle. If millennials aren't watching those ads, how can they be reached? The big guys are so desperate, they even spent a million dollars on a Super Bowl ad making fun of beer geeks all the while buying up every craft brewer willing to sell its soul.

Our longtime client American Giant is one of the poster children of the "Better Economy" in the fashion sector. The company has spent virtually nothing on traditional paid media in its six-plus year history, relying on a branding, earned and owned media campaign that focused on the greatest sweatshirt ever made. The CEO outlined this trend in a book we co-authored with him called "I F\*\*\*ing Love That Company."

That brings me to my final key component of this new "Better Economy": customer relationships. Before these big changes started to occur, customer service was usually an afterthought for a big company. They did

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### PR IN THE 'BETTER ECONOMY'

Continued from page 18

it only because they had to, and invested the bare minimum to get by. Some people would inevitably complain or be unsatisfied, but those people were drops in the bucket compared to a deep infrastructure that could throw a few million bucks at a TV campaign in a matter of days.

But social media-fueled word-of-mouth has created a massive problem for market leaders and a wonderful opportunity for the disruptors. Suddenly, a random Instagram or YouTube "celebrity" with 100,000 followers can harm your brand with one simple scream. Yelp, TripAdvisor, Glassdoor and all the rest of the review sites have provided easy access to firsthand, unfiltered critiques of your company. And often there's very little, if anything, that can be done about it. This means that if a company doesn't have an authentic, customer-first philosophy that enables it to put out fires in a genuine manner, it's at great risk for brand deterioration.

The good news is a well-oiled social media and customer service team can be invaluable to building and maintaining a brand. Even better, doing so costs a pittance compared to trying to gain share and change behavior through traditional paid media campaigns.

There's a confluence of trends that have given power to the consumer, and brought big brands, typically used to controlling and influencing markets with relative ease, to their knees. The old methods no longer work, but new ones have emerged that are truly better for everyone. Lucky for us, PR practitioners are one of the big benefactors.

Welcome to the "Better Economy."

Mandell co-founder is LaunchSquad, a 120-person communications agency that focuses on emerging and innovative brands. Jason has helped over a hundred companies over the past 20+ years develop and share their stories with the world. O

### EXPANDING BANDWIDTH IN TECH

Continued from page 16

specific tech audiences via salon dinners, email newsletters or bespoke partnerships.

Influencer marketing is just one of a slew of new digital PR channels that are becoming more pronounced for tech clients.

Ross Levanto, Senior VP at Highwire, said tech clients are providing more budget to execute the firm's ideas for content marketing.

"There's a strong interest in going beyond earned media and taking a compelling idea and turning it into a video, an ebook or blog, to achieve marketing objectives such as aiding brand awareness and lead generation," Levanto said.

Take Highwire's integrated PR program

for Norwest Venture Partners, a global venture capital and private equity firm.

Highwire uses both earned and owned media to show how Norwest helps entrepreneurs develop their businesses. It also creates content tying Norwest to entrepreneurial topics such as ecommerce, and positions senior executives at the company as thought leaders.

"Content marketing has to be part of the mix," Levanto said.

Highwire generated \$14 million in tech fees in 2016, and anticipates a 17 percent increase for 2017.

Matthew Schwartz is Editorial Director of *Gould+Partners.* **O** 

### WHEN HACKERS TARGET PR FIRMS

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company should employ a dense, strong cyber security footprint, and train its employees regularly as cybersecurity should be a top priority. Kon says that it's highly recommended to have somebody on staff that is proactive in protecting the company from cyber threats. But if the company cannot afford a full-time person to monitor its systems, it should retain a cybersecurity technology organization that would

be responsible for protecting its footprint. This concern should report directly to the senior management of the communication/PR company because its success can literally save the firm from dissolution caused by clever and insidious hacking.

Frank Tortorici leads Marketing Maven's business and professional services practice out of their NYC office. He can be reached at frank@marketingmaven.com. O

### PR IN TURBULENT TIMES

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Community roundtables. These companies could use their convening authority to also engage users at the local level with community roundtables engaging on important issues of the day. Forum topics could include the skills gap, unemployment in towns abandoned by traditional manufacturing, or finding ways to spread technological innovation to businesses, and social entrepreneurs, etc.

Responsible journalism. These companies should publish manifestos on the future of responsible journalism, and build relationships with leading journalism schools as a means to build strong journalist talent capabilities and practices.

The alternative is to face onerous regulations, limits on the pace of innovation, loss of revenue and public demonization.

Finally, for communications firms, this is an issue of business strategy as well as communications. Smart companies will:

- Seize this moment to realign and act as business strategist as well as a communications expert.
- Demonstrate consistency and fairness in all communications and insist their teams have thoughtful engagement approaches.
- Embed social responsibility in the DNA of their clients' organizational structures and systems, and be in complete alignment with the client's business and engagement strategies. They will help their clients create programs, coalitions and platforms that show that their clients are aware, they are responsible and they are active. They will develop effective, highly integrated campaigns that effectively position their clients as leaders in this movement.
- · Develop and position their clients' thought leaders in issue areas of interest, and orchestrate events which bring industry allies, academics, policymakers, activists and more to the table for a robust discussion of the role technology companies and they play in society.
- Highlight the good their clients are doing but help them avoid pitfalls too (e.g., decisions that make short-term business sense, but do long-term reputational
- Create strategies that engage their clients directly with the social and civic implications of innovation. They will provide crisis management strategy designed to mitigate any unintended consequences along the way.

Peter Prodromou is CEO of Racepoint Global. O

### Picking partners for overseas growth

Smart strategies for signing partner agencies when it's time to take your tech company global.

By Phil Carpenter

ou're the CMO of a Silicon Valley-based tech company, and you're out with a friend at The Dutch Goose in Menlo Park for a beer, as you've just closed your series B financing and are in the mood to celebrate. Your friend runs marketing for a tech company that's further along — it has just filed its IPO paperwork, in fact — and on your second pint of Anchor Steam, you begin to talk shop.

"Hamelin Labs is killing it in the U.S.," your friend says. "Now that you've raised a new round, you have to be thinking about overseas expansion. You're soon going to have launches to manage in multiple countries. Have you nailed down your agency strategy yet?"

Sound familiar? When you reach this crossroads, it's important to think carefully about how to proceed, as the paths you could follow are different from one another, and once you head down one of them, it can be painful and time consuming to make a change later.

So, what are your options?

### The global firm

The allure of the global firm is the promise that a single agency can represent you in whatever markets you pursue. Entering Germany? Your global firm has an office in Berlin. Expanding into China? The global agency has offices in both Beijing and Shanghai.

In picking a global firm, you could select a generalist with broad mandates that include tech practice groups. Or, you could pick a tech specialist.

The global agency feels like the convenient choice. You get a single bill. You get unified measurement and reporting. And when it's time to move into a new region, you don't have to run an RFP to find a new

The principal problem with this model, however, is that talent can vary widely from office to office with a global firm. The agency's Mexico City team may be fantastic. But its Bogota team could be lousy ... and now you're stuck with them. Given that team quality is so critical to success in marketing and PR, it seems unwise even dangerous — to just roll with a global agency's default crew when entering a new

The other challenge is cost. If you have

a million dollars a year to spend on PR, global firms will give you plenty of love. But that's not a realistic PR budget for an emerging technology company. And if your budget is modest, you may end up with a global firm's "B team" (if it'll take your business at all).

#### Best of breed: the DIY model

An alternative to signing a global agency is to go with the "best of breed." In this scenario, you are hiring the very best agency partner you can find in each market you enter. And under the "DIY model," you'll then manage these agencies yourself.

Let's be clear: This path takes work. You'll need to invest in identifying, onboarding and managing strong agencies in your target geographies. You'll have to coordinate their activities to make sure they're executing according to your overarching global PR plan. You'll need to work with them on measurement and reporting so that you can roll up results in a unified fashion. And you'll have to deal with budgets and bills from multiple vendors.

But if you're willing to put in the effort described above, the outcome can be outstanding. You get access to top-notch PR talent and the results that talent can deliver for you. If a team isn't performing to your standards in a particular market, you can swap agencies in the region without causing problems throughout your agency portfolio.

You'll get more for your money, as you will work with smaller to mid-sized agencies that value your business and will work hard to keep it. And, you will have deep knowledge and excellent control, as you will be very close to what each agency is doing in each region and how they are performing for you.

If you follow this path, make sure you hire the right internal staff to deftly manage the global network of firms you'll build. Your best bet is to bring on team members who have worked both for agencies and for other tech companies. This way, they'll have a detailed understanding of how agency life works and can manage your agency partners most effectively.

### Best of breed: centralized control

In this scenario, once again you're hiring the very best agencies you can afford in the different markets you are targeting. The variation on the theme, however, is that with the centralized control model, you appoint a single agency as the coordinating firm. You work closely with this lead agency to set strategy. The lead agency, in turn, handles the day-to-day interaction with

the regional agencies. It also coordinates things like measurement and billing.

This hybrid proach is a compelling one. You retain the ability to hire the best possible talent in each market. But you outsource the operational



**Phil Carpenter** 

complexities of managing these disparate agencies to a single coordinating firm.

Yes, this model does come with some extra costs to cover the fees of that coordinating agency. But doing so will also reduce your stress substantially and enable you and your staff members to devote more of your bandwidth to other facets of your jobs. I liken this approach to hiring a general contractor to help you remodel your house. Yes, you could run such a job yourself, hiring and managing subcontractors directly to help you with everything from framing to roofing to painting. But hiring a GC substantially reduces the time that you need to devote to remodel logistics, freeing you up to tackle life's myriad other tasks.

#### **Next steps**

When it's time to make this choice on behalf of your growing tech company, do your homework. Talk to industry friends who have been through this stage in their company's growth to understand which path they chose, what worked for them and what they wished they had done differently. Talk with your marketing-savvy venture investors about what other companies in their portfolio have done — and how those choices panned out. And be sure to interview firms of different stripes to hear their pitches.

With good information, you can make an informed choice — and on your path to world domination, this is an important

Phil Carpenter is Executive Vice President & Managing Director at PAN Communications. O

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### Standing out in a noisy space

How technology marketers can use psychology to ensure their messages break through the deluge of media that consumers receive on a daily basis.

By Elizabeth Edwards

t doesn't need to be said twice: we live in a fast-paced, tech-driven world. Today, everywhere you go, everything you do, and everyone you meet has some relation to technology. In a world where you ask Siri or Google your most dire questions, tell Alexa what song you want to hear and expect Cortana to schedule your appointments, it's more impressive when you find a task or product that doesn't involve technology. So how is any technology brand, product or company supposed to appear special? Just a few years ago, being in technology was a differentiator. The word "technology" alone was enough to catch someone's eye, sell your product and communicate your category. Technology was evolving, fascinating, confusing and distinctive. Although it can still be all of those things, it's not unique enough anymore to rely on that distinguisher to be your main marketing point. Nearly everyone and everything is becoming tech — even down to self-driving trucks and wearable dehydration detectors. The increase of technology innovations paired with the ever-increasing number of messages a consumer sees a day makes it harder than ever before to market your technology in a way that is effective and memorable. So how do you make your technology message break through all the noise?

In one word, science.

The use of psychology in marketing can ensure that your technology isn't just another message lost in the craziness of the thousands of communication efforts that consumers receive on a daily basis. By providing the way that humans are hardwired to react, psychology gives you the ability to create marketing efforts that yield exceedingly effective results. Understanding new psychological principles that affect decision-making is imperative in today's noisy world to get your message not only out, not only heard or seen, but remembered. Psychology deepens your understanding of the consumer's unconscious wants and needs, and because of this, your messaging is catered to what your audience is looking for — even if they don't know it. Here are a few principles and effects that you can specifically begin leveraging now to stand out from everyone and everything else in the tech space.

#### **Authority principle**

We know there are thousands of products

that solve the same problem. Often, consumer choices between comparable options come down to a simple differentiator. People want to feel like they made an informed decision without necessarily having to do extensive research. The authority principle provides that differentiator, and is an effective way to put your product above others that may appear similar in a consumer's mind. The Authority Principle explains why we desire to hear an opinion or suggestion from an authority figure — someone who we look at as a "professional" or "expert." If we have access to an authority figure's input, we don't feel like we need to make the decision for ourselves because someone who knows better than we do makes it for us. No one wants to buy a product and then hate it, knowing they only have themselves to blame. This psychological principle creates influence behind your brand that increases credibility. By pairing your brand with someone who is looked at as intelligent and informed, consumers will be more confident about their decision to purchase. Of course, this authority figure doesn't have to be Ryan Gosling — or anyone with overwhelming fame. Just putting your CEO or spokesperson in a lab coat while describing product capabilities is enough to create the idea of authority in the consumer's mind.

### Category size bias

Consumers are known to respond faster when there is a small category rather than an overwhelming number of options or items in a grouping. Technology is, of course, an enormous category, encompassing so many components that it's difficult to even fathom how many "things" it contains. This large category makes it easier for products to get lost or forgotten. By using the category size bias, your consumer will be less overwhelmed and have a higher chance of noticing, and picking, your product. Avoid generalizing your brand as just technology because that groups you with everyone in the world. When you are marketing your product, create a sub-category that consumers can visualize in their mind with fewer options to compare. This is less overwhelming and lets your product stand out.

#### Social default bias

People want to feel secure in decision-making, so they turn to other consumers to affirm which product to purchase or technology to use. Social default bias states that a consumer is more likely to make a decision that others have already made, and will consequently be content with the way that the product works because of other pre-existing satisfaction. So, when your

product gets a recommendation from someone, make that known. Show that others have used your product, liked your product, and allow for new users to easily demonstrate their relationship with the product to create involvement. The effect that groups of people



Elizabeth Edwards

have on decision-making is immense, even if the consumer doesn't personally know the individuals recommending your product. Reading product reviews, seeing others with the product, or hearing personal recommendations are all enough to create a confidence in the consumer that will drive them to purchase your product.

#### Perceptual contrast theory

It's impossible for someone to look at two different objects or people presented next to each other or in sequence and not create a comparison between the two. The brain always compares the second to the first. In technology marketing, present a primary option that's not as good as your option. This taps into the perceptual contrast theory and can be the push a consumer needs to purchase from your brand. Showcase your product second and portray clear differences that will inevitably be compared by the consumer, and make sure that your product, brand or technology is superior. People will automatically compare the two and will ultimately choose yours as the best

Whether your technology is innovative or classic and dependable, it's likely lost in the noise of the industry. What used to be an exciting, futuristic industry is now a noisy space full of unheard and unseen messages. Utilize psychological laws to truly understand and reach your consumer in a way that will make your product, your brand, stand out from everyone else in the crowded tech world. Differentiate yourself by keeping science behind your communi-

Elizabeth Edwards, an award-winning communicator, speaker and author, founded Volume PR in 2001. O

### Thought leadership: going beyond the buzzword

Businesses spend enormous sums of time and money developing "thought leadership" content. But truly getting into the ring of ideas is a practice that demands a great deal of courage.

by Scott Davila and Christian Munson

ompany leaders and their marketing departments talk a lot about wanting to be thought leaders, but they often have a hard time getting there. Why? Not because they don't know how, but because they don't understand what thought leadership really is.

And if they do, many lack the stomach to take the risk.

Because of that, thought leadership has been hijacked by marketing and communications that educate, inform and reinforce the status quo, not challenge it.

Every year, businesses spend loads of time and money on developing "thought leadership" content. It comes in all shapes and sizes — from white papers and e-books, to webinars and infographics, to survey reports, videos and even cartoonish memes. If you take the time to engage with any of it, a large percentage is tactical, promotional and self-serving. It's about how to do this and that, not about why.

There's a time and place for this information, but it's wrong to call it thought leadership.

Strategic thought leadership isn't about the how. It's about leading an industry into a new, innovative and impactful approach to business. It understands the internal and external factors that will exist tomorrow and empowers your audiences by helping them see into the future and showing them greater possibilities.

Success requires meeting some important criteria.

### Strength of purpose

It starts with communicating and delivering on a clearly defined purpose.

You must know in what direction your industry is moving, what problems will need to be solved and why it's important to attack them with strategic intent every single day. Otherwise, there just isn't a platform for leadership.

At our agency, our purpose is to help our clients connect with the people who matter most to them. We come to work every day to fulfill this mission so that our clients can be successful, grow their organizations, hire more talent and make a positive impact on the world.

Credibly fulfilling this purpose over decades gives us a platform for leadership. It allows our employee-owners to solve communications challenges in new ways, create tools like our Crisis IQ quiz and get ahead of the digital transformation that is changing how people connect and engage with information.

Apple's purpose — to harness the power of technology, simplify its use and make it accessible — gave Steve Jobs a platform from which he could turn a computer company into a pioneering phone company. IBM's long history of technological innovations enabled the company to lead its stakeholders into a new age of cognitive business. Lyft's purpose to facilitate mobility gave John Zimmer a platform to revolutionize our transportation infrastructure.

#### **Future casting**

Leadership implies leading somewhere, right? How are you going to build on your purpose and inspire stakeholders to do things differently? Better?

The core of thought leadership is challenging the status quo and sharing a vision about where the industry is heading. Let your competitors talk about the five things they learned at the latest industry conference. A thought leader shows the way for-

When Jobs unveiled the iPhone in 2007, he didn't just say that Apple was getting into the phone business. He said that everything we currently did on desktop computers (browse the Internet, send email, make purchases, watch videos, get directions, etc.) would soon be done on the little black rectangle he held in his hands. He called for a digital revolution and led the charge.

### Stakeholder belief

Leaders require followers, and followers don't follow unless they believe what they see and hear from the brand out front. It's not always a linear progression. Sometimes, employees, investors and customers believe because a company has delivered on its purpose for years. Other times, belief in a coming future happens first, opening doors for organizations to do things differently.

Would Apple have been successful changing the way people use cell phones if the personal computer hadn't already transformed people's expectations of technology? Or would IBM's move to a cognitive business vision and services have worked if it hadn't already paved the way for e-business two decades ago?

Thought leadership happens when a powerful purpose, a compelling vision of future fulfillment and people who believe in it, come together. That's the sweet spot and the hardest part.

### It takes guts

But don't discount what comes next. Easy, it is not.

It takes guts for PR and marketing professionals to challenge their leadership to communicate new ways of doing things in a market comfortable with the way things are. That's especially true if you're the market leader, because you're the status quo - and thought leaders question the status quo.

Naysayers and competitors also will spring up quickly to take carefully aimed shots



Scott Davila



**Christian Munson** 

at thought leaders. Those challenges will sting at best, and at worst, completely derail efforts to make change. Why mess with what's already working? Thought leaders will be prepared for negative reactions and not be derailed.

In addition to thick skins, thought leaders also need their wallets.

Merely saying something doesn't make it so. Companies articulating a bold vision of the future must invest in making it a present reality. Teams, processes and even products and services need to be recalibrated to align with the new vision. The marketplace needs to see actions being taken to pursue it. Smoke and mirrors are for magicians, not world changers.

Creating a thought leadership strategy is more than a messaging exercise parlayed into blog posts, speaking engagements and the well-placed op-ed. It needs to permeate the organization: operations, customer service, new product/service development, employee engagement, investor relations, etc. It takes strategic vision, courage and commitment to take risks and lead by actions, whether you're out to change your company, your industry or the world.

Scott Davila is Senior Vice President and Technology lead at Padilla. Christian Munson is Senior Director, Corporate Communications at Padilla. O

### **Employer branding: an insider's view for PR pros**

Even when it comes to the world's biggest, hottest brands, recruiting top talent remains one of the most competitive and critical of business challenges.

By Andy Getsey

mployer branding is a critical element in any organization's ability to attract strong candidates — think of it as the sum total of a company's brand awareness and reputation as an employer of choice.

According to LinkedIn's 2017 Global Trends Report, 80 percent of business leaders believe that employer brand has a significant impact on their ability to successfully recruit top talent.

A lot of PR work involves creating highly structured and polished stories and thought leadership pieces aimed at media, social channels and events and addressing topics like company news, product news, financial performance, vision and perspective — all of which is super important.

But in the war for talent, serious candidates can be wary of too much marketing polish, and really want more of an insider view of the company. Working with HR executives, recruiters and employees, PR pros can help create the kind of authentic communications about the company's mission/ values, staff and day-to-day work activity that give candidates the kind of information they actually need, and that can make a difference in recruiting effectiveness

How can a PR person inject more employer brand value into his/her work to directly impact a company's success in attracting top candidates?

Build employer branding elements into the PR plan. Proactively collaborate with the HR/recruiting team to build an employer branding "track" into the corporate PR plan. More than anything, prospective employees want to know what a company values, what it's really like to work there, what the work itself is like, and who the people are that make the company go. Bake these kinds of stories, and content about these topics into the program — inside the usual product announcements, earnings releases, hiring and promotion announcements, etc.

For example, in a product release, highlight the individuals and teams, and the challenges they overcame in creating the product. In hiring or promotion announcements, include nods to key aspects of the company's mission, values and culture.

Inject candidate-facing talking points into everything. Similarly, work with your company's spokespeople to inject bits of the company's mission, values, culture, diversity, meaningfulness of work, etc., into conversations about news, perspectives, vision, and other topics. It can be subtle, but do it.

Highlight interesting people and work. Promote interviews, contributed article opportunities and blog/social media/video posts with the company's most interesting people, engineers and other technical staff, as well as racially- and gender-diverse employees, university graduate hires and in-

Candidates want to know who really works at your company, what they're working on and what they have to say. Staff-produced content is far more interesting to prospective employees than what the company says about itself.

**Help with Glassdoor.** Use your skills in community management, crisis planning and Q&A coaching to work with HR on strategy for managing Glassdoor, and messaging to address the most common comments and complaints — and work with management to address valid criticisms and make actual changes.

Include recruiters on real-time clip distribution. Get to know your company's recruiters, and pass along employer brand-friendly articles and posts to them as they hit, so they can work them into candidate calls and correspondence right

Help with events. Offer your event management knowledge and skills to help the recruiting team in planning and hosting tailored recruiting events. Help engineers with planning and managing meetups. They know what they're doing, but coming from PR, you may have a different perspective and skillset that would be additive and welcome.

Submit for best workplace awards. Collaboration between PR and HR and recruiting on awards strategy and execution is powerful. PR people often have access to media and award-list resources and application skills that HR departments may not have, and HR/recruiting has a professional feel for the employee point of view that PR may not. Some awards are given strictly through employee ratings — like Glassdoor and Indeed.com. Many others accept applications — from the big ones like Fortune, WSJ, Inc. and Working Mother magazines, to local opportunities through city business journals, to the dozens of others for different industries, company sizes, type of worker, etc. There's a fair bit of work involved, so pitching in together makes it easier. But it's worth it.

Work employer brand-related KPI's and metrics into your PR program evaluation and reporting process. Nothing motivates adoption of new activities like

tracking them. Set some goals, put some efforts against them, and report on them. A few starter ideas:

- # articles or posts conveying positive aspects of your company's
- # references of your company's mission, values, culture in articles/ interviews about other topics



Andy Getsey

- # profiles of, or Q&As with, interesting employees
- # articles or posts from interesting emplovees
- # HR events PR assists with, before and after metrics
  - # awards applied for/won
- # clips or posts passed along to recruit-
- # visits to company's career site, Linked-In, Glassdoor pages before and after enhanced PR/HR collaboration
- # applicants before/after stronger collaboration between PR and HR

Granted, stepping up employer brand support may well increase your workload, but the impact of injecting more employer branding value into your overall PR efforts can be huge in terms of attracting and recruiting top talent.

And as employer branding continues to explode as a discipline, adding pro-level experience to your portfolio of skills will make you more valuable — and possibly even open up new career opportunities.

Andy Getsey is Co-Founder and Managing Partner of Employera (www.employera. com), HR consulting firm focused on employer branding, talent acquisition, employee engagement and experience design to help companies attract and keep the right people. He also co-founded and helmed tech firm Atomic PR, which was acquired by Huntsworth in 2011. O

### AR isn't technology for technology's sake

The rise of Augmented Reality underscores how companies can embrace new technologies while paying attention to the ways in which these advancements will provide solutions and actually benefit their audiences.

By Jeremy Lerner and Deborah Brown

"We are stuck with technology when what we really want is just stuff that works."

— Douglas Adams

s brands fight for attention across media and devices, connecting with an audience while remaining authentic has never been more challenging — or vital — to success. Brands frequently respond to this challenge by layering the latest technology into their communications plan, perhaps without first paying enough attention to how this technology will impact their customers' experience.

Prioritizing innovation above solutions is rarely effective; leaning too heavily on jargon and the latest tech gimmicks consistently betrays even the best intentions. When brands prioritize innovation over solutions in this way, they risk alienating their audience. For companies to incorporate new technologies successfully, they must select only those innovations that help solve the challenges customers face.

### Change the way we interact

The rise of Augmented Reality - superimposing virtual elements and digital information on a user's view of the real world, thereby augmenting their view with additional graphics — offers telling lessons in how companies can embrace new technologies while considering the benefits to their audience.

The technology's increasing presence across brand campaigns raises the concern that, as it enters the mainstream, it may be misunderstood as technology for technology's sake. Since AR only entered the mainstream recently, through mobile games such as Pokémon Go and Ingress, some find it difficult to imagine its applications beyond lucrative licensing deals and consumer entertainment.

The implications of AR are actually extensive, and any brand dismissing it as a passing fad is missing a huge opportunity to reach their target audience. Here are a few ways you can direct your clients to use AR to drive solutions that facilitate meaningful interactions, are scalable for continued application, and provide a return on investment.

To get priorities in order, you can start by

"How does my client define technology?" "Where does 'adapting technology for consumers' fall on their list of competing priorities?"

"Is this a solution that is helping anyone? Would a simpler solution fit better?"

"What can we learn from the data we are collecting?"

Questions such as these should always inform your team's recommendations.

### Leverage visual recognition

Machine learning is a simple application of artificial intelligence that enables engines to recognize and learn from data they've seen before, such as an image. Visual recognition algorithms and the image banks through which they comb have never been faster, more exhaustive or more capable of making complex inferences.

By using an image as a marker — an industry term for an image that prompts a virtual application to launch - you can use a mobile device's camera to recognize an image, and then create a virtual experience on the mobile screen after recognition. Visual recognition is key to this application of AR.

These applications quickly recognize any well-designed logo, and will soon expand to more complex items such as cars and shoes. What product, image or printed collateral might your team or client find use in "turning on" through image recognition?

### A new presence at trade shows

The application of AR has helped brands stand out at events and trade shows with rich, immersive experiences, bringing static booths to life. By using any mobile device's camera, on-site imagery can be recognized to provide an informative experience perhaps to showcase new products, offer price comparisons, auto-play video, instantly purchase, download information like a catalogue or manual and more.

The user takes this experience home and can continue interacting with the brand's content long after the event. Transaction tools and product catalogues obtained from the brand through AR stick with them, while others fade from view.

AR can also direct users towards donation pages, social media platforms, downloadable content and beyond. By leveraging visual recognition and existing collateral at events, a wide audience of mobile users is introduced to unique decision streams they would not have encountered otherwise.

#### **Promote fresh content**

By creating an Augmented Reality experience, you create a web infrastructure capable of hosting fresh content as it is developed and released. This scalable solution grows with your group's output.

As new products, marketing promotions and communications refresh throughout the year, and new content is developed, an AR platform is a logical place to host this collateral. Regularly updating dedicated

content on AR ensures it remains a destination that offers new and unique material. In this way, AR seamlessly integrates with a brand's existing digital ecosys-

The hottest new technology trend is not always the right recommendation for your client. Fostering meaningful connections among the message, the user and the brand should always be the priority. Any technology that doesn't improve and increase these interactions can be counted as another technology



Jeremy Lerner



**Deborah Brown** 

for technology's sake. Brands have the tools today to ensure they are leveraging AR to foster these connections, and they can reap the benefits of harnessing this new technology as it is applicable to their business.

Jeremy Lerner is Digital Project Manager at Peppercomm and oversees integrated content campaigns. Deborah Brown is Partner and Managing Director, and manages accounts ranging from crisis management to B2B. **O** 

### PR news brief

### Equifax picks DLA Piper

Equifax has turned to DLA Piper for DC work in the wake of its data breach that exposed the personal data of nearly 146 million people.

Ignacio Sanchez, who chairs DLA Piper's government affairs practice group, and Steven Phillips, cochair of its federal law unit, head Equifax's lobbying

The massive breach triggered moves on Capitol Hill to tighten regulatory screws on the \$9.4 billion credit bureau business, which is controlled by the Big Three firms of Equifax, TransUnion and Experion.

Massachusetts Senator Elizabeth Warren, for instance, has pushed a proposal to force firms to give customers a free and easy way to freeze their credit. Other measures call for software upgrades and creation of a national technology standard for the credit bureau business.

### An integrated approach to company storytelling

As technology continues to evolve through a global media landscape, more opinions and perspectives are being amplified than ever before. Within this new media reality, however, companies are finding it increasingly challenging to cut through the cacophony of voices in order to tell effective brand stories and campaign narratives in an effective and impactful manner.

By Sanjay Kulkarni

t's critical for communications and public relations professionals to adopt new strategic methods to optimize their messaging in order to reach the audiences that matter most.

Communications teams must also consider the best ways to utilize big data technology and devise new approaches to measurement that are campaign-specific and aligned with company goals.

#### The PESO model

Website and blog platforms continue to enhance their features through personalized timelines, filtered newsfeeds and ad-targeting methods in an effort to create a unique and rewarding experience for each individual. PR professionals should be encouraged to move away from narrow, one-size-fits-all campaigns that focus their efforts on a single type of media and instead adopt a multi-faceted approach that incorporates paid, earned, shared and owned media channels.

By spreading a company's messaging across various media channels, the PESO model provides more opportunities for an initiative or a product launch to reach and impact key audiences. In other words, the message has more paths to success.

The holistic nature of the PESO model also makes it an asset for relationship-building among the media and with customers. A campaign launch that utilizes a company's full breadth of media channels and resources can direct readers and viewers to a company's additional platforms to learn more and explore further.

For example, an earned op-ed can include links that direct readers to a company website and specific social media pages, which in turn can lead to related videos and interactive content. This is more engaging for audiences than a one-sided approach of only a paid or earned platform, since users will commit to spending more time learning a brand's story or a campaign's purpose.

#### Creating effective content

PR professionals can best utilize the PESO model by ensuring their content is created with the target audience in mind. The creative process should always start at the end: who is this intended for and what message should they take away from this? Companies should not simply produce

content for the sake of content. Build materials with the key group always in consideration so that the end result will be tailored and specific to their interests and

In addition to the audience, communications teams should know the ins and outs of the media channels that the content will live on. A high-performing communications professional should understand what works and what doesn't on certain channels; this understanding will support a company's goal of generating the most effective materials for establishing a brand story and reputation.

Stay up-to-date with emerging platforms and shifting site popularity by conducting regular audits of the company's frequently used channels. Audits will also help assess if each platform is still reaching target audiences and benefitting the company as it has in the past.

### Measuring success

As in any aspect of business, PR and marketing campaigns must establish goals and measures for success at the outset. Once a campaign is launched, the communications team should have in mind clear indicators that people — particularly priority stakeholders — are engaging with the content. Like the PESO approach for distributing deliverables, the process for setting the barometer of success is not a one-size-fitsall solution.

The checkpoints for a campaign should be specific to each initiative and platform. For example, if a company released a video via Facebook to raise awareness on a particular subject matter impacting their bottom line, communications professionals should set a target number of views to gauge effectiveness, as opposed to likes or comments.

The audience should also be taken into consideration when evaluating success. A high level of engagement is of little value unless the right people are interacting with the content. This is where communications professionals can leverage social media monitoring technologies that provide analytics broken down by demographic and other specifications.

These capabilities can also analyze engagement by sentiment, providing insight into how the content resonates with stakeholders. This allows companies to measure success qualitatively as well as quantita-

The wealth of information and conversation in today's media can be daunting, but should not deter PR and marketing departments from creating new and impactful narratives. The PESO model provides a head-on approach for tackling the landscape



through channel diversification and audience specification.

Setting the right goals and priorities on a campaign-by-campaign base will help identify key measurement indicators and will go a long way in defining success. By leveraging all the resources at your disposal, you will not only meet, but exceed message impact expectations.

Sanjay Kulkarni is Global Head of PR *Solutions at Nasdaq Corporate Solutions.* **O** 

#### PR news brief

### Ogilvy works to kill Sinclair / Tribune deal

WPP's Ogilvy Government Relations represents the Coalition to Save Local Media, which is fighting the proposed Sinclair Broadcasting/Tribune Media Co. merger on grounds that the \$6.6B cash deal would crush local independent media and lead to higher prices for consumers.

OGR's team includes Moses Mercado (chief of staff to ex-Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt), Tim McGivern (COS to former Kansas Republican Senator Sam Brownback), Conrad Lass (ex-lobbyist for American Petroleum Institute, Southern Co. and Rio Tinto mining company) and Todd Novasone (ex-COS to Kansas Republican Jerry Moran).

The Coalition contends the Sinclair/Tribune combine would reach 72 percent of US households and effectively control the market for broadcast equipment and impede the introduction of new services.

American Cable Assn., CCA (rural/regional wireless carriers), ITTA (broadband providers), DISH Network, Common Cause, Public Knowledge and Foundation for Rural Service are among Coalition

Sinclair says the deal would enable it to build a next-generation broadcast platform to offer advanced services for a larger customer base.

### Five common mistakes in tech PR

Agencies and PR practitioners regularly engage in a number of everyday, subtle behaviors that could cost their tech clients valuable relationships and relevance with key stakeholders.

by Aaron Strout

s an experiment, try searching for "PR mistakes" on Google. Rather than finding everyday blunders communications professionals make, a long list of "PR fail" articles fill the page. Obvious snafus like United Airlines' handling of a passenger who was forcibly removed qualifies as a mistake. But how many companies or their agencies make those types of mistakes? More likely, they're erring on a much smaller scale. At the end of the day those mistakes add up. And while they might not land a brand on the front cover of USA Today, they may cost that brand valuable relationships and relevance with their key stakeholders. With an eye toward being helpful, here are five common mistakes in Tech PR:

1. Targeting the wrong influencers/media professionals. Every company has "the list." It often includes 100-250 journalists - many of whom are relevant - but often lacks a rank order beyond the first 5-7 contacts and likely includes targets that were once relevant but have become less so over time. What the list most likely doesn't include is bloggers or those that run YouTube channels. It probably also doesn't take into consideration aggregate influence. Back in the day, when a journalist worked for one publication and social media wasn't yet a thing, it was easy to get a relative sense of whether the aforementioned was important or not. Today, journalists often write for multiple publications, or may keep a personal blog at the very least. They're also sharing content via Twitter, LinkedIn and SnapChat. This new paradigm creates a new influence that's hard to measure without the proper tools. In order to solve this problem, our data scientists have created an algorithm that uses 110 different data points to determine a list of the top 50 influencers with weighted ranking. Why is this such a problem? For one, why would you want to spend one second with a journalist that used to be influential but now isn't in your top 100. And conversely, don't you want to know who your new and emerging influencers are? What about having the ability to actually groom those with higher signal to noise into top influencers in your space?

2. Using "impressions" as a performance metric. Everything these days must be measured. And with PR it's often been a given that it only drives soft ROI or general awareness for a product, service or brand. But in today's world, is knowing how many potential eyeballs saw a piece of coverage good enough? If a marketer tried to explain that they'd sent out 100,000 pieces of direct mail and thus had 100,000 impressions but no insights beyond that, they would likely be fired. It's because the cost of that direct mail campaign would be \$25,000-\$50,000 thus requiring that the marketer know not only how many responses they received, but how many of those responses turned into leads or even new customers. When the only cost for something is the time it takes to pitch something, the bar for proving effectiveness is set lower. But with companies constantly seeking ways to improve their top and bottom lines, nobody is being allowed to skate. What if PR started to look at number of website visits driven? Or leads generated? Or at the very least, what about positive share of voice in a particular space? The tools exist today to at least show correlation if not causation on all of these fronts so why not use them?

3. Failing to understand what content resonates with one's target audience. It's probably safe to say that most companies or agencies don't sit back and say, "I wonder if we can put out a press release that nobody cares about?" But I will guarantee that there are press releases that aren't optimized for search. There are also pieces of short and long form content that find their way to places like blogs, Twitter and LinkedIn (I see social media as an extension of PR) that use the wrong language or even worse, don't resonate with target audiences. Given the role that organic search plays in product or brand discovery these days, why not give yourself the best chance of being found? There are numerous tools out there (Google provides some free of charge) that can help optimize content. Or, if you're really on your game, try running a content gap analysis by comparing search volume for certain key words with keyword density in your owned, earned and social content.

4. Treating influencers/journalists like order takers. This means that instead of assuming reporters and bloggers are robots waiting around for the next pitch email or press release to float into their inbox, why not take a step back and look at the challenges these journalists are up against? Many are underpaid, under-resourced and likely under the gun to garner a certain amount of views or social shares for their content. A way to help and build better relationships with these key individuals is by proactively checking in with them and asking them what they are writing about. Share great stories and insights that you've heard about that don't involve your company. Obviously, this can't be a full time focus, but just like good networking requires "putting money in the bank," so too does good PR.

5. Ignoring your employees as a critical channel to share news. This could be an ar-

ticle unto itself, but employee advocacy is probably one of the greatest untapped resources in the market. Yes, there are risks involved in making sure employees are trained and equipped to share company news. Tools like Dynamic Signal, Social Chorus and



**Aaron Strout** 

LinkedIn's Elevate make launching, scaling and tracking this activity easier than ever ... even in regulated industries.

Are you making these mistakes? Or is your agency? The good news is that they can all be fixed. The solutions just require good data, tools and a little elbow grease.

Aaron Strout is Chief Marketing Officer of W2O Group. O

#### PR news brief

### LDWW handles Whitefish

LDWW is handling Whitefish Energy, the tiny Montana company that had its \$300 million contract to rebuild Puerto Rico's power lines cancelled Oct. 29 by the island's governor, Ricardo Rossello.

Criticism by Congress and the Federal Emergency Management Agency prompted Rossello to ax the contract granted to the two-person firm. Some expressed concern over Whitefish's ties to Interior Secretary and ex-Montana Congressman Ryan Zinke, whose son worked for Whitefish during the summer.

Ken Luce, former Hill+Knowlton Strategies COO and founder of the Dallas-based integrated communications shop, and Brandon Smulyan, a Weber Shandwick and H+K alum, represent Whitefish.

Luce told MSBNC that Whitefish landed the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority pact because it moved quickly to land the business. "This is really a very simple effort by an entrepreneur to get on the plane, fly to Puerto Rico, talk to PREPA when no one else would," Luce told MSNBC

Rossello said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and Florida's Rick Scott have agreed to send utility crews to restore power to the island of 3.4 million. About 30 percent of Puerto Rico's power has been restored six weeks after Hurricane Maria.

Luce has counseled ExxonMobil, General Motors, American Airlines Sprint, US Airways, while Smulyan handled Carnival Corp., Ford Motor, Verizon and Jose Feliciano Foundation.

### Chasing press mentions is PR with blinders

Earned media opportunities are a far more effective and strategic means of gaining coverage and opening editorial doors than merely chasing press mentions in business or trade publications.

By Dan Garza

yths and stereotypes continue to persist in high-tech PR. Most prevalent is the one where you've got to be buddies with a business editor or reporter, take him/her to lunch as a way of currying favor and scoring good press. Or at least get a mention in an upcoming article.

That antiquated PR practice is usually at the prodding of company execs. They're more interested in pumping up stock price at the moment than conveying useful information to their customer base. So, they're hoping a mention in the Wall Street Journal or New York Times will kick up their stock.

Accomplished PR pros have outgrown this Madison Avenue schtick of yesteryear. But the mentality still lingers. So, you may wonder — in today's highly competitive and volatile landscape — what do leading hightech companies expect out of veteran PR pros? Press mentions? Really?

You can think of mentions as PR with blinders. The reason is the intensity and mental energy of just trying to get a mention not only makes you myopic, but also blocks your views from looking at the broader strategic opportunities high-tech PR offers. To put it another way: the focus and intensity of getting a mention stagnates your thinking and blinds you from a broader view at the strategic opportunities hightech PR offers.

In most cases, your company or product mention is usually in a series of competitor mentions the reporter uses to highlight the subject he/she is writing about. Or it could be a standalone mention citing your company or product as an example.

What does a mention really get you from a business point of view? Certainly, from the editorial standpoint, that mention or an exec's quote expands a story, adds more credibility to it.

However, from a business's point of view, what's the value? Quite honestly, a mention is rather lightweight and doesn't convey keywords that search engines pick up and give a company's marketing message new life as it travels along its viral journey.

On the other hand, to be fair, a mention in top national business publications like the New York Times and Wall Street Journal is nothing to sniff at or lightly brush off. But still, those mentions are often few and far between, non-strategic, and actually, forgotten in no time.

And who knows what slant that particular article takes when your product or service is mentioned. You'll never know until the article is published, and then you're either a hero or a persona non grata. In effect, you're rolling the dice. You're lucky if you get a positive mention.

The faulty assumption on the part of the PR pro is that he/she will get a favorable mention. Unfortunately, for that naïve PR pro, the objective of a straight reporting business publication article is usually to cover a particular issue and not to hype or glorify a particular business or technology subject.

### **Editor lunches so yesterday**

Savvy high-tech PR pros know it's so yesterday to take editors out to lunch to try to wrangle stories. Editors tell you up front that proposed stories stand on their own, so no need to try to curry favor with them. Instead, most PR pros work toward understanding editorial needs and polishing their stories to meet those requirements. No need to check out favorite restaurants for editors as part of the PR pro's job description.

What you have to keep in mind is the high-tech landscape is extremely competitive. It doesn't matter whether you're a chipmaker, a computer vendor or software company, there are always highly aggressive competitors nipping at your heels, and most often they aren't so gentle about it. They are more than willing to run you out of business.

A lot of high tech companies haven't yet learned that PR is a top-notch tool to help maintain a competitive edge. But you've got to nurture it and use it in the right way. The wrong way is to use yesterday's thinking and practices, in general, being random and reactive, and solely going after press mentions or cranking out press releases.

You have to be strategic, or put another way, you've got to use a well-organized and sustained methodology coupled with content marketing to effectively get your messages across to the right audiences.

#### **Better ways**

There are better ways of gaining coverage in the trade and business press than trying solely for mentions. A good route to take is to collaborate with marketing and sales to lay out a strategy, a plan, if you will, that clearly defines the what, when and how to launch and sustain a content marketing/PR

Once you get rolling on that plan, it's always on because you are constantly generating new content from your subject matter experts or SMEs to keep the content engine well fueled and in tip-top condition.

Have you thought about scheduling your CEO or CTO to speak at top industry conferences, ghostwriting speeches and abundantly sprinkling them with industry issues? That approach will draw editors like

a magnet because that's where they live. They want to get perspective on top issues.

There are also great opportunities with a sustained program of technology-contributed articles. As mentioned earlier, Silicon Valley marketing execs have this notion that a PR ma-



Dan Garza

ven must be buddy-buddy with business editors to get that much sought after mention. But think about it, business editors are hard to convince, plus they get a gazillion PR story queries a week.

Your story has a better chance of getting business editorial attention via contributed articles in the trade press. How is that possible? As far back as the invention of the silicon transistor, business editors have relied on trade press articles to keep them abreast of the latest technology developments.

Today, you can add blogs as another strategy for getting the word to business editors. For instance, techtarget.com has increasingly become popular with its multiple technology editorial sites for news and blogs. One particular site, IoT Agenda, offers the opportunity to post blogs on an arranged monthly schedule - just as long as the blogs are useful to readers and not laden with product hyperbole.

It's not only business editors, but market and financial analysts also rely on technology trade press articles and blogs to keep them up to date. That's where your story and your messages really shine and get considerable attention by those key influencers. So, rather than constantly deploying the frontal approach for your business story, try the flanking movement like that taught in ROTC 101. Strategically finesse your technology content via a well-organized contributed article program, instead of trying to force it down editors' throats. You'd be surprised at the results. Pretty soon editors start coming to you, instead of you dogging

Continued on next page

### **Getting PR off the desert island**

Getting out of our comfort zones and becoming integrated within a broader, multi-dimensional mix of communications channels and media is vital for PR's continued success in the tech landscape.

By Sabrina Horn

aking technology meaningful, approachable and embraceable is the holy grail for every tech communications professional. Twenty plus years ago, the tools and channels for PR pros to share their stories were simple, push-oriented and one-dimensional. Press releases were the primary vehicle used by PR pros to convey a news announcement. The only visual media at play were broadcast TV and advertising. Websites didn't exist, as bizarre as that seems now.

Today, PR has evolved and expanded to include many new ways of relating to the public. It's about figuring out how their story fits into conversations already taking place amongst a plethora of other channels and media. Its success, therefore, is based on being integrated with those other channels and campaign elements, requiring PR counselors to be more informed of all the avenues available to them and take a broader view. PR as a function can't work in a silo because it won't be as effective. Nowhere is this more the case than in the technology industry, where tech PR is undergoing a revolution.

Today, technology lives within healthcare devices, educational learning tools, payroll systems, travel accessories, fashion and even inside art. Often, the benefits of technology are misunderstood. The current hype cycle around artificial intelligence, machine learning, driverless cars and robotics is just beginning. Innovation can be complex and intimidating to businesses and consumers alike, therefore requiring a more thoughtful, multi-faceted communications approach. Our role as tech communicators is of profound importance here. How we position and communicate the benefits of a new technology can be the difference between smooth consumer adoption or the rapid demise of yet another tech start-up.

In this new tech PR landscape, the great-

CHASING PRESS MENTIONS

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them for a mention.

There's another important point about contributed articles and blogs. Most often, the right keywords go viral, thanks to search engines. Business editors often conduct their research these days by entering keywords on Google, and voila, are presented with a motherlode of up-to-date tech coner the complexity, the greater the need for digital/ visual communications to simplify, explain and achieve buyer acceptance. Tech campaigns should incorporate all these elements: websites, videos, infographics and the use of virtual reality within immersive events. PR can still be "king" especially in thought leadership campaigns. It can create "virality" to advance conversations on social media and it can be the place where campaigns begin: a powerful engine that augments paid strategies across multiple platforms.

As a result, agencies are evolving their firms to offer more of these communications elements and brand marketers are changing how their marketing and communications teams are structured. For many firms, it means learning to speak a new language, hiring new people with broader skill sets and creating new processes around integrated service paradigms. It means getting out of the comfort zone and thinking multi-dimensionally.

So, where do you start when you want to get off the desert island?

First, identify the central objective your company wants to achieve, and the key problem your product or service solves. Then, articulate how it solves that specific problem differently. Who are the audiences? Where do they get their information? How open minded are they to something new and what existing beliefs might be in the way? Who influences their habits? These and other questions feed the research to fuel your strategy. Then, what are the story arcs you want to tell? You can have several, and they can run in parallel or in a sequence. And finally, from everything in the wheelhouse of communications (written, spoken, digital/visual), what are the tactics that bring those stories to life?

In a basic hypothetical example, a marketer of enterprise-level security software

tent, and lots of times, those are either published contributed articles, blogs or technical papers.

Once they come across your exec's contributed article or blog, you've captured the business editor's attention. As he/she sees more of your technology pieces on search engines, the more influence you're building. Chances are, when your technology topic comes up for business reporting, those editors will be calling you.

has to reach multiple audiences with clear messaging. Customers in the cyber world typically don't like to divulge their security issues and won't be of much help with endorsements. Earned media by way of a thought leadership campaign around digital resilience with contributed content is part of a carefully devised PR strategy that drives social activity. That company must also simultaneously manage the messaging

conveyed via its website, its billboards and its print ads. Those messages are all intimately intertwined and are clearly more powerful in brand building if they convey the same story.

In another example, how we talk to consumers about robots that help us do our chores at



Sabrina Horn

home spans all types of media and channels. The use of love-based or positive marketing strategies to help assuage the emotions of fear associated with robotics can be instrumental and must be infused in every digital and analog aspect of this communications campaign. Without a healthy advertising budget, videos and infographics and some clever writing can be embedded in a creative social campaign targeting audiences on Facebook, and a radio morning talk show circuit. Traditional PR elements hang off this program, leveraging it, driving it, supporting it.

In sum, everything we do today as tech PR professionals needs to be connected and integrated within the broader communications mix. This presents a tremendous opportunity for tech PR people: the chance to relate to different publics in multiple ways, for the purpose of bringing acceptance to innovation. It is beautiful, complicated, intelligent and purposeful. Those that leave their desert island may find choppy waters but will soon hit their stride in an exciting new phase of their profession.

Sabrina Horn is Managing Director of Finn Partners' Technology Practice. O

Wouldn't it be much more effective, less hassle, and with fewer rejections to allow technology and contributed articles/blogs to open editorial doors for you, instead of working so hard for a press mention?

Dan Garza is a marketing PR professional and veteran observer of Silicon Valley PR. He's collaborated with top technology companies and was instrumental in creating and implementing successful PR strategies at these firms. O

# O'Dwyer's guide to TECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATIONS



Susan Thomas, 10Fold CEO.

### 10FOLD

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Susan Thomas, CEO Ross Perich, Vice President, Enterprise Angela Griffo, Vice President, Infrastructure Fran Lowe, Vice President, Big Bart Tillmans, Vice President, Operating Systems Cathy Denham, Controller Gary Good, Chief Media Strategist and Lead Writer

10Fold is an award-winning agency specializing in elevating B2B technology brands through media, analyst and influencer relations, content development (including an in-house video production team), social media services, and content amplification. Headquartered in San Francisco, 10Fold has regional offices in Pleasanton and Capistrano Beach, CA as well as Austin, TX and Denver, CO. The 10Fold team is differentiated based on its deep domain expertise across networking, information security, enterprise software, mobile, DevOps, Big Data and machine learning, and storage industries. 10Fold helps elevate and amplify the innovation that changes the way the world works and lives. Based on an accountable Metrics Matter<sup>TM</sup> methodology, 10Fold has served nearly 400 companies (including a "herd of unicorns") since its inception in 1995.

### **AIRFOIL PUBLIC** RELATIONS

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Lisa Vallee-Smith, CEO Leah Haran, Sharon Neumann, Keith Donovan, Sr. VP Amy Bryson, VP

Airfoil is an independent public relations and marketing communications firm that has served as the perceptual architect for many of the world's best-known technology brands. With offices in tech-rich regions including Detroit, Silicon Valley and New York, Airfoil Public Relations is recognized for delivering strategic solutions built on research-driven insights and calculated, creative communication risks. The firm develops strategies that maximize clients' competitive advantages in local, national and global business markets, and with target audiences through traditional and emerging channels.

Airfoil's team of progressive account professionals and vital global partners apply a multidisciplinary lens to client communication challenges, providing content development, design, digital marketing, research, public relations, advertising and social media services to help meet their objectives. The firm elevates positioning for brands across consumer, enterprise, health care, auto and indus-



Airfoil Group CEO Lisa Vallee-Smith.



ARPR's growing team includes a mix of media relations, content marketing, social media and lead gen experts.

trial segments.

Since its founding in 2000, Airfoil has built a reputation for results and earned its placement on prestigious industry lists like O'Dwyer's "Top 50 Independent Public Relations Firms," *The Holmes Report* "Top 12 Technology Firms," and Advertising Age "Best Places to Work." The firm has earned numerous accolades including PRNews 'Small Agency of the Year," PR-SA's "Silver Anvil Award of Excellence" and "Silver Anvil Award of Commendation," and multiple Hermes Creative awards.

### ALLISON+ **PARTNERS**

40 Gold Street San Francisco, CA 94133 www.allisonpr.com

Jonathan Heit, Partner and Co-Founder + President Jordan Fischler, Partner and Head of Consumer Technology

Technology has been a core area of expertise throughout Allison+Partners' history. We helped create the very notion of online influence as part of our early You-Tube work, and have since worked with nearly every major technology brand, including Dropbox, WhatsApp and Google, to name just a few. Our experience fuels our current successes including executing a strategic consumer and consumer tech media relations program in three global markets for Pinterest, shaping the future of the enterprise with Samsung, redefining "safety science" for UL and helping Zendesk stand out in

the competitive customer support space. We thrive on our ability to help technology companies establish leadership positions in their categories. Technology helps shape culture and in turn, culture impacts how we use the technology at our disposal. Our efforts are informed by those cultural trends coupled with real-time research that allow us to execute programs and drive meaningful business results. Whether a new product launch, the evolution of a service, or a financial event, we've been there before and can lend our expertise to ensure success.

#### **ARPR**

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Additional offices in New Orleans and San Francisco

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

In less than five years, ARPR has emerged as one of O'Dwyer's top 30 tech PR agencies in the U.S. Our culture, coupled with our high standard of excellence and a commitment to innovating PR, has resulted in a diverse roster of more than 20 leading global tech com-

With 35 awards on our shelf, ARPR has earned a reputation for

propelling what's possible by creatively telling high-impact stories that intersect technology, innovation and business. Specifically, we scale to complement high-growth startups, mid-market leaders and global public and private enterprises within the cybersecurity, mission critical, health IT, mobility, MarTech and FinTech sectors to #MakeNews and #DriveLeads.

From our Panorama Approach to our team with diverse skill sets to our workplace culture and benefits — ARPR is writing the next chapter in the mass communications textbook. Just like our tech clients, we're focused on innovating the future.

### **BATEMAN GROUP**

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Syreeta Mussante and Paula Cavagnaro, Executive Vice Presidents

Joe Franscella. Senior Vice President

Elinor Mills, SVP of Content Rachael Cassidy, Matt Coolidge, Kerry Tescher and Amy Ziari, Vice Presidents

Jennifer Steinle, VP of Operations

Headquartered in San Francisco with offices in New York City, Bateman Group was founded in 2004 with a goal of creating the technology-focused PR agency of choice for startups and established market leaders alike — a different breed of agency where content development is a core competency instead of a liability. Bateman Group is distinguished by its people-first company culture and progressive workplace policies. By assembling and retaining a stellar team of the top communications strategists in the industry, Bateman Group maintains one of the highest employee retention averages in the industry - turnover is typically no more than 8%.

Clients include: AdRoll, Amplitude, Animoto, Anthemis, Armis, Atlassian, Betterment, Code2040



Bospar Team Call.

(pro bono), Clover, Currencycloud, Cyence, Cylance, DigitalOcean, EyeVerify, Fastly, Ginkgo Bioworks, Google, HackerOne, HackerRank, Harness, Illumio, Invoca, LinkedIn Sales Solutions, LinkedIn Marketing Solutions, Live Grey, Manifold, MapR Technologies, Narvar, Netskope, Optimizely, Optimove, Ping Identity, Platform9, Quick Base, Rainforest, Recorded Future, Scale Venture Partners, Segment, Shape Security, Smartsheet, SnapLogic, Snowflake, Stackla, Tegile Systems, Tenable Network Security, Ultimate Software, UpGift, Urban Airship and Virtustream.

### **BOARDROOM** COMMUNICATIONS. INC.

1776 N. Pine Island Road Suite 320 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33322 954/370-8999 www.boardroompr.com donsil@boardroompr.com

Julie Talenfeld, CFO Don Silver, COO

We are a full-service public relations and integrated marketing agency delivering results for many of Florida's top businesses. We bridge new and traditional media, giving clients an edge in rising above the highly competitive marketplace.

In addition to software, IT events apps, BoardroomPR has worked in several industries delivering media relations, marketing consulting, trade show strategy, social media, website development, SEO and identity packages for companies in a host of industries.

Representative high-tech clients BoardroomPR has served include healthcare tech, real estate and construction web portals, industrial technical solutions, aviation apps, computer devices, energy and power generation high tech devices and many other tech PR applications.

Whether it is new software. Internet portals, medical or industrial device or solution, consumer or business services, new app or tech incubator or special event, our experienced high-tech PR specialists know how to get you where you need to go. With more than 150 years of experience, our team includes PR pros, journalists, multimedia specialists and web market-

### **BOSPAR**

Locations in San Francisco, LA, Orange County, Chicago and the Washington, D.C. area. 415/913-7528 success@bospar.com @BosparPR

Chris Boehike and Curtis Sparrer, Co-Founders and Principals Tom Carpenter, Principal Tricia Heinrich, Chief Content

Bospar is an award-winning boutique tech PR agency that offers the best of big and small.

Like a big agency, Bospar has seasoned professionals across the country, based in San Francisco, Los Ángeles, Chicago, Orange County, New York, and Washington, D.C. Its content department provides blog posts, case studies, ghost-written articles, messaging, positioning, press releases, social media content, website copy, infographics, research projects and videos.

But like a boutique, you will get attention from the most senior staff and a team of people who have worked together for years.

Bospar's staff includes journalists who know how to reverse-engineer media coverage from a client's needs and provide intensive media training with an insider's perspective. Bospar supports its media efforts with analyst and influencer relations, customer and

third-party relations, case histories and speaking and awards programs. The agency's specialty is driving coverage from the likes of ABC to the Wall Street Journal.

### **CATAPULT PR**

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Terri Douglas, Co-Founder & Principal

Ranked the leading technology PR agency in Colorado, Catapult PR helps B-2-B technology companies drive market-leading positions through Strategic Narrative Marketing. Catapult's formalized approach combines positioning and messaging, aggressive media and industry analyst relations, social media and content marketing into a comprehensive strategy designed to helps companies become true market leaders.

The firm is expert at coordinating and executing high-impact company/product launches. Îts Strategic Narrative Marketing process begins with a full-day workshop, and provides tech firms with the tools to define and own new or existing market categories.

Catapult has deep expertise in all major vertical markets, including years' long experience in application development, cloud, big data, commercial wireless and enterprise platforms that disrupt market norms

Catapult's success stems from its personal and professional service, along with partner-level account involvement and strategy. It is the preferred agency for technology companies looking for both strategy and strong execution.

### **COOPERKATZ &** COMPANY, INC.

205 Lexington Avenue. 5th Floor New York, NY 10016 www.cooperkatz.com

Ralph Katz, Principal Anne Green, President, CEO

CooperKatz & Company offers full-service public relations, marketing communications and creative services capabilities to a national client base. We have a 21-year track record of developing creative, high-impact, technolo-

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### COOPERKATZ & COMPANY

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gy-focused communications programs for such clients as Ad-ID, Capgemini, Carrier, Collective, DealerTrack, Fiserv, MSN, Otis Elevator Company, Polar, Telcordia, Teliris, Virgin Mobile, Zipcar and more.

Our technology expertise covers both B2B and B2C organizations across a wide range of industry sectors. Clients leverage our award-winning team for needs including: brand positioning, media relations, industry analyst relations, social media / digital strategy and execution, content marketing and development, new product introductions, special events, advertising, video production, collateral materials, design and more.

CooperKatz has won numerous industry awards including "Best Agency of the Year" in our size category from The Holmes Report and "Best Places to Work in NYC" from Crain's New York Business across multiple years.

### **DALE CURTIS** COMMUNICATIONS LLC

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#### Dale Curtis, Founder & CEO

Founded in 2009, Dale Curtis Communications helps companies and causes advance their agendas through strategic, integrated com-munications in Washington, DC and beyond.

DCC provides public affairs oriented PR and content services to a variety of clients in sectors including technology, telecommunications, public safety, manufacturing, energy, and nonprofit issues.

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

Our in-house specialties include strategic counsel and planning, messaging and content, news media relations, digital media, graphic design, video, and events. We maintain a network of adjunct professionals in DC and across the nation who can be activated as needed

Tech- and telecom-related cli-



Feintuch Communications President Henry Feintuch (left) and Healbe CEO Artem Shipitsyn display the GoBe 2 Smart Life Band at CES in Las

ents have included the BSA-The Software Alliance, the High-Tech Digital TV Coalition, InterDigital, IPC-The Electronics Association, LyondellBasell, NASSCOM, NE-NA-The 9-1-1 Association, SAP Americas, SAP National Security Services, and the Wireless Internet Service Providers Association (WISPA).

### **FAHLGREN MORTINE**

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Fahlgren Mortine is one of the nation's largest marketing and communications agencies, ranking #10 on O'Dwyer's list of U.S. PR firms. Through industry-leading integration and a pledge to "think wider," the agency skillfully blends the authenticity of a public relations firm, the creativity of an advertising agency and the accountability of a digital shop to innovate, influence and achieve as one agency for an enviable portfolio of technology and B2B clients. Our buyer-centric approach is informed by a willingness to "go deep" into markets, personas and solutions to reach buyers with

the right message through the right channel at the right time. From building awareness with thought leadership, media relations and advertising to nurturing relationships via marketing automation, Fahlgren Mortine delivers the full range of services required for success in today's multi-channel world, including branding, public and analyst relations, media planning and buying, content marketing, social media strategy and management, advertising and digital development

### **FEINTUCH** COMMUNICATIONS

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

Feintuch Communications = Tech PR. We've been doing it for decades and all with an eve towards delivering business results.

Our senior-led team helps startups, rapidly growing firms and established enterprises to influence markets about their products, services and corporate values. We do that with journalistic sensibilities and solid business experience.

Preparing to launch an exciting social media platform or beta test a breakthrough ad technology? Planning the introduction of advanced technologies for audio capture or video display? Looking to get industry analyst feedback on an

enterprise mobile app? Or explain to shareholders or prospective investors why a security technology, biotech development, retail tech enhancement or fintech algorithm may change the world? Is your new green technology gearing up to challenge conventional wisdom about alternative energy? Are you aiming to expand your marketing to a global stage?

We thrive on helping organizations to address their business communications challenges and position themselves to succeed in the marketplace. Our programs are designed to deliver business ROI, not just press clippings and status reports. We welcome the opportunity to partner with you to grow your business.

### FINN PARTNERS

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In 2017. Finn Partners' Technology Practice, ranked third on O'Dwyer's list of top technology firms, enjoyed continued global growth and thrives as the agency's largest practice area. This year, global marketing and communications firm Finn Partners expanded its tech footprint with the acquisition of Singapore-based technology boutique Ying Communications which will also serve as the agency's central hub for Asia/Pacific. Finn also acquired ABI Marketing Public Relations, specializing in Industrial technology with offices in Frankfurt and Shanghai.

With its U.S. and global reach, Finn's Technology Practice is over 130 professionals. The firm is recognized as a leader in integrated

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# We're plugged into the technology industry.



Too many exciting technology companies fail because they're not well-understood. We're wired to change that. Padilla helps innovators build, grow and protect their brands through powerful connections that achieve real business results. Connect to your stakeholders with precision and purpose at PadillaCo.com.





Sabrina Horn, Managing Partner, Technology Practice Leader at Finn Partners.

### FINN PARTNERS

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tech communications across all core and emerging sectors including: artificial intelligence, fintech, autotech, enterprise cloud, cybersecurity, storage, consumer tech/ IoT, data science, supply chain, services, mobile, marketing tech, digital media, information services, and telecommunications. Finn Partners is at the center of the tech industry's global ecosystem, connecting influencers, media, and financiers with top tech executives to help them build their brands and move their businesses forward.

As the industry moves toward integrated communications, Finn Partners Technology Practice is ahead of the curve, supporting its technology clients with full service programs including digital, branding/web, public affairs, crisis communications, public relations, events and research services. In 2017 Finn Partners conducted and published its own primary research on the growing consumer use of,

and concerns around, artificial intelligence in homes and driverless cars.

### GREENOUGH

One Brook Street Watertown, MA 02472 617/275-6500 www.greenough.biz

Phil Greenough, CEO & Founder Jamie Parker, President

It's about what customers can do with technology, not the feeds and speeds. For nearly two decades since our founding, Greenough has pioneered brand storytelling that leads with the what and why for enterprise solutions, mobile applications, IT security and robotics.

Whether it's a decision-maker within an enterprise considering technology for marketing analytics, HR or financial operations or a consumer choosing a device, it's always the story that drives the ac-

We've perfected brand journalism to deliver compelling stories across earned, owned and paid channels. As designated reporters for your brand, we bring stories to life that strongly resonate with your target tech buyer because we eschew the hype and hone in on what's relevant to buyers.

Our brand journalism "reporting" uncovers standalone stories and perspectives that are routinely featured in CIO, TechTarget, VentureBeat and other technology trades as well as vertical outlets. Our continuous vetting of "sources" identifies and prepares experts who can regularly comment on technology stories across business media, from national outlets such as the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal to local news outlets and hyperlocal media.

Our campaigns target earned, owned and paid media simultaneously, delivering your unique technology value proposition, often tailored to unique vertical markets. From thought leadership through



ing" our clients into breaking feature stories, we ensure that your brand stories are well-told across relevant channels and help drive marketing qualified leads and new sales.

### **HIGHWIRE PR**

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

Highwire is a full-service communications agency built on the promise of delivering creative, results-oriented PR programs for innovative companies.

Highwire is an award-winning agency that has achieved success with a simple formula: we believe in supporting our clients with results-oriented programs built on business goals.

At Highwire we transcend the "same old same old" strategies with the same zeal clients bring to their own business. And we do it with a smart, informed approach that's founded on relevance and insight. We roll up our sleeves and immerse our experts in your business, executing on your challenges and goals to generate greater awareness, growth and sales. Our client expertise spans consumer and lifestyle brands to mobility and enterprise technologies. Across our San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Boston offices, we have more than 85 employees, along with proven partnerships with international agencies that collectively and successfully drive international campaigns.

### THE HOFFMAN **AGENCY**

325 S. First St. San Jose, CA 95113 408/286-2611 SBurkhart@Hoffman.com LHoffman@Hoffman.com www.Hoffman.com/tech-pr/ www.storytelling-techniques.com Twitter: @DailyBrew

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 a heritage in the tech sector, the firm's work today cuts across a range of B2B and consumer markets.

For clients with global needs, the company operates its own offices in Asia Pacific, Europe and the United States. Unlike traditional agencies handicapped by their silo structure, we apply a collaborative approach to implementing multi-country campaigns. This leverage of content and thinking across geographies ultimately generates better results. And we can do this with a single-point-contact for clients.

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 also conducts storytelling workshops.

Even on the operations side, The Hoffman Agency walks to a different drummer. Eschewing the traditional focus on the financial side measuring account people based



HIghwire PR's staff.

on their "billability" — the firm adheres to the belief that if you deliver great work to the client, financial performance will follow.

### **HOTWIRE**

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Barbara Bates, Global CEO John Mahoney, Chief Client Officer Heather Kernahan, President, North America

Hotwire is a global communications agency that helps CMOs better engage and connect with their customers. From Sydney to San Francisco, we operate with a borderless mind-set across 22 locations including the UK, US, France, Germany, Spain, Italy and Australia, together with co-branded partners Yellow Communications in the Netherlands and Belgium, Active DMC in the Middle East and VIANEWS in Brazil, as well as other affiliate partners.

On September 29, 2016, Hotwire acquired Eastwick Communications — continuing our mission to offer a truly global client and employee centered alternative to the multinational agency model. This acquisition will give us better access to the technology hub of the world, strengthening our reach and expertise as a large multinational agency with the service ethos and deep local connections that only a local agency can offer.

### **ICR**

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ICR provides strategic communications and advisory services that help companies drive business goals, bolster credibility and enhance long-term enterprise value. ICR's Technology Practice, comprised of former Wall Street veterans and seasoned communications experts, brings a unique POV that helps technology companies build carefully articulated positioning and competitive advantages around their ideas, concepts and stories. The team delivers results for clients across a range of sectors, including SaaS, Cloud Infrastructure, Internet, Ecommerce, Mobile, Fintech, Data/Analytics and IoT. Marrying a deep understanding of technology, capital markets, business and financial media, ICR provides a compelling value proposition for companies at various life stages, including startups seeking to raise additional capital, growth companies with IPOs on the horizon, organizations investing in M&A. businesses transforming to meet customer and market demands, and public entities looking to better tell their stories. ICR maintains offices in Boston, Connecticut, New York, San Francisco, Hong Kong and Beijing.

Clients: Alteryx, Appian, Datos IO, FLEETCOR Technologies, Forter, Guidewire, HARMAN International, Mobileye, MuleSoft, Proofpoint, Red Hat, ShopKeep, TechStyle, Veeva, Yext.

### **INKHOUSE**

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

Founded in 2007, InkHouse's steady growth can be attributed to the company's longstanding rep-



Inkhouse CEO and co-founder **Beth Monaghan** 

utation for solid PR and content campaigns, and deep bench of experienced communications professionals, former journalists, and creative thinkers on staff.

We partner with global brands, Fortune 100 enterprises, venture capital firms, and technology companies at any stage of their lifecycle. Our client roster runs the gamut from enterprise technology (fintech, security, cloud, wearables, SaaS), to professional services, venture capital, healthcare, education, consumer and real estate.

With offices in Boston, New York, San Francisco and Providence, RI, InkHouse is well-positioned to serve both national and international clients looking for dynamic, thoughtful integrated communications campaigns.

Communicate. Amplify. Engage. inkhouse.com

### **JMRCONNECT**

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Mostafa Razzak, CEO and

Shaping Influence Worldwide®: A 360-degree approach to telling your brand's story with focus, consistency and authenticity, across every medium.

We are relentless, and our handson approach is a catalyst for clients' success.

JMRConnect is an award-win-

ning public relations, digital communications, and social influencer engagement agency that helps brands connect to their target audience. Our clients' successful campaigns are marked by tier-1 media coverage, thought leadership, third-party recognition, and multi-channel visibility. Engaging both internal and external stakeholders transforms friends, followers, and industry leaders into loyal brand advocates.

Don't just take our word for it.

"The most proactive agency I've ever worked with!", said Saman-tha Osowski, SVP, Marketing for Yorktel

Social media has changed both how, and from where people receive and consume news and information. For advocacy to be effective, messages must not only reach your target audience, but also resonate across multiple channels to impact opinions, build brand trust, and solidify reputations. Our 360-degree approach leverages traditional, interactive digital, and social engagement to tell your story with focus, consistency and authenticity, across every medium.

The JMRConnect team is wellversed in myriad disciplines, including: corporate communications; employee advocacy and engagement; public affairs; investor relations; community building; journalism; and industry analysis. Our senior-level personnel bring a diversity of skills and decades of expertise from multinational agencies; privately-held and publicly-traded companies; private equity and venture capital; political consulting; media; and analyst firms

### **KARBO** COMMUNICATIONS

601 Fourth St., Suite 204 San Francisco, CA 94107 415/255-6510 info@karbocom.com www.karbocom.com

1304 Jefferson Avenue Redwood City, CA 94062

Julie Karbo, Founder & CEO

Karbo Communications is a respected and innovative PR and digital communications agency that delivers on business objectives. With Karbo Com, you don't get bench players. You get the industry's top marketing and PR teams working with you every day, whether it's developing positioning, placing your company in top

\_ Continued on page 36



The TDK and Karbo Com team at January 2017 CES.

### KARBO COMMUNICATIONS

Continued from page 35

media, growing an active social media base, creating viral videos or writing influential content. We've ushered in clients across technology industries, such as cloud, SaaS, mobile, the Internet of Things, social, Big Data, apps, advertising tech, security and networking.

The Karbo Com team has worked extensively with both B2B and consumer tech companies, including Apple, eBay Advertising, the IoT World conference, Logitech. Real Time Innovations. Equinix, Cisco, Defense.Net, NerdWallet, GoDaddy, Fox Digital apps, a National Geographic App, Oracle and Intel. When it's make or break, vou want the best. You want a team that's seen it all, yet knows the latest and greatest trends, technologies and tools. At Karbo Com, we have a track record of delivering revenues, industry leading stature, partners and funding.

Clients: Open Fog Consortium/

Fog World Congress, Logitech, (Real-Time Innovations). TDK, 8th Wall, nCAP, JotForm, Flexera/BDNA, OnScale and Optalysys.

### **LAUNCHSQUAD**

340 Pine St. Suite 100 San Francisco, CA 94104 415/625-8555 squad@launchsquad.com www.launchsquad.com

LaunchSquad is a public relations, content marketing and creative communications agency with offices in San Francisco, New York, Boston and Seattle. We also have several senior team leaders located in other major U.S. markets including Chicago, Atlanta, Denver and Portland.

Since 2000, we've been passionately helping companies build brands and market traction through innovative communications programs Our expertise spans both consumer-facing and B2B clients in a variety of industries including

Lindsey Carnett, CEO and President of Marketing Maven at a restaurant in Hell's Kitchen launching new consumer technology product, Pi SOLO.

consumer technology, enterprise technology, fashion, retail, entertainment, quantum computing, media, ecommerce, gaming, education, finance, energy and more.

We work with our clients to understand, shape and expand upon their stories and then connect with audiences and build lasting engagement. Our holistic approach to communications takes advantage of all of the ways story can be shared through owned, earned and paid media.

Whether it's helping develop Amazon's self-publishing business, supporting Stubhub as it transforms its business, building American Giant into one of the hottest new fashion brands in the world, or taking software company Okta from early stage startup to more than 500 staff, we believe our fine-tuned set of services and talent can develop a winning communications program for virtually any company.

As a 120-person agency, we can bring a lot of resources to bear on helping our clients get known. Our services include extensive brand strategy and story development, marketing and communications strategy, content strategy and development, extensive media relations and thought leadership work, creative production and social and digital campaigns.

### **MARKETING** MAVEN

1460 Broadway, 1st Floor New York, NY 10036 212/967-5510 www.MarketingMaven.com lindsey@marketingmaven.com natalie@marketingmaven.com

Los Angeles Headquarters 310/994-7380

Lindsey Carnett, CEO & President Natalie Rucker, Director of **Business Development** 

Marketing Maven combines traditional media relations and cutting-edge digital strategies for consumer technology clients. This fusion of online and offline marketing helps our team develop product launch campaigns that are results-driven and measurable. By aligning with our clients' goals, identifying and engaging with their key influencers and adapting to emerging trends, we produce award-winning campaigns.

From national app launches to children's software or mobile charging devices, Marketing Maven executes worldwide PR stunts,

national media tours, integrated influencer campaigns and viral social media competitions to generate buzz for our clients. In addition to content marketing, our digital team also executes social media advertising campaigns with analytics and insights geared toward driving consumer awareness, engagement and sales conversions.

### **MCGRATH/POWER**

75 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113 408/727-0351 www.mcgrathpower.com JonathanBloom@mcgrathpower.

Jonathan Bloom, CEO and Founding Partner Kate Walker, SVP and Partner Derek James, VP and Partner Kristin Bleier. VP

We are an integrated marketing and communications agency with a profoundly diverse history of crafting communications programs with conviction for consumer brands, B2B technology companies and many organizations-in-between. Communications today encompass an incredible variety of services, from strategy development and traditional media relations, to social media and content marketing efforts, and as a fully integrated agency, we are prepared to help our clients with it all. Our tenacious approach is derived from more than three decades of experience working with startups and industry leaders, including Cisco, Lowepro, Mellanox, Open Networking Foundation, SanDisk, TiVo and Vodafone. As the Silicon Valley partner of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, we've been able to develop and deliver highly effective global communications programs for numerous clients via our 100+ offices worldwide.

#### **MERRITT GROUP**

8251 Greensboro Dr. Suite 600 McLean, VA 22102 703/390-1500 Fax: 703/860-2080 info@merrittgrp.com www.merrittgrp.com

220 Montgomery St. Suite 640 San Francisco, CA 94104 415/247-1660

Alisa Valudes Whyte, Sr. Partner & CEO Thomas Rice, Jayson Schkloven and John Conrad, Exec. VPs &



Kate Walker, SVP and Partner at McGrath/Power and Jonathan Bloom, **CEO** and Founding Partner

**Partners** Shahed Ahmed, Senior VP & Partner

Merritt Group lives at the intersection of market expertise and technical proficiency to help our clients reach their goals and dominate their markets. Our client roster includes organizations ranging from large, industry-leading enterprises to emerging, venture-backed innovators. Our philosophy starts with understanding our clients' target audiences and markets, and leads to the development of powerful messages and creative programs that drive awareness around their innovations. We pride ourselves on delivering insightful, strategic communications approaches that help the world's most inspiring companies get people talking and keep their audiences engaged.

We have built our business on the expertise of our people, procuring and developing the industry's best talent. We foster innovation and experimentation that allows our employees to develop their careers and reach their fullest potential, while delivering incredible service and value to our clients throughout the process. Merritt is dedicated to fostering a culture that employees love working in, from being recognized by Washingtonian Magazine and the Washington Business Journal, to promoting health and wellness among staff and giving back to the community through programs such as its "Merry Week of Giving."

Clients: Varonis, IOActive, PAS Global, Authentic8, DMI, Gigamon, Databricks, Teradata, CalAmp, GoodData, Northern Virginia

Technology Council, Innovation Health, Telos, Monster Federal, MAXIMUS and ServiceNow Fed-

#### **MWWPR**

304 Park Avenue South New York, NY 10010 212/704-9727 www.mww.com

8 California Street San Francisco, CA 94111 415/464-6422

Karen Clyne, National Technology Practice Lead and General Manager, San Francisco kclyne@mww.com Tara Naughton, Executive Vice

President, Consumer Marketing tnaughton@mww.com

MWWPR is a leading global independent communications agency. Since our founding days, national and international brands have turned to MWWPR for our extensive experience in the technology industry — from start-ups to tech giants to global innovators, we've worked with them all. Our team of professionals live and breathe the tech space, and bring a century of collective experience.

Constant innovation. Fierce competition. Technology industries move fast. We stay ahead of the trends to make sure we move faster. Our core teams deliver true subject matter expertise ranging from semi-conductor technology and data security to consumer electronics, apps, computer software and entertainment for fully integrated solutions. We build true working relationships with media,

analysts, and other influencers who drive the market conversation. We create original research, events and partnerships to give our clients the edge they need to succeed.

Companies choose MWWPR because of our proven track record of combining industry knowledge, influencer relationships, creative ideas and execution of the media to drive measurable results for their businesses. Our practice melds left-brained technology with rightbrained content for a well-rounded offering vou won't find anywhere else. We build and maintain meaningful relationships with media, analysts and other influencers who drive the market conversation. We also work with influencers to create our own communities, original research, events, and partnerships that give our clients the edge they need.

#### **PADILLA**

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

Scott Davila, Senior Vice President/Technology Lead

Padilla is a top 10 independent public relations and communications company comprised of 240 employee-owners. Padilla builds, grows and protects brands worldwide by creating purposeful connections with the people who matter most through public relations, advertising, digital and social marketing, investor relations and brand strategy. Padilla includes the brand consultancy of Joe Smith, the food and nutrition experts at FoodMinds and the research authorities at

Padilla's Technology Practice is wired into B2B technology and related market trends, including enterprise software and hardware, IT services and solutions, engineering, materials science and cloud computing services. Our technology team works with clients around the globe to turn their complex stories into compelling IT communications that achieve real business

Clients in the technology sectors include 3M, Element Fleet Management, Proto Labs and Rockwell Automation.

Padilla is a founding member of The Worldcom Public Relations Group, a partnership of 143 independently owned partner offices in 115 cities on six continents. Make a connection at PadillaCo.com.

#### PAN COMMUNICATIONS

255 State St., 8th Floor Boston, MA 02109 617/502-4300 info@pancomm.com www.pancommunications.com

Boston I San Francisco I New York I Orlando

Philip A. Nardone, President & CEO Mark Nardone, Executive Vice President Elizabeth Famiglietti, EVP, Human Resources Phil Carpenter, EVP & Managing Director Gary Torpey, EVP, Finance Lisa Astor, Senior Vice President Gene Carozza, Senior Vice President

Darlene Doyle, Senior Vice

President

PAN Communications is a data-focused integrated marketing & PR agency servicing B2B technology and healthcare brands. With offices in Boston, San Francisco, New York and Orlando, PAN delivers insight-driven, measurable public relations programs for leading and emerging brands nationally and globally such as SAP, RSA, MediaMath, Maestro Health and Fuze, to name a few.

With a staff of 100+ professionals, PAN offers the agility and personalized service of a mid-size agency while leveraging national and international relationships to manage large scale communications programs. The agency continues to experience impressive growth and provides today's modern marketers with impactful communications, influencer relations, social media and digital services that continue to expand on its brand equity.

#### PEPPERCOMM. INC.

470 Park Ave. South, 4th Floor N. New York, NY 10016 212/931-6100 hello@peppercomm.com www.peppercomm.com Steve Cody, Co-CEO and Co-Founder Ed Moed, Co-CEO & Co-Founder Ted Birkhahn, Partner & President Ann Barlow, Partner & President, West Coast Deborah Brown. Partner & Managing Director Jacqueline Kolek, Partner & Managing Director Maggie O'Neill, Partner &

Continued on page 38

#### PEPPERCOMM, INC.

\_Continued from page 37

Managing Director Mike Friedin, Chief Digital Officer

Peppercomm is an award-winning strategic, integrated communications and marketing agency headquartered in New York City with offices in San Francisco and London. The firm connects brands, messages and people through data-driven insights, cross-channel communications and brilliant customer experience. Employing an omni-channel approach, the company uses customer insights to determine the right mix of tools and platforms to help clients reach, engage and influence customers along their path to purchase.

Founded in 1995, Peppercomm has received numerous accolades, including The Holmes Report's North American Corporate/B2B Agency of the Year and Bulldog Reporter's Midsized Agency of the Year. The agency has been listed as one of Fortune's 10 Best Workplaces in Advertising and Marketing, 100 Best Workplaces for Women, 50 Best Small and Medium Workplaces and 50 Best Workplaces for New College Grads.

Services include Branding, Content Strategy & Development, Creative Services, Crisis Management, Digital Solutions, Experiential, Insights & Strategy, Licensing, Public Relations & Social Media and Research & Measurement.

For more information, visit www.peppercomm.com.

#### **RACEPOINT GLOBAL**

53 State Street, 4th Floor Boston, MA 02109 617/624-3200 www.racepointglobal.com

Larry Weber, Chairman & Founder Peter Prodromou, President & Chief Executive Officer Ani Jigarjian, VP, Global Marketing & Business Development

Racepoint combines the power of worldwide reach with personal attention. Our clients expect ev-

The December issue of O'Dwver's will profile Entertainment & Sports PR firms. If you would like to be profiled, contact Editor Jon Gingerich at 646/843-2080 or jon@odwyerpr.com

erything to be bigger, better and bolder. They also want access to the brightest minds at all times. We have the necessary DNA to do

At Racepoint, we challenge our clients to do more to stay ahead and demand that they challenge us to be accountable. We drive communications that are strategically sound and strive to forge personal relationships, breakthrough results and lasting impact.

Racepoint's strength and ability to deliver are predicated on its understanding of technology, which is central to its own DNA. Today, every company — at its roots is a tech company, whether it be an auto company inventing a new self-driving car, a power company delivering clean energy or an agriculture company inventing new ways to extract higher yield. Because of our technology DNA, we are better positioned to understand these dynamics and act on them in ways that make our clients leaders.

#### **RASKY PARTNERS**

70 Franklin St., 3rd Flr. Boston, MA 02110 617/443-9933

555 11th Street, NW, Suite 401 Washington, DC 20004 202/530-7700

Rasky Partners is a nationally recognized public and government relations firm with nearly three decades of experience providing exceptional client service to technology companies that operate at the intersection of business, politics and media.

With offices in Boston and Washington, D.C., Rasky Partners offers a comprehensive range of services including media strategy and public relations, government relations, reputation management, communication and digital media to tech clients looking to launch new technologies, grow market share and manage the considerable regulatory challenges they encounter along the way.

As an independent firm, Rasky Partners has the flexibility and resources to address complex communications challenges with a commitment to serve our clients' interests first. We are dedicated to providing consistent, strategic hands-on engagement at all levels, as each client team — including the senior professionals — is highly engaged, from the beginning to the end of each client engagement.

#### **ROGERS & COWAN**

1840 Century Park E., 18th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90067 310/854-8132

909 Third Ave., 9th Floor New York, NY 10022 212/878 5501 Fax: 212/878-5117

inquiries@rogersandcowan.com www.rogersandcowan.com Instagram: @rogersandcowan Twitter: @rogersandcowan Facebook: @rogersandcowan

#### Mark Owens. CEO

Technology is disrupting business and life as we know it every day, and driving one of the greatest periods of innovation the world has ever known. From big data to AI, wearables, and immersive technologies such as AR and VR, to integrated DMP systems to make sense of it all, technology touches every aspect of our lives.

At Rogers & Cowan, we work with tech companies from the startup to the established to help build their brands and reputation. also help non-tech companies navigate technology in an increasingly technological world.

Our team leverages the power of owned, earned and paid media to ensure its tech clients are relevant and part of the cultural conversation. We harness the power of technology, influencers, talent, content, brands and media to proactively develop the narratives that shape pop culture and the technology landscape. Our expert digital team has exceptional media buying and community management capabilities and works closely with our team of over 100 publicists to ensure that we're not just on top of what's trending, authentic and hot right now - we're creating and maximizing it in all forms of media.

We're the agency that generated unprecedented coverage for NVID-IA's launch of the most advanced GPU ever created. We regularly generate coverage for our app clients among mainstream and entertainment media where tech coverage is limited and, our team of technology experts get a seat at the table and provide on-going strategic counsel to one of the biggest telecomm and OTT brands in the world.

Many of our clients sit at the intersection of technology, entertainment, digital content and brand marketing. Our dedicated team of specialists has in-depth knowledge and experience working with consumer electronics hardware and devices, embedded and core technologies, videogame platforms and peripherals, app developers, content creators and producers, OTT and social and digital media companies to provide consistent coverage of their products and services to the trade, business and entertainment communities.

Representative clients/projects: YouTube, Hasbro, Kabam, 505 Games, 3Black Dot, Sonos, Amazon Studios, Microsoft, Kinect for Xbox 360, IMAX, 3D Entertainment Summits, Game Marketing Summit, NVIDIA and Razer.

#### RUDER FINN

425 East 53rd Street New York, NY 10022 212-593-6400 www.ruderfinn.com

Kathy Bloomgarden, CEO Robin Kim. Head of Global Technology & Innovation

Ruder Finn's technology practice supports transformative brands, as well as brands in transformation across all sectors of technology. We work with some of the world's most innovative startups and impactful enterprises. Our work has been recognized with awards such as Bulldog Reporter's "Tech PR Agency of the Year" as well as "Global Tech Campaign of the Year" for our work with Nokia, and "Consumer Tech PR Campaign of the Year" for our work with Polaroid Swing, among other awards. We are leading in emerging technologies like AI, VR and IoT and have driven media's interest in The Future of Work and Digital Transformation. In addition to pure technology, we work with companies at the intersection of technology and other industries and help hone their positioning, an imperative as technology becomes a key narrative in every industry. We're also the agency that turned an AI start-up into the world's most sought-after platform, created the world's first ever live streamed virtual reality concert, introduced Google lens to the healthcare world, launched the first-ever partnership between AWS and a Fortune 500 software multinational and helped global corporate leaders digitize entire countries. We tell stories about technology's impact on the world today and tomorrow. Our technology team works cross-functionally with our healthcare, corporate and digital teams using integrated marketing communications strategies to uncover what's next as technology transforms and disrupts the world as we know it.



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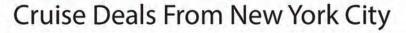














7 Day U.S & Canada Carnival Cruise Line - Sunshine Sep 10, 2016 • fr.\$470

**Business Travel** 

8 Day Bahamas Norwegian Cruise Line - Gem Jun 4, 2016 • fr. \$599

NORWEGIAN

7 Day Caribbean/Bahamas RCCL - Anthem of the Seas Dec 9, 2016 • fr. \$824





















SourceCode founders Mondshein and Honeyman build campaigns that fuse innovative technology with a human touch to drive growth and ROI.

#### SOURCECODE **COMMUNICATIONS**

135 Madison Ave, Floor 8 New York, NY 10016 352/246-5532 https://www. sourcecodecommunications.com hello@sourcecodecomms.com

Greg Mondshein, Co-Founder & Managing Partner Becky Honeyman, Co-Founder & Managing Partner

Founded in September 2017 by former Hotwire Senior Vice Presidents Greg Mondshein and Becky Honeyman, SourceCode Communications is a tech-focused, human-centered PR agency headquartered in New York City.

The agency caters to high-growth clients in the consumer and lifestyle technology, fintech, mobile, adtech, and enterprise technology sectors. Engagements with clients are fully bespoke -with an unwavering focus on key business metrics and reverse engineering a communications strategy accordingly. In just a few months of operation, the agency has already signed several AOR relationships and partnered with a premier marketing conference brand as its official communications partner.

#### TREVELINO/ **KELLER**

949 W. Marietta St. Suite X-106 Atlanta, GA 30318 404/214-0722 X106 and X105 dtrevelino@trevelinokeller.com akeller@trevelinokeller.com www.trevelinokeller.com www.groovy-studios.com

Coming off a highly successful year as the 10th fastest growing firm nationally and second fastest

in the Southeast, Trevelino/Keller's long-standing pedigree in technology continues to be its economic engine. Contributing to its success is its ability to cross fertilize across its six other practices to yield a unique degree of vertical prowess in areas such as Fin-Tech, Consumer-Tech, Clean-Tech, Food-Tech, Fashion-Tech and more recently Ag-Tech. While it's four areas of service — public relations, digital/ social marketing, demand generation and creative services, align with what it believes are the most relevant services today, new markets of focus are gaining increased traction - Disruptive Forces, Category Pioneers, Ûnknown Leaders and Wonder Women. For companies whose leadership aligns with one of these markets of focus, the agency demonstrates a unique understanding of the company's personality and mission that's increasing its ability to close and grow business

In an early 2017 repositioning, the firm also introduced its Outcome-Driven position with emphasis on four strategic outcomes it pursues on behalf of its clients — Growth, Value, Engagement and Leadership. Each outcome comes with its own path of customized programming. Rounding out the firm's capabilities is its Groovy Studios brand, made up of in-house specialists that deliver graphic design, dynamic content, brand identity and web services.

#### **VOLUME PUBLIC** RELATIONS

6312 South Fiddlers Green Circle Suite 400N Greenwood Village, CO 80111 720/529-4850 Twitter: @VolumePR www.volumepr.com edwards@volumepr.com

Elizabeth Edwards, Founder and President

Volume is unlike any tech agency you've ever worked with. In fact, Volume is different from every agency in the US. How? For starters, because we are going to boil the basis for selecting your PR partner down to one simple point.

Yes, we've worked with hundreds of technology start-ups to established brands, won awards, secured national media coverage, increased thought leadership, and other great reasons you probably look at when hiring an agency. Yes, we could list off the launches we've created, the great media results we've yielded, or the brands we've led to acquisitions — which includes our last telecom client acquisition for \$230 million in '16. And sure, we could fill you in on our tech client portfolio including brands like Level(3).

BUT! That isn't what sets us apart the most. In fact, those are just the details of our company that show who we are on paper.

So, what is different about Volume compared to other agencies? The difference is YOU. Volume makes YOU feel differently than any other agency you could work with, and we translate that feeling to every message we create. Volume communication and strategy is all based in psychology and new neuroscience research. You get better outcomes because we go deeper into looking at human behavior and how the mind works to win over your audiences. This means you always look different. Sound different. And achieve greater levels

#### **W20 GROUP**

50 Francisco Street San Francisco, CA 94133 415/362-5018 www.w2ogroup.com info@w2ogroup.com Twitter: @W2OGroup

Jim Weiss, CEO & Founder

W2O is a privately-held integrated marketing communications firm built on something we call insight integration. It's a strategic approach based on unearthing transformative insights your competition can't see and integrating them into of all the work we do — across all marcom disciplines - for our clients' brands. We've grown from our inception in 2001 to over 550 people in 12 offices across the U.S. and Europe.

We build unfair advantages for brands. How? By following the right data to get to the point. That's where your brand becomes

more relevant and valuable to your audience

The truth is most of the data out there is just noise. The right data is the kind that tells you who your audience really is, what matters to them, and where your brand fits in their lives. It leads us to insights that we can use to transform your brand story, experiences - and even your offering. And it gives us the clearest measurement of how our work is performing and how to optimize it.

The W2O network includes WCG, Twist, Pure, Sentient and Marketeching. For more information, please visit www.w2ogroup. com.

#### **WEBER SHANDWICK**

909 Third Avenue New York, NY 10022 www.webershandwick.com GlobalTech@webershandwick.com

Our role as communicators and storytellers in the technology sector used to be straightforward: educate the world about why technology is important. But that world changed. Technology is now pervasive in every facet of our lives and deep in every industry. The communications challenge is no longer to explain how technology works, or even why it's relevant – but rather to manage the impact of innovation, in all its various forms, in all its various engagements.

That requires a dynamic team of the best experts from media, analytics, strategy and creative to engage audiences with communications that drive value. It requires teams who understand today's unique environment, from Silicon Valley to London, from Singapore to Sydney, and everywhere in between.

Weber Shandwick's Global Technology practice is uniquely qualified to deliver this kind of value because we see the whole picture. We start with the problems our clients want to solve and apply a strategic rigor to position for long-term success. We deeply understand the shift from publishers to platforms and how this affects what content vour customers see. We see the link between storytelling and how to drive action from your most trusted audiences. And we know the value of data and analytics to the lifecycle of every campaign, from inception to conclusion.

Companies embracing this era of change — from automotive to fintech to healthcare — see Weber Shandwick as a critical partner to navigating it. O

# O'DWYER'S RANKINGS TOP TECHNOLOGY PR FIRMS

		Firm	Net Fees (2016)	Б	Firm Net F	ees (2016)
	1.	Edelman, New York, NY	\$265,316,000	36.	North 6th Agency (N6A), New York, NY	\$1,018,321
3	2.	Racepoint Global, Boston, MA	23,713,740	37.	Feintuch Communications, New York, NY	862,100
$\lesssim$	3.	Finn Partners, New York, NY	20,344,000	38.	Pierpont Communications, Houston, TX	832,960
otin	4.	W20 Group, San Francisco, CA	19,515,000	39.	360PR+, Boston, MA	802,608
$\stackrel{\times}{<}$	5.	Highwire PR, San Francisco, CA	14,032,125	40.	Verasolve, Potomac, MD	802,000
$\geq$	6.	Spark, San Francisco, CA	14,021,737	41.	Standing Partnership, St. Louis, MO	771,017
$\leq$	7.	Hotwire, New York, NY	13,247,420	42.	Makovsky, New York, NY	657,000
S	8.	ICR, New York, NY	12,735,776	43.	CooperKatz & Co., New York, NY	485,060
	9.	PAN Communications, Boston, MA	11,704,377	44.	Marketing Maven Public Relations, Camarillo, CA	454,793
$\leq$	10.	Hoffman Agency, The, San Jose, CA	11,340,000	45.	Konnect Agency, Los Angeles, CA	319,290
>	11.	Merritt Group, McLean, VA	11,078,745	46.	French I West I Vaughan, Raleigh, NC	310,275
	12.	APCO Worldwide, Washington, DC	10,733,500	47.	Power Group, The, Dallas, TX	266,962
	13.	Bateman Group, San Francisco, CA	10,482,117	48.	Hunter PR, New York, NY	250,000
	14.	Inkhouse Media + Marketing, Waltham, MA	10,375,200	49.	McNeely Pigott & Fox Public Relations, Nashville, TI	V 242,524
1	15.	Padilla, Minneapolis, MN	9,898,630	50.	Moore Communications Group, Tallahassee, FL	236,885
	16.	LaunchSquad, San Francisco, CA	9,400,000	51.	WordWrite Communications LLC, Pittsburgh, PA	233,300
	17.	Walker Sands Communications, Chicago, IL	8,052,898	52.	BLAZE, Santa Monica, CA	230,000
	18.	Fahlgren Mortine, Columbus, OH	7,955,463	53.	Maccabee, Minneapolis, MN	193,886
	19.	<b>5W Public Relations,</b> New York, NY	5,300,000	54.	O'Malley Hansen Communications, Chicago, IL	191,000
$\mathbb{Z}$	20.	Airfoil Public Relations, Royal Oak, MI	4,767,140	55.	Dale Curtis Communications LLC, Washington, DC	186,933
	21.	Jackson Spalding, Atlanta, GA	4,407,649	56.	Red Sky PR, Boise, ID	162,198
1	22.	Havas Formula, New York, NY	4,253,000	57.	BoardroomPR, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	150,000
	23.	Peppercomm, New York, NY	4,082,143	58.	Public Communications Inc., Chicago, IL	133,841
(	24.	Rasky Partners, Inc., Boston, MA	2,964,147	59.	Champion Management Group, Dallas, TX	129,815
	25.	<b>G&amp;S Business Communications,</b> New York, NY	2,831,159	60.	Schneider Associates, Boston, MA	124,500
1	26.	Coyne, Parsippany, NJ	2,400,000	61.	BizCom Associates, Plano, TX	110,000
N	27.	Idea Grove, Dallas, TX	2,298,518	62.	Beehive Strategic Communication, St. Paul, MN	108,641
₹	28.	Gregory FCA, Ardmore, PA	2,000,000	63.	Bob Gold & Associates, Redondo Beach, CA	70,937
	29.	Prosek Partners, New York, NY	1,910,000	64.	Landis Communications, San Francisco, CA	60,000
	30.	Greenough, Boston, MA	1,350,349	65.	Rosica Communications, Paramus, NJ	54,000
	31.	ARPR, Atlanta, GA	1,340,397	66.	SPM Communications, Dallas, TX	41,040
1	32.	Trevelino/Keller, Atlanta, GA	1,300,000	67.	Greentarget Global LLC, Chicago, IL	40,000
	33.	Karbo Communications, San Francisco, CA	1,240,061	68.	Lovell Communications, Nashville, TN	29,039
	34.	Lambert, Edwards & Associates, Grand Rapids	, MI <b>1,175,000</b>	69.	The Buzz Agency, Delray Beach, FL	<b>5,700</b> º
V	35.	IW Group, Inc., West Hollywood, CA	1,053,000			

# Would you work for Weinstein?

By Fraser P. Seitel

epending on where you sit, Harvey Weinstein is either a sick, troubled pig or just a pig. The disgraced former movie mogul is now despised by just about everybody (with the apparent exception of

NBC News).



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.

But what's lost in the daily revelations of new Harvev sexual victims Weinstein and indig-Company nities is the other related, rapid fall from grace that was nearly as precipitous as Harvey's.

Lisa Bloom, crusading daughter of crusading mother Gloria Allred, publicity-seeker par excellence and eager Harvey Weinstein public relations

spokeswoman, resigned in shame after being pilloried for agreeing to speak for Harvey "Oink Oink" in the first place.

Bloom's dramatic public demise provides a cautionary lesson for any public relations counselor tempted to go to work for a deep-pocketed but ethically-suspect client.

While any miscreant is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution the right to a lawyer, there's no such similar guarantee for a public relations counselor. In PR, you don't have to work for anybody you don't want to represent. For in public relations, as in life, you're judged by the company you keep. And if you choose to go to work for O. J. Simpson or Bashar el Assad or Nelly or Harvey Weinstein or another of that ilk, you are judged

Which is precisely what happened to Lisa Bloom, whose public relations representation of Mr. Weinstein was doomed from the start

First, she's a lawyer, not a public relations professional. And just as hedge fund manager Anthony Scaramucci proved unqualified to handle PR, so, too, did Lisa Bloom.

A PR professional confronted with Weinstein's transgressions would have immediately acknowledged them publicly, asked for understanding and moved on to a course of remediation. But Bloom, the lawyer, instead

chose to parse Weinstein's failings, describing him as "deeply bothered by some of his emotional responses and temper ... and chagrined the issue still plagues him."

Every time she opened her mouth to defend Mr. Weinstein's indefensible, decadesold treatment of women, she pounded his — and her own — reputation further into the ground.

Second, Bloom's representation of Weinstein was irreparably tainted. Not only was she paid extravagantly to represent him publicly, but Weinstein had earlier agreed to produce a mini-series based on a book Bloom had written.

All of this might have been just peachy had it not flown in the face of Bloom's entire career. Up until she signed up with a serial sexual harasser, Bloom had earned a reputation as an outspoken defender of sexually harassed women.

And so, mercifully, after a week in the Weinstein saddle - and no doubt sufficiently shoved by her aghast mother — Ms. Bloom resigned. But the damage to her reputation and her business was done. What self-respecting woman claiming harassment would ever again hire the woman who defended Harvey Weinstein?

As further proof of the dangers in representing the Weinsteins of the world, in the wake of Bloom's resignation, one of Harvey's other public relations counselors, Lanny Davis, surreptitiously slunk away as well.

Davis, of course, was the Bill Clinton lawyer-apologist, who morphed into a self-acknowledged public relations expert. Among the erstwhile lawyer's more prominent public relations clients were the former president of the Ivory Coast, who was jailed for crimes against humanity, and the former President of Equatorial Guinea, who was charged with torturing opponents as well as stiffing Lanny on his consulting bill. At least Lanny shouldn't have similar problems collecting from Harvey Weinstein. O



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#### PR news brief

#### DowDuPont parks specialty group at Glover

DowDuPont has tapped WPP's Glover Park Group to handle the specialty products division of the \$73 billion combine created by the "merger of equals" announced in 2015 and finalized Aug. 31, 2017.

Based in Wilmington, the SPD includes businesses in segments such as electronics & imaging, industrial biosciences, nutrition & health, safety & construction, sustainable solutions and transportation & advanced

GPP's team includes Jack Krumholz, founder of Microsoft's government relations office; Grant Leslie, legislative aide to former Sen. Tom Daschle and ex-Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack; and Joel Leftwich, ex-Republican majority staff director for Sen. Pat Roberts on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry.

# **Talking taxes in 2017**

By Richard Goldstein

or 2018? I don't believe anyone knows for sure. According to the Trump administration, a new framework will deliver a 21st century tax code that's



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built for growth, supports dle-class families, defends workers, protects American jobs and puts America first. It proposes to deliver fiscally responsible tax reform broadening the tax base, closing loopholes and growing the economy. It includes the following:

• Tax relief for middle class fami-

lies.

- Postcard tax filing for the vast majority of Americans.
- Tax relief for business, especially small business.
- Ending incentives to move jobs, capital, and revenue overseas.
- Broadening the tax base and providing greater fairness for all Americans by closing special interest tax breaks and loopholes.

Wow, almost sounds too good to be true! **The unified framework** 

On September 27, 2017, Republicans in Congress and the Trump administration released their "Unified Framework" for tax reform to accomplish the above goals. The document is meant to be the foundation Congress will use to put forth legislation for middle income tax cuts, a simpler and fairer tax code, competitive tax rates aimed at helping US companies create more jobs, give workers a pay raise and grow the economy as enumerated above.

#### Rates and individual changes

Under the current tax code, taxable income is subject to seven tax brackets. The framework will consolidate the current seven tax brackets into three brackets of 12 percent, 25 percent and 35 percent (35 percent being the current top tax bracket).

There may be an additional top tax bracket to ensure that the reformed tax code is at least as progressive as the existing code and does not shift the tax burden form high-income to lower- and middle-income taxpayers.

Generally, higher income taxpayers itemize deductions for the most part. This is due, in part, to mortgage interest and taxes paid (income and real estate taxes as an example). Higher earning individuals also tend to make larger tax deductible charitable contributions that are not made by lower- and moderate-income families.

The framework, to simplify the current code, proposes to eliminate most itemized deductions, but retains tax incentives for home mortgage interest and charitable contributions. This, in my view, helps middle-income taxpayers in addition to higher-income families. However, I believe there will be pushback on eliminating the deduction for state and local income taxes.

My solution is to allow a deduction for real estate taxes. This will help all taxpayers regardless of the income level. Of course, those living in high tax states — New York, California and New Jersey as an example — will object to this as well. I believe, however, that this deduction will be legislated out!

The framework retains tax benefits that encourage work, higher education and retirement security. Tax reform will look to maintain or raise retirement plan participation of workers and resources available for retirement. No mention of social security however. A difficult benefit to play with, in my view.

Tax reform will provide for an enhanced child tax credit and middle class tax relief. The framework will repeal the personal exemption for dependents and increase the child tax credit. Additionally, a new non-refundable credit of \$500 for non-child dependents to help defray the cost of caring for dependents. (Non-refundable meaning if you have no tax liability the \$500 will not be refunded.)

The "hated" alternative minimum tax will be eliminated. According to the framework, it no longer serves its purpose and requires taxpayers to, in effect, do their taxes twice: once under the regular system and once under the alternative system.

The framework will repeal the death tax (estate tax) and the generation-skipping transfer tax. If this is repealed, I am curious what the states will do. Most states are not able to eliminate estate and/or inheritances taxes. In my view, I don't believe there will be a wholesale elimination of the estate tax because it impacts only our wealthiest citizens. Time will tell.

#### **Impact on business**

Small business drives our economy and increases employment. The framework creates a new tax structure for small busi-

ness — there are many PR firms that are considered "small business" — so they can better compete with the rest of the world, boosting both jobs and higher wages. Accordingly, the framework puts corporate tax rates below the average of other industrialized countries and promotes greater investment in American manufacturing. I support this concept 1000 percent!

The maximum tax rates under the framework, to be applied to small and family owned businesses conducted as sole proprietorships, partnerships and S corporations, will be 25 percent. The framework is aware that wealthy individuals may adopt measures to recharacterize personal income into business income to avoiding paying higher tax rates.

Tax rates for corporations will be reduced to 20 percent. In addition, it aims to eliminate the corporate AMT and the impact on "double" taxation of corporate earnings.

Businesses will also be able to write-off the cost of new investment in depreciable property other than structurers (real property) for at least five years. However, the deduction for net interest expense may be partially eliminated for corporations. Interest paid by non-corporate taxpayers will also be reviewed.

Certain tax credits such as the research and development credit the low-income housing credit will be retained.

I'll keep you informed as further details develop! **O** 

#### PR news brief

# Credit reporting giant TransUnion taps CGCN Group

TransUnion, the Big Three credit reporting service, hired Republican advocacy shop CGCN Group for issues related to data security, privacy and cybersecurity that may come before Congress in the aftermath of the massive Equifax hacking scandal.

Principals Steve Clark, one-time top lobbyist at regional phone company Ameritech; Sam Geduldig (aide to Congressman John Boehner before he became Speaker of the House); Jay Crawford (ex-policy advisor to Boehner); and Mike Nielsen (legislative aide to former Utah Senator Robert Bennett) anchor TransUnion's nine-member lobbying team.

Chicago-based TransUnion shuffled its lobbying line-up this year, terminating American Defense International and Roberti Global, while Thompson Coburn has been inactive.

Eris Group (\$24,000 quarterly retainer) and long-time lobbyist Kate Moss (\$20,000) remain on TransUnion's payroll.

Equifax in September revealed its data breach that occurred earlier this year affects 145 million Americans. It turned to Edelman for crisis management work.

## Pyramid law pits legal group against multilevel marketers

egal services provider LegalShield has tapped law firm Kelley Drye & Warren in response to a series of bills making their way through Capitol Hill that could weaken consumer protections against pyramid schemes and similarly deceptive direct sales initiatives often billed as "multilevel marketing" programs.

Pyramid schemes typically employ a business model wherein non-salaried members are recruited with the promise of financial returns in exchange for investing in a company's products or services and then selling them directly to consumers in exchange for a commission. Many times, however, those sellers, now burdened with loads of unmovable inventory, are required to recruit additional sellers beneath them in order to make their initial investment back, let alone make a profit.

Last year, the Federal Trade Commission secured settlement agreements with two multilevel marketing companies totaling nearly \$210 million: weight loss and nutritional supplement giant Herbalife and now-defunct retail services and products seller Fortune Hi-Tech Marketing.

LegalShield has retained KD&W to combat H.R.3409, or the Anti-Pyramid Promotional Scheme Act. That consumer protection bill, introduced in July by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), seeks to amend the Federal Trade Commission Act, ostensibly to help would-be MLM investors avoid scams by providing the first federal definition of an illegal pyramid scheme.

However, critics say that deceptively titled bill would actually limit the FTC's ability to enforce actions against those companies, because it redefines MLM and pyramid promotional practices in such a way that it allows many companies widely considered pyramid schemes to evade that definition, effectively granting them immunity from the government agency.

Critics also charge that much of the bill's text was crafted by MLM trade group the Direct Selling Association. Herbalife, FHTM and energy drink seller Vemma Nutrition Company, all of whom were subject to recent FTC lawsuits, are DSA member companies.

In addition to H.R.3409, the FY 2018 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations bill, which was drafted by the House Appropriations Committee this summer, now contains a provision introduced by Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI), stating that no funding for the Treasury Department, the Judiciary, the Small Business Administration, Securities and Exchange Commission or any other agencies for the fiscal year can be spent on enforcement actions against pyramid operations.

The DSA has endorsed the Moolenaar amendment, with President Joseph N. Mariano in July penning an editorial in The Hill where he said the proposed amendment would "make clear that direct sellers buying products for their own personal use is a legitimate business practice."

Ada, OK-based LegalShield, which develops and markets legal protection plans for individuals, families and small businesses through a network of about 7,000 independent provider attorneys across North America, added direct sales to its sales force in 1984 and was formerly a member of the DSA. LegalShield left the organization earlier this year, however, with CEO Jeff Bell resigning his board of director position. In a blistering press release published on LegalShield's site in March, Bell leveled a series of criticisms at the trade group, citing "concerns about the lack of enforcement of the DSA's Code of Ethics for its members" as reasons for LegalShield's exit, and claiming that "LegalShield feels the DSA does not stand up for or strictly enforce its Code of Ethics ... therefore weakening the direct selling industry as a whole." O



# **Podesta uses Levinson Group** for communications support

he Podesta Group, under investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller as part of his probe of potential collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia into meddling in the presidential election, is using crisis/litigation shop The Levinson Group for communications support.

PG founder Tony Podesta stepped down Oct. 30, telling his staff he plans to fight any charges, and doesn't want the firm to fight them, according to Politico. The firm is now under the operational and financial control of CEO Kimberly Fritts.

Molly Levinson, who launched The Levinson Group in 2014, joined CNN as a Producer in 2001, rose to Political Director in 2006, left for the Political Director spot at CBS News and then returned to CNN as a politics and elections consultant.

Between April 2012 and June 2014, Podesta repped Brussels-based nongovernmental group the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine, work allegedly done under the guidance of former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates.

PG says it fully disclosed its ties to ECFMU and complied with FARA filing regulations five years ago within weeks of starting its work. "Any insinuation to the contrary is false," said PG. O

# **Animal Rights groups launch** lobbying salvo for cosmetics bill

nimal protection and advocacy group Cruelty Free International has retained Blue Marble Strategy for representation on animal and science issues in Washington.

CFI has retained Blue Marble to lobby in support of H.R. 2790, the "Humane Cosmetics Act," which would prohibit animal testing for any cosmetic products in the U.S. after one year and prohibit the sale of all cosmetic products tested on animals within three years.

The use of animal testing to demonstrate the safety of products is not required by the Food and Drug Administration or the Product Safety Commission. The practice is already banned in Israel, India and every nation in the European Union.

Blue Marble Strategy is the nation's first private government affairs and consulting firm dedicated to animal and environmental protection, as well as wildlife conservation. The animal rights lobbying group inked a similar pact earlier this year with the Beagle Freedom Project, a coalition run by Los Angeles-based non-profit Animal Rescue, Media, and Education, to advocate its support of H.R. 2790 on Capitol Hill. O

# **UAE** media agency makes anti-terror PR push

he UAE National Media Council, an independent body of the United Arab Emirates' government that oversees, regulates and promotes that country's media sector, has inked a pact with London-based Project Associates UK for global PR services.

The international communications consultancy was retained to raise awareness about state-sponsored terrorism in the Middle East and to create and promote counter-narratives that discourage young people from taking up Islamist extremist causes.

The firm will also work to raise awareness of the Arab world's positive contributions to regional dynamics and policy achievements and will also promote greater collaboration between the US and UAE on counter-terrorism efforts.

The UAE, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt and five other Gulf states, have been locked in a months-long diplomatic squabble with neighboring Qatar, home of Arab satellite TV channel al Jazeera. Those countries in June broke diplomatic ties with Qatar, imposing an economic and political boycott against the country in response to its alleged support and funding of Islamist terrorist groups.

Project Associates' two-month contract with the UAE media agency brings the firm \$250,000.

The UAE has maintained a long-running communications pact with Washington-based government and corporate PR shop the Harbour Group. Other firms to perform lobbying work for the Persian Gulf nation in recent years include Kemp Goldberg Partners, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld and DLA Piper.

Project Associates, which was founded in 1997, maintains an additional office in Brussels as well as teams in Paris, Berlin and Bern. O

## Thailand DOT taps Quinn

hailand's official tourism development agency, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, has hired travel and lifestyle firm Quinn for PR efforts to boost awareness of the Thailand brand as a top Southeast Asia travel destination in New York and Los Angeles travel markets.

Quinn's work for the TAT account will include driving awareness of Thailand through top-tier U.S. broadcast, online and print media features, as well as social media exposure; and creating branded content to be disseminated through interactive digital, blog and social platforms.

The agency will also support TAT's tourism marketing concept, "Open to the New Shades campaign," a global effort aimed at deepening the unique local experiences of Thailand on the world stage; and will execute three 360-degree campaigns in a bid to engage target audiences.

The campaign's ultimate goal is for Thailand to exceed a million U.S. visitors by the end of next year.

The contract, which began in October, continues until September 30, 2018 and brings the agency a base fee of \$8,000 per month. •

#### **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.

White House Writers Group, Inc., Washington, D.C., registered Oct. 24, 2017 for Polish National Foundation, Warsaw, Poland, to provide consulting services to the Foundation (composed of seventeen commercial corporations, government-owned, in whole or in part) to advance public understanding and support for the five cardinal points of the "fairness agenda" that guides the Foundation's work program in the US and in NATO Europe.

Husch Blackwell, LLP, Washington, D.C., registered Oct. 16, 2017 for China National Forest Products Industry Association, Beijing, China, to educate Congress on issues involving the importation of plywood from China to the US.

Aristotle International, Inc., Washington, D.C., registered Sep. 27, 2017 for NASA (National Super Alliance), Nairobi, Kenya, regarding US Government support for a fair and transparent election in Kenya.

#### **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.

Franklin Square Group, LLC, Washington, D.C., registered Oct. 21, 2017 for X (Google Inc.), Mountain View, CA, regarding issues related to innovation, science and technology for the company that is developing "moonshot" technologies such as balloon-powered Internet and self-driving cars.

American Defense International, Inc., Washington, D.C., registered Oct. 20, 2017 for EagleEye Intelligence, Boca Raton, FL, regarding incident management and aerial platform solutions.

Boyagian Consulting, LLC, Arlington, VA, registered Oct. 25, 2017 for U.S. Tolling Coalition, Arlington, VA, regarding the elimination of existing federal restriction on states to toll the US interstates.

Frinzi & Associates, Austin, TX, registered Oct. 26, 2017 for Crisis Prevention Institute, Milwaukee, WI, regarding cyber bullying.

Guide Consulting Services, Inc., registered Oct. 23, 2017 for Schizophrenia and Related Disorders Alliance of America, Houston, TX, regarding issues pertaining to the reclassification of schizophrenia as a neurological disorder.

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Employees: 19. Founded: 2009.

Agency Statement: With offices in Los Angeles and New York City, Marketing Maven's integration of PR, SEO and social media marketing helps provide a competitive edge to their clients. Marketing Maven helps businesses grow their revenues by developing campaigns that engage a target audience, generate sales then utilize advanced metrics to measure ROI. Their services aid national marketing campaigns and product launches with reputation management, organic SEO tracking, competitive analysis reports, key influencer identification and online product reviews to help increase revenue. Hispanic marketing is also a core competency for Marketing Maven, not only focusing on Spanish language media relations, but assisting clients with culturally relevant content for various marketing channels. Visit www.marketingmavenpr.com for more information.

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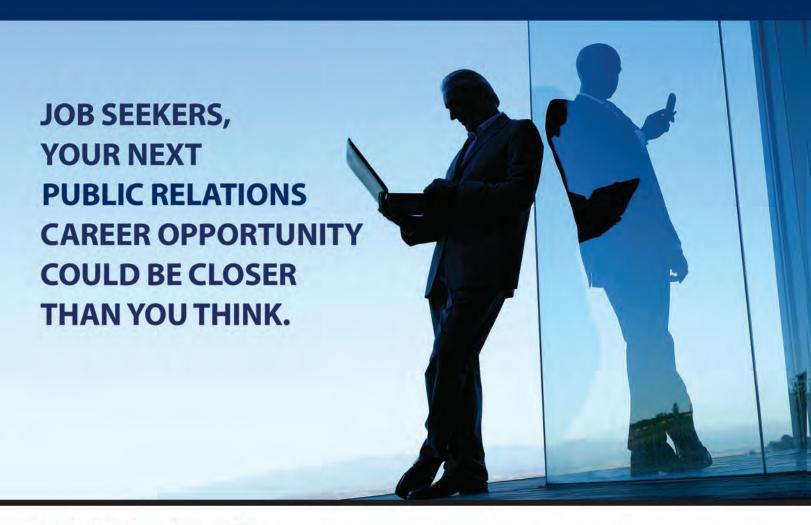
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